The Future Homes Standard 2026

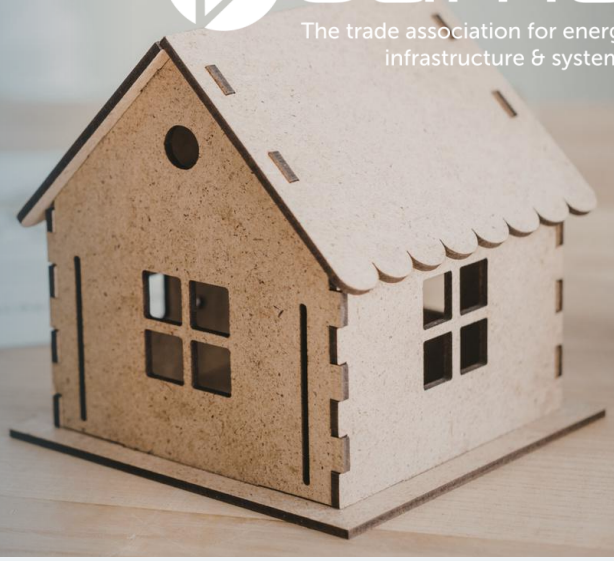
Key changes, compliance metrics, and what comes next for new homes.

March 2026

Version 1

Your sharable guide, just for our members

Formed to support all employees within our member companies



beama
The trade association for energy infrastructure & systems

"The Future Homes Standard marks an important step in moving new buildings both towards electrification (away from fossil fuel heating) and mechanical ventilation - approaches BEAMA has long supported. This creates a strong foundation for a smart, low carbon energy system and changes the direction of new build homes in England.

We have the documentation, but we have yet to model what this means in practice. This will be vital to seeing how technologies perform within these new dwellings.

Our fantastic team look forward to supporting you as our members with clear guidance as these changes are implemented and modelling capabilities arise."

Yselkla Farmer, CEO

The Future Homes Standards was first mentioned in 2019. Now we have sight of it for the first time.

The Future Homes Standard (FHS) is designed to reshape how new homes are built in the UK - cutting emissions, improving energy performance, and reducing reliance on volatile fossil fuels.

By shifting to clean, home-grown energy and electrified heating, it aims to support long-term energy security while creating zero operational carbon homes as the grid continues to decarbonise at pace.

Alongside this, the Standard seeks to balance upfront and running costs for homeowners, deliver safer and healthier living environments, and support the Government's target of building 1.5 million new homes.

The FHS was first cited in 2019 as part of interim reforms to regulations governing energy (Approved Document L) and ventilation (Approved Document F) use in new buildings.

Now we have sight of it for the first time, giving us the new direction of travel for new build homes in the UK as the Government aims to meet its many objectives.

This guide cuts through the detail to explain some of the key changes in the Future Homes Standards and their practical impact.

It's intended to support clear understanding and confident conversations across organisations and highlight further opportunities for engagement.

Implications for our members

This regulation and guidance heavily influences what products will be specified (and therefore sold) in new buildings for some time to come.

With a target for 300,000 new homes to built each year, this has a significant market impact. We do not yet know the full implications for some products, as this will partly depend on the modelling software and what packages of products can be used to meet the requirements of the regulations. Overall, the FHS reflects a wider move to the electrification of heating and mechanical ventilation, and the skills requirement of doing so.

Basics of Building Regulations and what has been published

The Future Homes Standard (FHS) is not one single document. It is a term for an updated package of regulations and guidance that sets parameters for construction of new buildings in England.

When building a new dwelling, there is a cascade of legal requirements (and routes to meet them) set out by the Government, impacting manufacturers, designers and installers – and this is no small change, it impacts the whole strategy behind HVAC specification across all new homes.

