

Improving safety, warmth and well-being

British Gas believes that safety and well-being in the PRS could be improved through simple steps and would recommend:

- Requiring the presence of an audible carbon monoxide alarm mandatory in all private rented properties that have gas appliances.
- The accreditation scheme should require landlords to not only have an Energy Performance Certificate, a gas safety certificate and electrical safety checks - but that certified copies should be provided to the tenant at the beginning of the tenancy and every 12 months during the life of the tenancy.
- A five yearly electrical safety check would provide significant additional protection for tenants and is a relatively low-cost way for the Welsh Government and the rented sector in Wales to demonstrate leadership and best practice.
- Ensure local authority enforcement teams have the resources to carry out regular, proactive checking of PRS properties against Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) requirements and investigate tenant complaints. Also to ensure enforcement action can be pursued where necessary.
- Reducing the number of tenants in cold and damp accommodation by promoting measures to increase energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty such as:
 - encouraging landlords to commission improvements and take advantage of funding that is currently available through the Energy Company Obligation to do so
 - ensuring that greater numbers of landlords adhere to their statutory duty to provide an Energy Performance Certificate to their tenants by requiring that copies are made available to tenants and accrediting bodies responsible for compliance
- Requiring the inclusion of an obligation for landlords on repairs within the rental contract and the proposed Codes of Practice would be enhanced by adding a Service Level Agreement. This would require a landlord to make provision for repairs within an agreed specified timetable.
- Provide education programmes for tenants and landlords to ensure both understand their rights and responsibilities in this area.
- Consider bringing forward the minimum energy efficiency rating of 'E' stipulated for rental properties by the Energy Act 2011 from 2018 to 2016 as part of the accreditation scheme. British Gas believes that this would deliver significant and lasting positive impacts for the health, financial and social wellbeing of tenants across Wales. It will also have a number of secondary effects, including cutting the costs to the NHS associated with fuel poverty.