



LIVING HOME STANDARD

Developed by the Welsh public to define
what everyone needs from a home in
order to live rather than just get by

JULY 2017

Shelter
Cymru



Ipsos MORI

Supported by



British Gas



John Puzey

Director, Shelter Cymru

At Shelter Cymru we believe that everyone in Wales should have a decent, safe, warm and affordable home. Our mission is to improve people's lives. With our policy, research, campaigning and lobbying, and our direct services to people in housing need we continue to overcome the challenges that stand in the way of people in Wales having a decent home.

We are proud of the work that we have done in partnership with British Gas and are very pleased that together we have produced the Living Home Standard. This Standard captures the values and issues that are truly important to households in Wales. It helps us better understand what is needed to make a house a home.

Wales has seen some exciting and ground-breaking changes in housing policy in the last few years. With landlord registration and licensing, exciting new homelessness legislation and ambitious affordable housebuilding targets, there is much to look forward to.

Unfortunately though, at Shelter Cymru we are constantly reminded that despite this progress there are still barriers to overcome before we meet our aim for everyone in Wales to have a decent, warm and safe home. This report has highlighted just how far we still have to go in Wales.

Worryingly, more than half of households with children are living in homes that fail the Standard. This needs to be improved. We must do better for our children and future generations.

While across Britain the biggest area of concern was affordability, in Wales it was poor conditions. People in Wales were twice as likely to say they lived with damp and mould compared to the rest of Britain. Too many people in Wales are living in poor quality homes and this needs to be a focus for government action. We recognise the important work done by Welsh Government to improve housing in Wales but there is a long way to go.

Let's use this Standard to pull the public, private and third sectors together and actively work to improve people's homes, communities, and health and wellbeing. Let's use this information to focus on our existing problems, plan together to solve them and continue the good work that has begun in Wales. The Living Home Standard can provide a benchmark for standards in Wales and allow us to monitor our progress in achieving better homes for all.



Steve Crabb

Director, Customer
Vulnerability and
Corporate Citizenship,
British Gas

We at British Gas share Shelter Cymru's belief that safe, warm and decent homes should be available to everyone.

We've worked together to improve the private rented sector and we are very proud of what we have achieved. By combining our knowledge and expertise, we have really made a difference.

- We've had success with our campaign to improve electrical and carbon monoxide safety standards in Wales.
- We've worked with Shelter Cymru to protect renters from retaliatory evictions – when tenants are evicted from their homes by landlords because they have raised problems with their property.
- Funding from our British Gas Energy Trust also enabled us to provide training on fuel poverty and energy debt for Shelter Cymru's advisers as well as funding specialist roles within Shelter Cymru which can provide free, impartial and tailored advice on how to stay out of debt.

We know that a *safe and warm* home is vital to our customers, so we place it at the heart of everything we do. Our engineers work hard to bring homes in Wales into the 21st century with smart meters and remote controlled heating. From installing insulation, repairing boilers or carrying out gas and electrical safety checks our network of 400 engineers in Wales work in homes across the country every day of the year. Our Connected Home business tells us that homes and the way that people live are being transformed by technology. But we also know that many people do not feel that where they live is 'home'.

We need to work harder to improve the standard of properties so that they become homes for everybody – and we felt that the development of the Living Home Standard would be a fantastic opportunity to do this.

Introduction

“Developed by the public for the public”

What is the Living Home Standard?

Although there are many ways of defining different aspects of what a home is and how this can be measured, until now there has never been a definition of what the public expects an acceptable home should provide.

The Living Home Standard fills this void by bringing to life what the public believe we should all be able to expect our home to provide, in order to secure our wellbeing and provide a foundation from which we can build and live our lives.

The Standard is the result of nine months of research undertaken by Ipsos MORI on behalf of Shelter and British Gas, including a series of discussion groups, workshops and quantitative surveys carried out in Wales and across Britain. These different strands brought together public views on what a home should provide, which was honed into a list of 39 attributes which together define the Living Home Standard – a standard that we should aspire for all homes to meet, irrespective of their tenure, size or age.

How does it work?