Aspect of FHS	Description	Examples of new measures
Building Regulations 2010 (amended 2026)	Minimum legal requirements.	Enforcement dates, legal requirement for on-site renewable electricity generation.
Approved Documents F (ventilation), L (energy) and O (overheating)	The legal requirements you need to follow when designing and building, including required energy performance. These are technology agnostic meaning multiple products can be used as a route to compliance.	Changes to the notional building (a building specification that would be compliant with minimum requirements) for heating and ventilation, and changes to guidance and requirements for heating controls, floor coverings with underfloor heating, and hot water cylinder insulation.
National Calculation Methodologies	Tools required to be used to assess a building's performance.	SAP 10.3 is available now to design buildings. The more advanced Home Energy Model will be available no earlier than 3 months from now.
Approvals	Rules for how to get a design and final construction assessed and approved.	There will be a new format for Energy Performance Certificates by 2027. Requirement to use certified assessors remains.
Additional guidance	Help to meet specific requirements.	Home User Guide template and ventilation guidance. Smart meter installations guidance.

Enforcement dates

New developments take time to design and build, so transitional arrangements will apply. These allow projects already in progress to continue under existing rules for a limited period.

The Government intends the Future Homes Standard to come into force on 24th March 2027, followed by a 12-month transition period. After this, construction must have started or the development will need to meet the new standards.

Different rules apply to high-risk buildings (such as tall residential buildings, care homes, and hospitals). These changes will come into force on 24th September 2027.

Some earlier transitional arrangements linked to older Part L standards will end by 24th March 2028, after which developments will need to meet the updated requirements.

This means it will take a few years before new developments are built to the new standards - but by that point, new homes should no longer be built with fossil fuels.

Compliance Metrics

New buildings must meet three key performance metrics: Target Emission Rate (TER), Target Primary Energy Rate (TPER), and Fabric Energy Efficiency (FEE).

These are well-established, widely used, and will remain unchanged.

A new voluntary metric - delivered energy - will be introduced in the Building Regulations England Part L (BREL) report in certain circumstances.

The average compliance approach which enables terraced housing to be built to lower performance standards based on block performance will be removed.

These support electrification with high benefits for renewable energy. Without modelling capability, it is unknown what a compliant direct electric specification to these metrics looks like.

The Domestic Notional Building

The notional building is a government model that represents a home meeting minimum regulatory standards.

Its performance, including energy use and carbon emissions, sets the legal benchmark for new homes.

Below, we compare current standards with the new regulations*, showing the focus on heating and ventilation systems in this update.

Building Element	Current Value (AD L 2021)	New Value (AD L 2026)
Roof U-value (W/m^2K)	0.11	0.11
External wall U-value (W/m^2K)	0.18	0.18
Floor U-value (W/m^2K)	0.13	0.13
Window U-value (W/m^2K)	1.2	1.2
Door U-value (W/m^2K)	1.0	1.0
Wastewater heat recovery	Yes	Yes
Hot water Cylinder	N/A	Yes 120mm insulation
Airtightness ($m^3/m^2.h$ @ 50Pa)	4	4
Ventilation	Natural ventilation with intermittent extract fans	dMEV SFP = 0.15 W/(l/s)
Renewable energy	Solar PV Calculation includes 40% of ground floor area	Solar PV Calculation includes 40% of ground floor area

*Non-domestic buildings and dwellings connected to heat networksuse a different model.

Renewable electricity generation: A new requirement

Homes and residential buildings must include renewable electricity generation, unless exempt, and provide a reasonable level of electricity for residents, even when serviced by a heat network. The requirement is technology-neutral, but solar panels are expected to be the main approach. As a guide, panels covering around 40% of each dwelling's ground floor area would meet it.

Exemptions may apply to buildings over 18m, those with limited roof space, or where renewable electricity is supplied from a directly connected off-site system.

This is a new requirement in for new builds in England. It is not yet known what other specifications would meet this requirement other than solar panels.

Exceptional circumstances

Local Authorities will not be permitted to apply for using more relaxed CO_2 emission rates. Homes which do not have access to the national grid might be allowed to install a higher carbon heating system, but they will still need to meet the emissions (CO_2) primary energy and fabric energy efficiency requirements.

This will reduce the opportunities for developments to use exceptional circumstances to continue the use of fossil fuel systems in new homes.

Compliance for dwellings connecting to a communal or district heat network

There are two routes to demonstrate compliance for buildings connected to heat networks. The first is through comparison with a heat network notional building, which is the only option for communal heat network systems, where multiple dwellings or units within one a single building are served from a central heat source in that building, The second is based on the carbon intensity of the heat supplied, requiring at least 90% of annual heat to come from low-carbon sources. This must be verified by a qualified third party.

