

New and existing buildings will be more energy efficient

The government has set out its plans and timeframe for its new Future Homes Standard which aims to 'radically improve' the energy performance of new homes, making them 'zero carbon ready' by 2025. As a first step, from 2021 all new homes will be expected to produce 31 per cent lower carbon emissions; and within four years, new housing must produce 75-80 per cent less carbon emissions than allowed under the current regulations.

Existing homes will also be subject to higher standards – with a 'significant improvement' on the standard for extensions, making homes warmer and reducing bills. Replacements and repairs will also have to be more energy efficient.

Meanwhile the government has also announced a consultation on higher performance targets for non-domestic buildings, which will also have to be 'zero carbon ready' by 2025.

Its plans include a new requirement for additional ventilation and indoor air quality monitoring in high-risk non-domestic buildings such as offices and gyms, reducing the risk of any potential infections being spread indoors.

The new measures will not just apply to new-builds but to existing buildings where relevant refurbishment works are being undertaken. Another area of focus is capture and reuse of heat which is often released in the outflows of a building through extraction and ventilation. The increased integration of smart building technologies in the build process will drive efficiency in general but will also allow users of spaces with periodic use to control all building services remotely only using these when needed.