



Get Future Homes Standard Ready

The Future Homes Standard (FHS) represents a fundamental shift in home building, creating a clear performance distinction between new builds and the existing housing stock. Homes built to the FHS will be comfortable, healthy, low-energy, and zero-carbon ready - without the need for expensive retrofit.



Many larger homebuilders – along with a good number of medium, small and micro builders – are already successfully delivering homes that include low-temperature heating and other FHS technologies. Indeed, 30% of new houses now have a heat pump and 55% of all new homes include PV panels.

That said, a substantial proportion of the industry has only just got started. The FHS Essentials have been created to support the whole sector, but with a particular focus on helping these homebuilders as they develop their approach.

The transition if not carefully managed can carry risks - from planning and design through to construction, commissioning, and customer engagement. This could lead to thermal discomfort, indoor air quality issues, elevated energy bills, and costly remediation. Failure to support homebuyers in understanding and running their low-energy homes – often featuring unfamiliar technologies and heating characteristics – could also lead to dissatisfaction and increased complaints.

Drawing on lessons from early adopters and pilot projects, the FHS Essentials are seven actions that have been widely recognised as critical for successful implementation. Adopting the FHS Essentials will help homebuilders de-risk delivery, reduce costs, enhance performance, and strengthen customer satisfaction.

Introducing the Future Homes Standard Essentials - seven key actions to de-risk delivery today



**Lead early,
learn fast,
share
lessons**

1

To manage the risks associated with the Future Homes Standard (FHS) regulatory change, every homebuilder - regardless of size - should already have pilot sites underway and a clear, structured plan for embedding learning across their organisation. If not, immediate action is required.

To prepare effectively for the FHS, every homebuilder regardless of size will benefit from establishing pilot sites with a clear, structured plan for embedding learning across their organisation. For those still considering their approach, starting this work now will help manage risk, build confidence and develop the capabilities needed - ready for the regulatory change.

- Enhanced electrical infrastructure and grid capacity requirements.
- Revised dwelling and heating system design.
- Increasing importance of accuracy during installation and construction
- Critical importance of commissioning and handover.
- Adapted customer journey.
- Enhanced workforce skills and supply chain capabilities.

As with any major regulatory change, delivery risks are inevitable - particularly during the early stages while experience and capability are being developed.

Evidence from homebuilders already on this journey shows that success depends on early action, careful planning, and a phased implementation approach. These organisations began with a small number of plots or a single development, resourcing these pilots intensively and applying focused oversight across the seven essential areas of delivery. The lessons learned were then embedded systematically before scaling to whole developments or rolling out across regions.

This structured, iterative approach accelerates learning, reduces risk and builds confidence.

Continuous improvement is critical. Those that formally captured, embedded, and shared lessons across their business found the transition less challenging.

Giving attention to how homes perform in practice and how householders experience them can offer valuable insights. Capturing in-use performance data, and insights from lived experience across a representative sample of homes provides vital feedback. This can directly inform design iterations, strengthen delivery processes, and enhance the customer journey. Addressing issues early - at pilot scale - allows refinement of solutions, builds confidence, and reduces risks.

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Lessons learned from delivering FHS homes at scale

Building Performance Evaluation: A guide for homebuilders and their advisors

Low carbon homes: trials and demonstrators

UNDER DEVELOPMENT FOR RELEASE 2026

Coming soon

- Ensuring thermal junction details are built as designed - Hints & Tips for homebuilders

Coming later in 2026

- Ensuring good indoor air quality - Where to start guide for homebuilders



Prioritise grid availability

2

For all-electric housing developments, securing a suitable grid connection is critical and must be considered at the earliest stages so that risks can be factored into land-purchase decisions and managed through design.

All-electric homes require greater electrical capacity for heating, hot water, EV charging and the export of PV generation. With other sectors also seeking connections, delivery timeframes could be significantly longer than for gas-heated schemes. Early engagement with Network Operators (DNOs/IDNOs) is therefore essential.

DNO 'heatmaps' and other resources can help identify local constraints, while early conversations – kept confidential by law – allow needs, phasing and optioneering to be discussed. Homebuilders should estimate capacity up front using appropriate guidance for all-electric homes and share realistic phasing plans, so the network operator understands power-on timelines.

