

GHA Membership Standards 2012

The Good Homes Alliance believes that a Good Home should meet high standards of energy and environmental performance, provide a healthy user-centred space, and be part of (and encourage) sustainable lifestyles and communities. The GHA is therefore working to develop a Gold Standard that defines performance standards against each of these requirements.



In the meantime, as a minimum, a Good Home should be sustainable, very low energy, healthy and have proven performance. The GHA membership standard therefore be based around these priorities:

- Sustainability
- Low energy use
- Health and wellbeing
- Proof of performance

GHA membership standard for 2012

Project membership – compliance with the list below

- Lower energy
Enhanced energy efficiency standards, particularly those focused on fabric efficiency, such as Passivhaus, the Zero Carbon FEES standard, or Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 energy standard
- Health and Wellbeing
A commitment to address indoor air quality (IAQ), thermal comfort and moisture levels.
- Proof of performance
Monitoring of
 - energy performance of the building shell at point of completion
 - energy and water consumption;
 - IAQ, thermal comfort and relative humidity; and
 - post-occupancy feedback.

Leader membership – compliance with the list above on 50% of new projects

Developer membership – compliance with the list above on at least one project

Associate membership – encouraged to monitor performance as described above.

Low Energy

Issues: The Code energy standards are set as percentage improvements on Part L and can be met through a mixture of fabric and renewable solutions. The GHA is keen that developers should achieve absolute levels of carbon reduction and should aim to achieve these through fabric improvements first rather than renewable add-ons, as these savings should then be achieved in practice throughout the life of the dwelling. The Passivhaus standard and the new Fabric Energy Efficiency Standard (FEES) set a limit to energy demand for space heating and cooling in kWh/m², and are therefore our favoured options for an enhanced energy standard (Note FEES levels achieve credits under Ene2 of the Code). Alternatively, the Code Level 4 energy requirement could be accepted.

Health and Wellbeing

Issues: The GHA wants to ensure that its members' homes are well-designed, healthy and comfortable, particularly given perceived concerns about indoor air quality if low-energy homes are poorly designed. GHA Leaders and Developers should therefore develop a plan for how they are going to address indoor air quality, thermal comfort, and moisture levels for each new site, before detailed design is complete. We would also like GHA Leaders and Developers to consider how they approach broader well-being issues, such as space standards, daylighting, green space and adaptability, so that these can be included in the membership standard at a future date.

Proof of performance

Issues: There is significant evidence that many new homes do not currently perform as expected in terms of the energy efficiency of the building shell (even before taking into account the effects of occupants). Similarly, there is emerging evidence that many new homes do not achieve required ventilation levels, hence affecting indoor air quality and thermal comfort and potentially causing problems with condensation and moisture. GHA Developers are keen to prove that their homes actually do achieve their target performance in reality, and are healthy and comfortable for occupants – it is therefore important to monitor the actual performance of the dwellings, both at the point of completion and during occupation. In addition, monitoring and post occupancy evaluation information also aids learning, which improves practice and is a core principle within the GHA.

The GHA is not proposing specific targets for monitoring (e.g. %age of dwellings) at this stage. Instead, GHA Developers should monitor the energy performance of one or more dwellings on each site at the point of completion, and monitor the ongoing performance of a number of homes on each site during occupation. Results should then be shared with the GHA to aid further learning.