



# GREEN HOUSING STANDARDS

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NEW DEAL



## ***Green New Housing Standards***

A Green New Deal aims to tackle the climate crisis whilst creating a fairer, more democratic society in the process. One way in which this can be achieved is through building low-carbon housing which addresses the housing crisis, tackles fuel poverty and reduces emissions from housing - which currently account for 17% of carbon emissions.

Housing is also a key area in which local government can have a direct and lasting impact on the move towards net neutrality through enshrining strict and ambitious standards on the design and build quality of all new social housing. Housing Associations, as the UK's primary providers of social housing, have a [critical role to play](#). However, at present, [only one in ten Local Authorities](#) have a plan to ensure carbon neutrality in their socially rented homes.

## ***Key policy***

***Commit Local Authorities and Housing Associations to Passivhaus Standards***

## ***Passivhaus Housing Explained:***

[Passivhaus](#) is shorthand for an accreditation given to buildings that meet clear environmental standards. The accreditation is generally considered to be an 'ultra-low' energy performance standard. The houses are designed and constructed to be compact, air tight and rely on heat recovery for temperature regulation. As a result, they can result in [energy savings](#) of up to 90% compared to traditional housing stock. Tackling the housing crisis requires a mass expansion in social housing provision. The climate crisis dictates that this new housing must be made to the highest environmental standards. Committing local governments and Housing Associations to meet these standards is a key step.

The justification for Passivhaus extends beyond its clear and advanced environmental credentials. Whilst there are multiple accreditation's that buildings can achieve, the justification for Passivhaus as a new national standard lies in its ability to avoid the consequences of low carbon technology through guaranteeing a constant level of thermal comfort as a result of its compact form, airtight construction and utilisation of heat recovery. This gives the added benefit of lowering the average costs of living through reduced gas and electricity bills.

Working with Local Government to implement these standards also aligns with their own objectives. As the National Housing Federation [outlines](#), local authorities regard 'improving resident satisfaction', 'tackling fuel poverty' and 'cutting fuel bills' as essential to their housing policies. The combination of carbon neutrality and decreasing fuel poverty for those on low incomes enables Local Authorities to make substantive progress in a number of key societal areas.

As the [World Bank](#) highlights, incorporating carbon neutral technology as part of a wider agenda to tackle additional societal issues, including the housing crisis, is likely to increase support for investment as well as encourage buy-in from the voting public. Therefore, enshrining Passivhaus as a national standard for Local Authority social housing would be a necessary step in lowering the carbon output of our built environment. Additionally such a policy would address additional significant societal issues, increasing both political support and public buy-in.

***Example:***

- [Norwich Goldsmith Street](#) is an example of where this standard has been used successfully in the construction of a social housing community. This won the Royal Institute of British Architects Stirling Prize in 2019 as an example of outstanding British architecture.