Choosing the delivery model early – whether applying directly to the DNO or working through an Independent DNO or Independent Connection Provider – is important, alongside appointing a competent client agent to coordinate capacity assessments and manage the application process.

Accurate load assessments and realistic load-profile phasing help avoid under or over-estimating demand with the latter potentially causing unnecessary delays and increasing costs. Where grid capacity is constrained, a range of mitigations such as phasing, energy storage, heat networks or smart-grid solutions can help manage demand. PV export curtailment, albeit temporary, should only be considered as a last resort due to the impact on energy bills.

In short, adequate and timely grid connection is of strategic importance and this needs to be reflected in homebuilder operations.



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Grid connections for all-electric houses: hints & tips for SME homebuilders

UNDER DEVELOPMENT FOR RELEASE 2026

Coming later in 2026

- Grid connections for all-electric homes - Where to start guide for small and micro homebuilders
- Grid connections for apartments - Where to start guide for homebuilders
- Load shifting and demand side response – Case studies for homebuilders



Own the customer journey

3

Feedback from homebuilders already on this journey indicates that homebuyers need a modified customer journey compared with those purchasing familiar gas-heated homes. Selling a future home requires clarity, empathy, and the confidence to explain new household technologies while shaping realistic buyer expectations. Sales teams must act as educators, able to describe systems such as low-temperature heating or smart time-of-use tariffs in everyday language.

Progressively introducing what it's like to live in a FHS home, and setting realistic expectations early, is essential for strong satisfaction from day one. This relies on tailored, consistent messaging from initial marketing through the first show home visit and every subsequent interaction, including handover and post-move-in support.

By keeping messaging aligned, managing expectations, and providing clear, steady support throughout, teams can help homebuyers feel confident in their decision. Be mindful that messaging remains balanced and evidence-based so it doesn't unintentionally overstate benefits. Clear, factual language helps maintain credibility and avoids any perception of greenwashing.

For householders to get the best from their home, it is important they are provided with sufficient knowledge and appropriate training for correct use and maintenance of the new FHS technologies.

Aftercare must also evolve. Rather than focusing solely on fixing issues, should they be raised, it should be more proactive, offering tailored support to help householders get the best from their new low-energy home.

In short, ensuring that every interaction explains and reinforces the benefits of FHS living strengthens the buying experience and highlights the value of sustainable, future-ready homes.



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Homebuyer customer journey for low energy homes: hints & tips for homebuilders

Selling a new low energy home: hints & tips for sales negotiators & estate agents (Heat pump edition)

Householder guidance: Buying a new low energy home (heat pump edition)

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Coming soon

- Rental customer journey for low energy homes - Hints & tips for landlords & managing agents

Evolve your design

4

Whilst full details of the Future Homes Standard are not yet published, a broad outline is known which strongly suggests elements of the homes' design will need to evolve, such as:

- A range of new products and technologies may be being specified. For example, triple glazing, hot water cylinders, and heat pump installations need careful health and safety design and sequencing considerations due to their size and handling requirements.
- In many cases, the internal layout of homes will need to be adapted to accommodate a hot water cylinder. The integration of other technologies may also require careful spatial planning.
- Paying close attention to the elements of the design that influence thermal performance – from wall build-ups, window specification and ventilation strategy to junction details and continuity of insulation – is important to ensure comfortable healthy homes and that low-temperature heating systems perform well.
- The siting of heat pump external units, where used, needs particularly careful thought with small or terraced homes.
- Fabric performance is likely to require modest improvement due to changes expected in the notional building. These, for example, may include slightly lower air permeability

and more accurate reflection of the performance of some components, such as windows. Once the FHS is published the full extent will be known.

- A well-designed ventilation system, by someone competent in ventilation design, continues to be essential to ensure good indoor air quality, and its importance only grows as homes rely more on mechanical ventilation.
- More PV is expected to be needed on the majority of homes. Each homebuilder/designer will have different ways of responding to this. Depending on the approach taken, it may influence:
 - the optimal roof design of individual homes and house types.
 - site layout house type selection - to benefit from advantageous orientations for PV / avoid disadvantageous orientations (particularly south facing plots).
 - the diversity of PV orientation across a site to reduce the peak export load for grid connections.