Temporary heating solutions must also meet low carbon requirements, meaning fossil fuel systems cannot be used to demonstrate compliance.

This provides greater clarity for communal heat network developments and ensures that both permanent and temporary systems support low carbon outcomes, avoiding future retrofit risks.

Dwellings from a change of use

A Material Change of Use (MCU) is when new homes are created from existing buildings, which will now need to meet higher performance requirements. An optional whole-building approach is being developed to support reuse of existing materials and reduce future retrofit needs. Further consultation is planned on these changes, including a new compliance tool and updated standards. Airtightness testing will also become a legal requirement.

This is likely to encourage greater reuse and retrofit of existing buildings, while increasing focus on fabric performance and, in turn, the importance of effective ventilation.

Calculation methodologies

Compliance is currently assessed using the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP), with version 10.2 in use today.

Under the Future Homes Standard, this will transition to the new Homes Energy Model (HEM), designed to support innovation, heat pump performance, and smart, low energy homes.

However, HEM is not yet ready for use. To support the transition, an updated version - SAP 10.3 – is now available. Both SAP 10.3 and HEM will run in parallel for at least 24 months after HEM launches.

HEM has the potential to be a step-change in how we assess building performance, particularly in recognising the benefits of electrified technologies and modern heating systems. However, its development is highly complex, and we have raised several concerns that still need to be addressed.

Running SAP 10.3 alongside HEM provides a practical solution, allowing progress towards the Future Homes Standard without delay, while giving industry time to test HEM, run modelling, and identify any issues before full adoption. We have yet to test the effectiveness of SAP 10.3, as new versions are known to launch with bugs.

Home User Guides

New homes must include a Home User Guide, giving occupants clear information on ventilation, heating and hot water, on-site electricity generation, and overheating. These are often supported by in-person handovers.

Updated guidance includes information on hot water cylinders and thermal stores. Digital versions will now be required, and for heat pumps, key operating information must also be provided on or near the unit.

This will help occupants better understand and use their systems, with digital formats creating opportunities for more accessible guidance, such as video content.

Product guidance and standards

Approved Documents set minimum performance standards for building products and services, covering areas such as efficiency, controls, and safety.

Updates include changes to building services efficiencies and controls, heat pump controls, operational information requirements, and insulation for heat distribution systems. Previously proposed measures around hot water cylinder insulation standards have been removed, although a higher specification remain in the notional building.

Guidance has also been updated to allow more design flexibility for floor coverings used with underfloor heating.

The guidance for demonstrating compliance of mechanical ventilation systems and comfort cooling performance levels has been revised. The maximum Specific Fan Power (SFP) for continuous decentralised Mechanical Extract Ventilation (dMEV) has been raised to 3.5 W/l.s, allowing for slightly more fan use per unit of airflow. The minimum Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) for comfort cooling has been lowered to 4.6, relaxing efficiency expectations.

These changes reflect positive industry feedback from the consultation process. Further analysis is needed from BEAMA to review the changes proposed during the consultation period.

Ventilation testing

For measuring air flow rates, approved testing equipment is used to give accurate reflections of the performance of a ventilation system, ensuring that a building complies with minimum performance requirements. Additional guidance is available on the expected levels of flow rate testing for relevant work in existing buildings has been introduced. A new measurement criterion (static pressure testing) has not been introduced for MVHR systems. For installation of a full cMEV, flow rate testing might be necessary to ensure that systems meet regulation requirements. Additional guidance is available on the expected levels of flow rate testing for relevant work in existing buildings.

These changes are welcomed by industry in line with the consultation, taking into consideration cost of additional testing requirements.

Ventilation wording amendment

There is now clarification surrounding expectations for access points for cleaning ductwork and expectations for access to MVHR filters. To maintain design flexibility across different dwelling types and systems, the text requires that ducting and the external air terminal can achieve the desired flow rates, rather than prescribing a fixed air velocity. The text specifies that duct connections should be 'adequately sealed,' which permits proprietary connectors to be used. MVHR for highly airtight dwellings specifies that the guidance only covers natural ventilation for less airtight buildings.

This clarification should provide clearer guidelines for relevant parties to comply with.