The 39 statements which make up the Living Home Standard are split across five different dimensions:

- 1  **Affordability**
- 2  **Decent conditions**
- 3  **Space**
- 4  **Stability**
- 5  **Neighbourhood**

Within each dimension some attributes were classed as essentials – conditions that every home must meet in order to meet the Living Home Standard. Other attributes were classed as tradables, features many people believed were important, but they were not universally applicable to or equally desired by everyone.

To measure whether a household meets the Standard it is assessed against all 39 attributes, across the five dimensions. A home must meet all of the essential attributes, and a minimum number of the tradable attributes in each dimension.

The 39 attributes are explained in full in Appendix 1.

How does Wales measure up?

Having developed the Living Home Standard, we took it back out to the public with a national survey in order to understand how many people in Wales are living in homes they feel are acceptable.

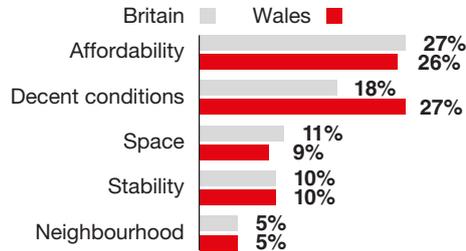
The method for the survey is described in full in Appendix 2.

Topline Results

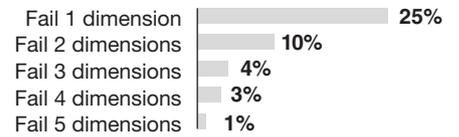
44%

of people in Wales live in homes that do not meet the Living Home Standard, compared to 43% in Britain as a whole.

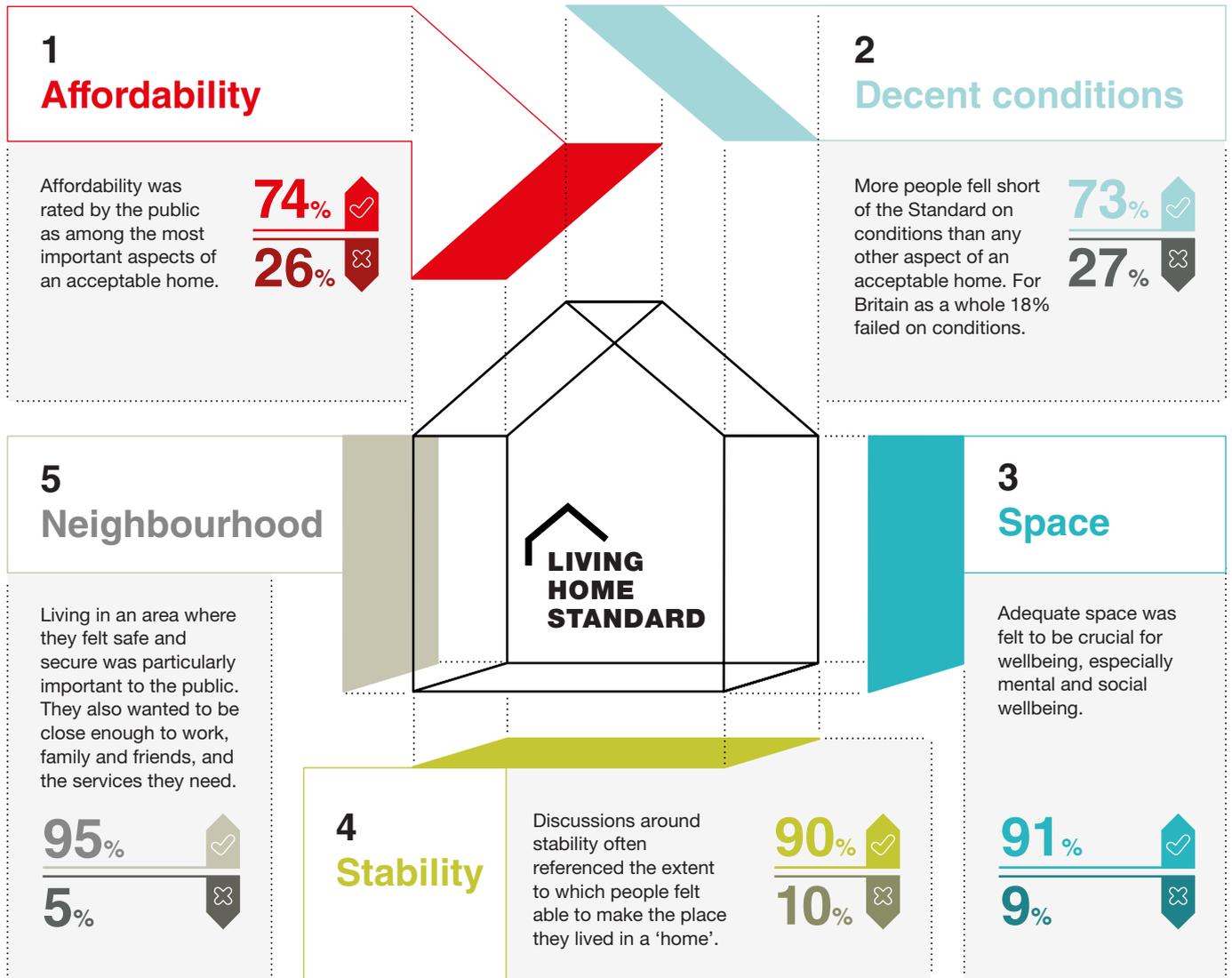
REASON FOR FAILING:



NUMBER OF DIMENSIONS FAILED:



% who pass and fail each dimension:



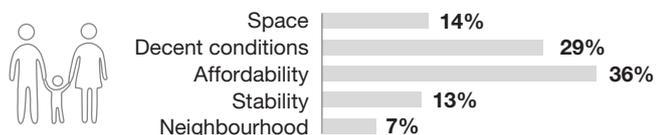
Legend: % passing the dimension % failing the dimension

■ Affordability ■ Decent conditions ■ Space ■ Stability ■ Neighbourhood

Who's most affected?

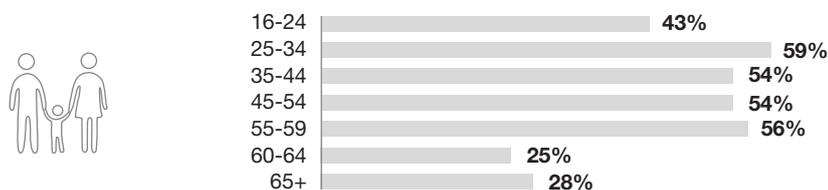
% WHO FAIL THE LIVING HOME STANDARD:

HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN ARE MORE LIKELY TO FAIL



More than half of households with children in Wales fail the Standard overall.

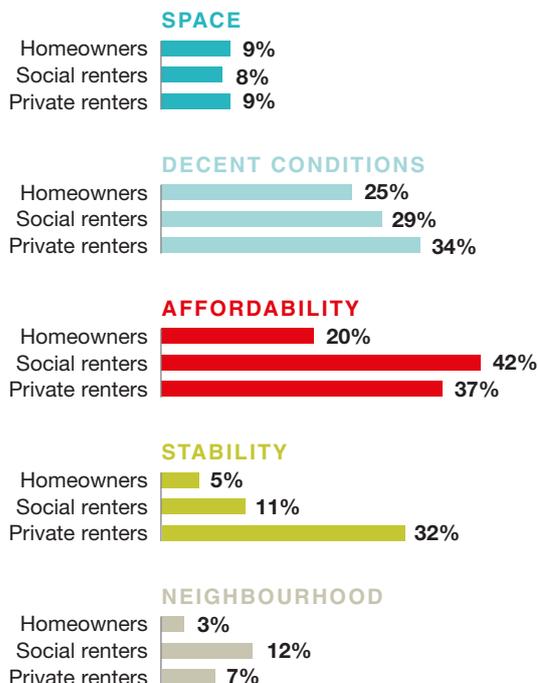
YOUNGER HOUSEHOLDS ARE MORE LIKELY TO FAIL



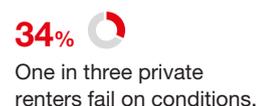
TENANTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO FAIL THAN HOMEOWNERS



TENANTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO FAIL THAN HOMEOWNERS