Optimising designs for the FHS requires a genuinely multi-disciplinary approach. Heating designers, ventilation designers, energy assessors and others need to work together to refine layouts and design details that deliver the required performance. Local policy, design codes and individual homebuilder approaches will influence how this is done.

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Integrating heat pumps - hints & tips for architects & architectural technologists

UNDER DEVELOPMENT FOR RELEASE 2026

Coming soon:

- Ensuring thermal junction details are built as designed - Hints & tips for homebuilders
- Ensuring good indoor air quality - Where to start guide for homebuilders

Coming later in 2026:

- Future Homes Standard (FHS) - Where to start guide for homebuilders and the supply chain (masonry construction)
- Future Homes Standard (FHS) - Where to start guide for homebuilders and the supply chain (timber frame construction)
- Home Energy Model (HEM) - Where to start guide for homebuilders
- Load shifting and demand side response – Case studies for homebuilders



Get heating
design
right

5

Conventional gas boiler systems are more tolerant. Should there be instances of suboptimal design, with the gas boiler's higher flow temperatures this shortcoming is less obvious to householders. However, they may still pay more to heat their homes.

By contrast, low-temperature systems, such as heat pumps, have tighter design margins. As a result, if heat loads are higher than calculated or the heating system underperforms, this is more immediately apparent once the home is occupied. This is typically seen through cold homes or noticeably high energy costs.

This means:

- Not treating heat pump, or other low temperature heating system, schemes the same as those with gas boilers.
- Identifying a single, 'responsible heating designer'.
- Ensuring the responsible heating designer is competent and experienced in the systems they are designing.
- Ensuring the final fabric design is reflected in the final heating system design calculations and energy model.
- Not allowing any deviation from the agreed heating design without authorisation from the responsible heating designer.

In short, low-temperature heating from lower-capacity heat sources demands highly competent and accurate design and component specification.



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Delivering homes with heat pumps: hints & tips for homebuilders

Heating system procurement: hints & tips for procuring heat pumps in low density homes

Integrating heat pumps: hints & tips for architects & architectural technologists

UNDER DEVELOPMENT FOR RELEASE 2026

Coming soon

- Heat pumps in SAP - Hints & tips for homebuilders



Build as designed

6

As introduced in '5 Getting heating design right', conventional gas boiler systems are inherently more tolerant to a wider range of installation variation.

With lower temperature heating systems, even when overall construction quality remains high, any defects that do occur - such as instances of poor installation, weak commissioning or underperforming building fabric - tend to be more apparent to the householder. Typically, this shows up as cold homes or higher than expected running costs. These issues are more likely to prompt complaints and a request for remedial works.

This means:

- An appropriately high health and safety focus when installing new products.
- Ensuring the dwelling fabric is built exactly as designed by a competent workforce and properly supervised.
- Only using competent, properly supervised heating engineers and electricians for heating system installations.
- Ensure the ventilation system is installed exactly as designed by a trained and competent contractor
- Not allowing deviation from the agreed design without authorisation from the responsible fabric, ventilation and/or heating designer.

- Requiring that heating installers demonstrate robust plans for cross-skilling from gas to low carbon heating in the run up to the FHS, and supporting this process.
- Confirming with manufacturers that the heat sources (such as heat pumps), cylinder, emitters and controls integrate fully as designed.
- Not accepting equipment / component / material substitutions without responsible heating, ventilation and/or fabric designer approval.
- Ensuring that PV panels, inverters and cabling are considered a system, installed by a competent engineer and certified.

In short, more than ever, FHS homes demand precise heating, ventilation and PV system installation and fabric construction.



