

# Residential retrofit standard, 1st edition, UK

## Basis for conclusions, March 2024

### Executive summary

As part of our ongoing commitment to championing sustainable practice, RICS is publishing its first professional standard on residential retrofit.

The professional standard sets out a series of concise mandatory and recommended requirements. These establish benchmarks around which RICS members can deliver retrofit Services that meet their clients' needs in a changing environment. It also provides information that the public and their advisers will find useful.

Authored by Larry Russen, a Fellow of RICS and a chartered building surveyor, chartered building engineer and party wall surveyor with over 40 years' experience. The expert working group was made up of energy professionals, surveyors, lenders, real estate agents and academics. This first edition reflects advances in professional practice and updates to legislation and regulatory requirements. It provides a framework and guidance for RICS members undertaking retrofit surveys to provide retrofit Services for all types of residential occupiers, rather than focusing solely on home buyers.

This basis of conclusions document aims to provide a summary of the project's approach and provide insights into the consultation responses received and the decision-making process.

### Background

1. RICS has been setting standards and providing guidance for RICS members and RICS regulated firms practicing in residential property for over 35 years. During this time, the scale of social, economic, political, technological and now climate change has been without precedent. The urgent need to adapt residential (and other) buildings to mitigate and manage global climate change, reduce carbon emissions, increase energy efficiency, help achieve energy security and protect the well-being of the occupiers of dwellings in the UK will require RICS members to quickly adapt to even more changes.

2. To enable RICS members to adapt and innovate, RICS intends this professional standard to provide a clear, flexible framework within which RICS members can provide high-quality residential retrofit Services the public can recognise and trust, which are consistent with the high standards expected by RICS and are fit-for-purpose in an ever-changing world.
3. The purpose of this professional standard is to:
  - establish a clear framework that sets minimum requirements to maintain consistent, high-quality standards for residential property retrofit advice in respect of provision of retrofit installations; including project management, survey inspection, technical assessment, design, specification, contract administration and project evaluation Services that RICS members provide
  - anticipate that members will act in a 'Service Role' or 'Roles' as retrofit 'lead professionals', 'assessors', 'designers', 'contract administrators' and 'post-retrofit inspectors'; whose duties are set out in more (but not definitive) detail in section 1.4 of the professional standard
  - provide mandatory requirements for RICS members in the UK who deliver retrofit Services.
4. This professional standard will form the basis of any assessment by RICS Regulation of those RICS members who deliver or are involved with residential property retrofit Services.

## Development process

5. The standard had a sole author who was supported by an expert working group made up of leading subject specialists selected for their specialist knowledge and diverse range of experience. The draft was shared with the expert working group throughout its development for comments and feedback.
6. A public consultation was held July to September 2023 to gauge feedback to inform the development of the standard.

## Consultation

### Process

7. A period of public consultation took place from 18 July to 12 September 2023.
8. Prior to the consultation, briefing sessions were held for RICS colleagues to provide an overview of the process and to encourage maximum engagement with stakeholders.

9. The consultation process was facilitated through the use of iConsult, our interactive platform, where participants were encouraged to provide feedback on the draft document itself and respond to a questionnaire.
10. A free webinar was held during the consultation period to give RICS the opportunity to meet with potential end users and gain a deeper understanding of feedback received.
11. The consultation was supported by a comprehensive communications strategy, which included a [press release](#), a [free-to-attend webinar](#), features in RICS newsletters, a [podcast episode](#), a [Property Journal article](#), a [post on the MyRICS Insight Community](#), a [post on Yammer](#) and a social media campaign featuring LinkedIn posts from:
  - [Frank Hovorka, RICS Sustainability Chair](#)
  - [Sam Rees, RICS' Senior Public Affairs Officer](#) and
  - [Hannah Reynolds, Architect – Historic Building Retrofit at Historic England and member of the EWG](#) and
  - posts on X (formally Twitter) reflecting statistics from a YouGov poll RICS ran prior to kicking off the project, which can be found [here](#) and [here](#)).

We also promoted the consultation at the RICS Residential Property Conference.

### Consultation statistics

12. We received 188 responses from 57 participants, in the form of 34 questionnaire responses and 154 comments on the draft standard. There were 1,657 downloads of the draft standard.
13. Among the participants were representatives from TrustMark, Legal & General, National Trust, Nationwide, Connells, Aracadis, Rider Levett Bucknall, City of Edinburgh Council, and the Property Energy Professionals Association.
14. The free webinar had 818 registrants.
15. RICS members and RICS-regulated firms made up 76% the registered participants on iConsult.
16. When asked where participants are located and/or what markets they work in, 65% of participants said England, 15% said Wales, 13% said Scotland, 2% said Northern Ireland and 5% said the whole of the UK.
17. When asked what roles/areas of work the participants would most closely associate themselves, the work they do/the company they are responding on behalf of does, 27% said residential property/home surveys, 16% said valuation, 14% said building surveying, 11% said private landlord, 8% said home owner, 8% said local authority/council, 6% said housing association and 4% said home occpier.

## Summary of responses and resolutions

### Key themes

18. Responses received ranged from those asking for clarity on the different roles relating to retrofit Services, how laws and regulations differ in the devolved nations, to comments relating to definitions in the glossary and qualifications needed. The broad themes are highlighted below, together with RICS' responses.

### Glossary definitions

19. Some feedback received asked for additional terms to be added to the Glossary, and others asked for clarity on the existing terms.

### RICS response

20. The author, EWG and RICS discussed these and made amendments to the draft where agreed.

### Comparison of the standard with PAS2035

21. PAS2035 is a similar standard produced by the UK government and BSi. Some feedback suggested the RICS standard should align closely with PAS2035 in its terminology.

### RICS response

22. While we can see the usefulness of PAS2035, we felt that this standard was never trying to replicate it and that the aim was to help RICS members deliver retrofit Services as part of their existing roles, for any type of client and property within their competence. This has been created with the aim of it being a one-stop-shop to help consumers access expert advice when they need it from RICS members.

### Service Roles

23. We received responses that asked for clarity and in some cases for RICS to be prescriptive/specific in our guidance.

### RICS response

24. We amended the draft where descriptions of Service Roles and their duties could be made clearer but rejected any that were too prescriptive and where decisions should be based on either the client's instruction or the professional judgement of the surveyor.

### Qualifications needed

25. Some feedback suggested that there are other standards such as PAS2035 that should be referenced here.
26. Others suggested that chartered building surveyors would not need any further training to perform retrofit Services.

### RICS response

27. This standard's qualification requirements are different to PAS2035 and, therefore, it was felt that more references to PAS2035 (or other standards) was not necessary and would be confusing.
28. There will be chartered building surveyors and those from other RICS pathways who will need to upskill to perform retrofit Services. RICS will be providing such training opportunities.

### Jurisdictions

29. Some comments referenced different laws and regulations in the devolved nations.

### RICS response

30. The standard is for those based in the UK so where any laws or regulations differ in devolved nations, a sentence has been added to highlight this.

### Conclusion

31. RICS is grateful for the invaluable contributions of our members, stakeholders and subject matter experts who took the time to review the draft document and we are delighted with the level of engagement the draft standard received at consultation.
32. Due to the volume of feedback received, it has not been possible to summarise every comment in this document, but we wish to emphasise that each individual comment was fully considered with responses documented by our dedicated authorship team.
33. We strongly believe that this RICS professional standard will play a vital role in helping the industry understand the process of a professional retrofit Service for residential properties and how our members can deliver that Service as we strive towards the shared goal of decarbonising the built environment.