OTHER KEY FINDINGS



1 Affordability

74% PASS THE CRITERIA FOR AFFORDABILITY

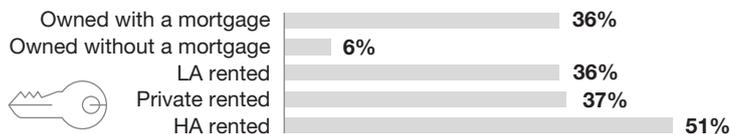
26% FAIL THE CRITERIA FOR AFFORDABILITY



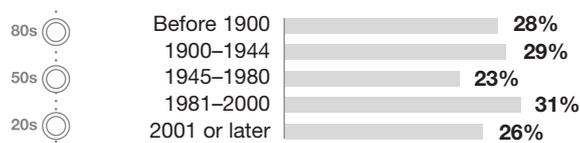
Worry that rent or mortgage payments would rise and become difficult to pay is the main reason households fail this dimension.

% PEOPLE WHOSE HOMES FAIL CRITERIA FOR AFFORDABILITY BASED ON:

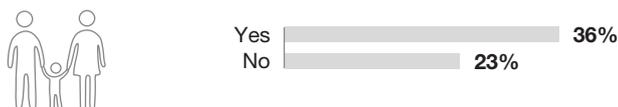
TENURE



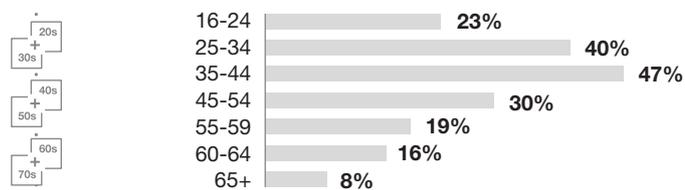
PROPERTY AGE



CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD



AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER



2 Decent conditions

73% PASS THE CRITERIA FOR DECENT CONDITIONS

27% FAIL THE CRITERIA FOR DECENT CONDITIONS



People in Wales are most likely to fail the Standard due to a lack of decent conditions. This differs from Britain as a whole, where affordability is the main reason people fail.

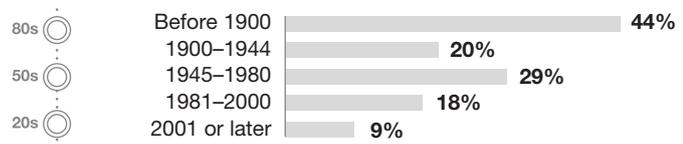
One in five people are not free from mould or damp problems (20%). This is twice as high as Britain as a whole.

% PEOPLE WHOSE HOMES FAIL CRITERIA FOR DECENT CONDITIONS BASED ON:

TENURE



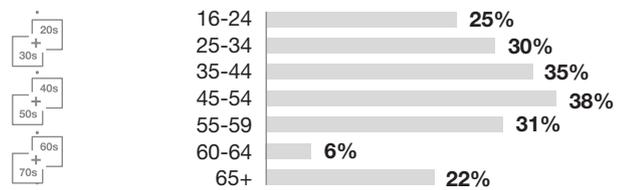
PROPERTY AGE



CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD



AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER



3 Space

91% PASS THE CRITERIA FOR SPACE

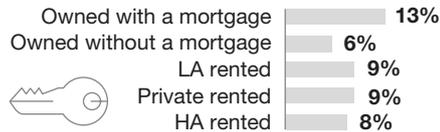
9% FAIL THE CRITERIA FOR SPACE



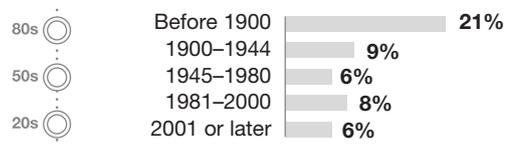
In Wales homeowners with a mortgage are most likely to fail the space dimension compared to Britain as a whole where social renters are most likely.