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Heat pumps: hints & tips for site managers

UNDER DEVELOPMENT FOR RELEASE 2026

Coming soon

- Ensuring thermal junction details are built as designed - Hints & tips for homebuilders
- Ensuring good indoor air quality - Where to start guide for homebuilders

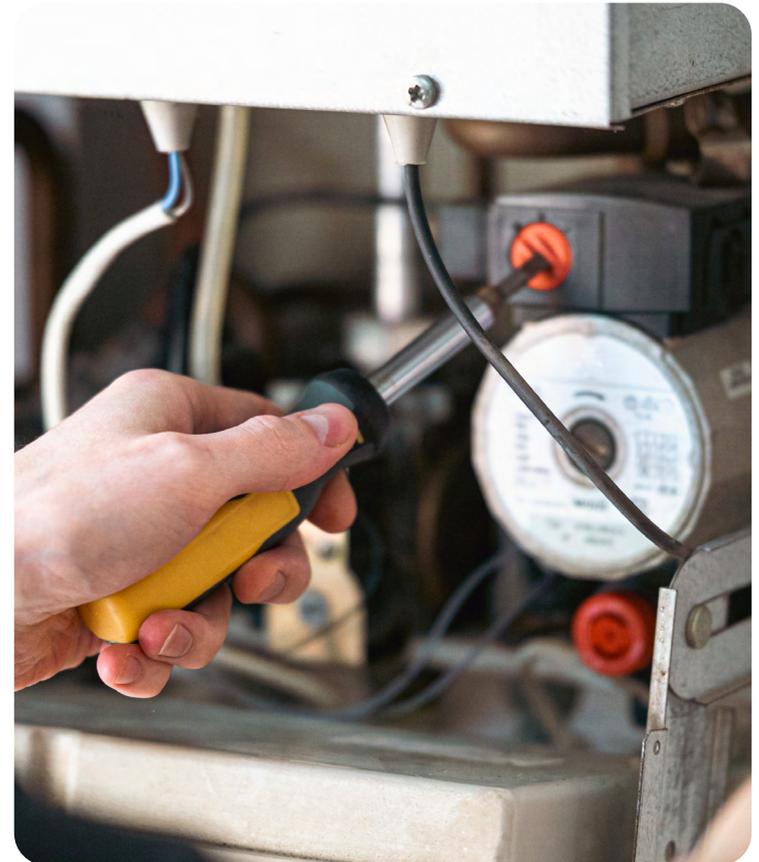


Future Homes Standard homes will have different and/or more technology and systems than is typical in new homes today. To perform well, these systems require careful commissioning by competent and experienced engineers.

For example, lower temperature heating systems, such as heat pumps, which typically have tight design margins, must be comprehensively checked and commissioned by an experienced and competent heating engineer. Experience over the last few years has highlighted this as a critical activity to ensure that the homebuilder can be confident of good outcomes for every home. Some homebuilders have a dedicated heating system commissioning team or arrange for each commissioning to be personally overseen by a competent member of the site or customer care team.

Likewise, PV system commissioning is critical to ensure the system operates correctly and that all safety aspects have been properly addressed.

A thorough approach to the commissioning of ventilation systems continues to be critical in these lower air permeability homes, especially as mechanical ventilation becomes more common. Setting fan air flow, alongside checking other elements such as trickle vents and door undercuts helps ensure the system performs as intended and supports good indoor air quality for householders.



RESOURCES AVAILABLE NOW



Heat pump commissioning: hints & tips for homebuilders

UNDER DEVELOPMENT FOR RELEASE 2026

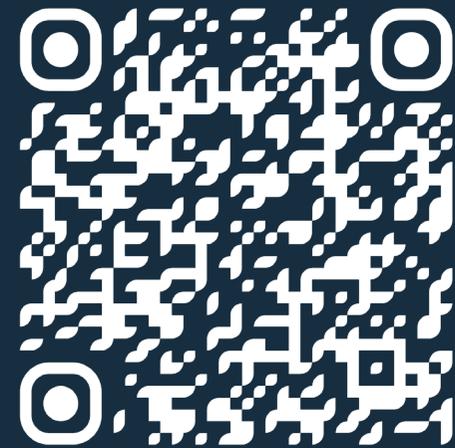
Coming soon

- Ensuring good indoor air quality - Where to start guide for homebuilders





All resources needed to support you to get Future Homes Standard Ready are available from the Future Homes Hub Knowledge Centre



knowledge.futurehomes.org.uk