Ventilation ductwork guidance

There is now no explicit maximum length for Decentralised Mechanical Extract Ventilation (dMEV) ductwork, and guidance has been introduced increasing evidence required for ductwork lengths over 2m. The suggests design verification should be provided by a suitably 'competent person' including design calculations and drawings. Guidance is also included on how and when flexible ductwork should be used in standard installations. In non-standard situations, alternative ventilation options can be provided accompanied by supporting evidence. The 50 mm insulation criterion approach has been retained because there is a significant risk of condensation and resulting mould growth on poorly insulated surfaces (such as air intake ductwork) within heated spaces.

These changes are positively in line with industry feedback related to the consultation. Further analysis is needed from BEAMA to review the status of our consultation proposals.

Competent Person Scheme

A Competent Person Scheme (CPS) allows qualified installers to self-certify that their work complies with regulations, removing the need for a local authority building control inspection. Registered technicians can install, test, and commission ventilation systems legally and issue compliance certificates.

There is now guidance on commissioning and installation of fixed building services in Approved Documents F and L, highlighting the role of competent persons schemes when installing a heat pump or mechanical ventilation. There is an emphasis on the need for installers to be suitably competent to carry out the work and should be a member of a Competent Persons Scheme or an equivalent body. For lower risk work, such as installing a single intermittent extract fans, the installer does not need to be a Competent Person Scheme member, however they should have received adequate training.

We recognise the importance of the CPS and hope to work closely with relevant parties to define what it means to be 'competent'.

Smart meters

Updated voluntary guidance has been issued to support the effective installation of smart meters in new buildings.

It provides clearer advice on meter placement, spacing and positioning to help maintain signal strength, reduce interference and support maintenance, particularly in flats and multi-occupancy buildings.

The scope has been expanded to cover all new buildings, alongside technical clarifications on connectivity and the guidance has been aligned more closely with wider industry standards.

A mandatory approach is not currently proposed, but this position may be reviewed in future.

By providing updated recommendations for consistent and effective smart meter installations, the guidance supports the delivery of homes that are ready to contribute to a smarter, more flexible and low-carbon energy system.

Overheating in buildings

Approved Document O provides guidance to reduce overheating risk and remove excess heat from homes.

Following consultation, the Government has committed to a call for evidence to address key issues, including updates to modelling approaches and improvements to existing methods. This is expected to lead to a future technical review.

This creates an opportunity to better recognise a wider range of cooling solutions, including both passive and active systems (such as MVHR with summer bypass, MVHRV and cooling from heat pumps), as part of an efficient and cost-effective approach to managing overheating.

Areas of further consultation

A voluntary approach (either post-construction or post-occupancy) to testing real-world building performance, focusing on methods that are cost-effective, non-intrusive and easy to adopt.

Improvements to overheating regulations with a full technical review, including the adoption of the updated CIBSE TM59 for the dynamic method and exploring improvements to the simplified method.

Energy efficiency standards for Material Change of Use dwellings, including for airtightness and voluntary whole-building metrics.

These consultations provide a key opportunity for BEAMA and our members to shape future policy and ensure our industry expertise is reflected in upcoming regulation development.

What's next from BEAMA?

The trade association for energy infrastructure & systems

We know how important these regulatory changes are for our members - and our support doesn't stop here.

Deeper technical engagement

We'll be running detailed discussions through our sector groups. We welcome multiple participants from each organisation and encourage broader involvement as we work through the impacts together. If you're not currently involved in your BEAMA sector group but would like to be, you can email your Group Lead below.

Further guidance and support

We'll be sharing additional guidance and developing market focused compliance resources to support you and build opportunities with housebuilders, developers, and specifiers over the coming year. We are also in conversation with the relevant teams within Government for dedicated sessions on these changes. We're always open to your ideas on what would be most useful and are happy to receive suggestions directly.

Need to talk it through?

We're here for one-to-one conversations if you have specific questions or concerns. Just get in touch and we'll arrange a call.

Get involved

Contact our Group Leads to join the conversation and help shape the industry response*.

Kelly Butler

Carly Nettleford

+ Electric Heating & Hot Water
+ Ventilation
+ Heating Controls
+ Water Treatment

Swetta Coopamah

+ Smart Buildings & Consumer Energy Data
+ Smart Meters & Metering Solutions

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*If two contacts are listed for the group you're interested in, please email both.

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