% PEOPLE WHOSE HOMES FAIL CRITERIA FOR SPACE BASED ON:

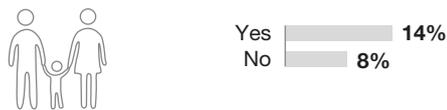
TENURE



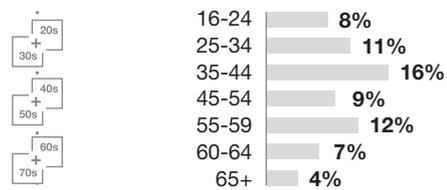
PROPERTY AGE



CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD



AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER



4 Stability

90% PASS THE CRITERIA FOR STABILITY



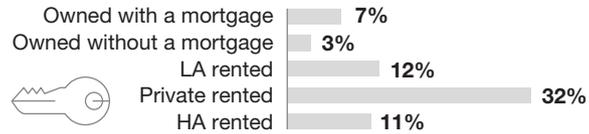
10% FAIL THE CRITERIA FOR STABILITY



1 in 3 private renters do not meet the stability dimension of the Standard, with the majority failing because they feel that they don't have enough control over how long they can stay in their home.

% PEOPLE WHOSE HOMES FAIL CRITERIA FOR STABILITY BASED ON:

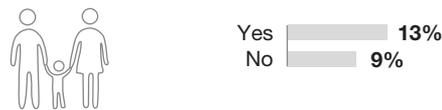
TENURE



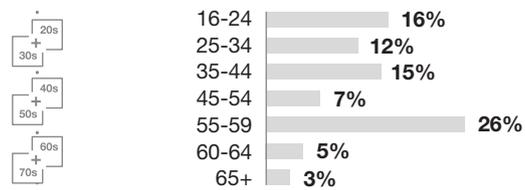
PROPERTY AGE



CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD



AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER



5 Neighbourhood

95% PASS THE CRITERIA FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD

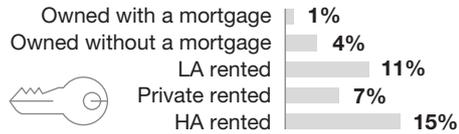
5% FAIL THE CRITERIA FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD



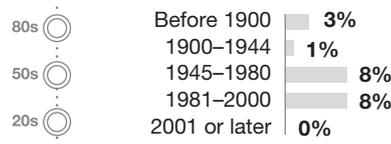
In Wales, 1 in 10 people (11%) felt that their homes were not close enough to family, friends or other support networks.

% PEOPLE WHOSE HOMES FAIL CRITERIA FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD BASED ON:

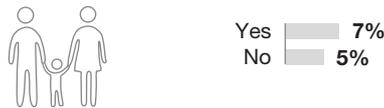
TENURE



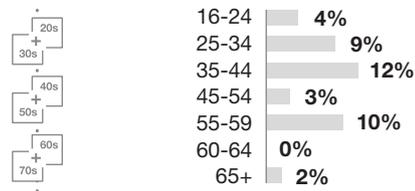
PROPERTY AGE



CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD



AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER



Appendix 1:

Living Home Standard attributes

Dimension	Essential attributes	Tradable attributes
 <p data-bbox="156 678 172 701">1</p> <p data-bbox="156 745 312 775">Affordability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="389 584 884 752">■ Can meet the rent or mortgage payments on the home without regularly having to cut spending on household essentials like food or heating <li data-bbox="389 775 884 875">■ Not worried that rent or mortgage payments could rise to a level that would be difficult to pay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="916 584 1410 707">■ Can meet rent or mortgage payments on the home without regularly preventing participation in social activities <li data-bbox="916 775 1410 943">■ Can meet the rent or mortgage payments on the home without regularly being prevented from putting enough money aside to cover unexpected costs
 <p data-bbox="156 1115 172 1137">2</p> <p data-bbox="156 1182 293 1243">Decent conditions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="389 999 884 1059">■ The home can be heated safely and effectively <li data-bbox="389 1115 884 1176">■ The home has hot and cold running water <li data-bbox="389 1232 884 1292">■ The home is free from safety hazards such as faulty wiring or fire risks <li data-bbox="389 1348 884 1449">■ The home is structurally sound with no important defects to the roof and/or walls <li data-bbox="389 1482 884 1543">■ The home as a toilet, and a bath and/or shower <li data-bbox="389 1576 884 1677">■ The home feels physically secure (for example with adequate locks on doors and windows) <li data-bbox="389 1711 884 1771">■ The home is free from pest problems <li data-bbox="389 1805 884 1865">■ The home is free from mould or damp problems <li data-bbox="389 1899 884 2000">■ The home is suitable for the current age and/or disability related needs of everyone in the household <li data-bbox="389 2033 884 2094">■ There are electrical sockets in the main living areas, kitchen and bedroom(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="916 999 1410 1099">■ The home is free from outside noise that regularly disrupts sleep or daily activities <li data-bbox="916 1155 1410 1256">■ The home has enough natural light in the main living areas, kitchen and bedroom(s) <li data-bbox="916 1290 1410 1391">■ Able to dry laundry in the home without causing mould or damp problems <li data-bbox="916 1424 1410 1525">■ It is possible to access the internet from the home or get an internet connection if needed

Dimension	Essential attributes	Tradable attributes
 <p data-bbox="164 371 180 398">3</p> <p data-bbox="164 439 244 465">Space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="395 188 887 286">■ The number of bedrooms in the home is adequate for all members of the household <li data-bbox="395 340 871 474">■ There is enough space to allow all members of the household to have privacy, for example when they wish to be alone <li data-bbox="395 497 855 631">■ There is enough space for all members of the household to comfortably spend time together in the same room <li data-bbox="395 654 865 712">■ There is adequate space to prepare and cook food <li data-bbox="395 766 880 900">■ There is adequate space to store essential items, such as a reasonable amount of clothes, towels and bedding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="919 188 1417 322">■ There are enough bathroom facilities for everyone living in the household to be able to use them at a time suitable for their needs <li data-bbox="919 340 1359 443">■ The home has access to outdoor space, for example a private or shared garden, or balcony <li data-bbox="919 497 1359 555">■ There is enough space to have visitors during the day or evening <li data-bbox="919 654 1407 757">■ There is enough space for members of the household to study or do work or homework if they need to <li data-bbox="919 766 1407 869">■ There is enough space for a guest to stay overnight, for instance on a sofa or sofa bed <li data-bbox="919 922 1407 1048">■ There is enough space to store domestic items like vacuum cleaners and ironing boards to keep them out of the way <li data-bbox="919 1070 1407 1173">■ There is enough space to store some personal belongings, such as books or children's toys
 <p data-bbox="164 1339 180 1366">4</p> <p data-bbox="164 1406 268 1433">Stability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="395 1218 849 1321">■ The household has enough control over how long they can live in the home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="919 1218 1407 1352">■ If ever given notice to leave the home, the household feel they would be given enough notice to secure somewhere else suitable to live <li data-bbox="919 1375 1407 1478">■ Able to stay in the home long enough to feel part of the local community if wanted <li data-bbox="919 1500 1375 1603">■ Can make changes to the interior of the home such as decorating, if wanted <li data-bbox="919 1626 1359 1684">■ Able to keep a pet in the home or garden if wanted
 <p data-bbox="164 1917 180 1944">5</p> <p data-bbox="164 1984 363 2011">Neighbourhood</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="395 1733 849 1792">■ Feel reasonably safe and secure in the local neighbourhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="919 1733 1423 1836">■ Amenities such as grocery shops, schools and/or a doctor's surgery, are within reasonable reach of the home <li data-bbox="919 1859 1391 1917">■ The home is close enough to family, friends or other support networks <li data-bbox="919 1939 1391 2042">■ Anyone in the household who works outside the home can usually reach their place of work in an hour or less

Appendix 2:

Living Home Standard survey methodology

This report presents combined data from two surveys.

The first survey was based on 1,961 interviews conducted face-to-face in homes across Great Britain with adults aged 16+ between 19th August – 5th September 2016. Data are weighted to the profile of the population. A total of 98 interviews with adults aged 16+ in Wales were achieved.

Welsh data from the first survey was combined with a booster survey conducted face-to-face in homes across Wales with adults aged 16+ who are living in Wales. Fieldwork for the Wales booster survey started on 10th January 2017 covering two waves and ending on 6th February 2017. A total of 233 interviews with adults aged 16+ in Wales were achieved.

Combined data is weighted to a Welsh specific profile in terms of gender, age, work status, tenure and household size.

Combining data from the two surveys together with the application of a Wales specific weighting strategy mean that current survey results are not directly comparable with Welsh estimates derived from the original GB-wide survey.

All research conducted by Ipsos MORI.

Further information about the development and calculation of the Living Home Standard can be found at <http://www.shelter.org.uk/livinghomestandard>.

