



Government launches second stage of consultation on energy efficiency in domestic and non-domestic buildings

Recently the UK Government launched the second stage of its consultation on energy efficiency in domestic and non-domestic buildings, called 'The Future Buildings Standard', giving everybody the opportunity to provide input and feedback on this vital plan. This once in a generation change will see all newly developed buildings built to much more stringent energy efficiency standards to support the Government's strategy of achieving net zero by 2050.

The consultation is the second stage of the Government's 2-part consultation on proposed changes to Part L (Conservation of fuel and power) and Part F (ventilation) of the Building Regulations. It builds on the Future Homes Standard consultation by setting out energy and ventilation standards for non-domestic buildings, existing homes and includes proposals to mitigate against overheating in residential buildings.

The Future Homes Standard is explicit, setting a target of 75% to 80% reductions in carbon emissions compared with current standards. It seems likely that the standard required for non-domestic buildings will be similar with any difference reflecting the difficulty of cutting emissions from some building types.

These include two carbon reduction options, of 22% (option 1) and 27% (option 2), with the government favouring the latter. The 22% cut could be achieved by more efficient building services alone whereas the 27% reduction relies on the same plus fabric improvements. The 27% reduction is an average as non-domestic Part L covers a huge range of building types from hospitals to distribution centres.

The most notable proposals in Part F are the measures to reduce the risk of disease being transmitted via aerosols – tiny particles that can stay airborne for extended periods. The consultation proposes new measures in non-domestic buildings where singing or aerobic exercise takes place or large groups gather. Ventilation rates must be 50% higher than minimum standards for other spaces, with fresh air supplied at a minimum rate of 15 litres per second per person. Systems that recirculate air must also be capable of being overridden to supply fresh air.

The consultation closes at 11:45pm on 13 April 2021. For the full consultation document visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-buildings-standard>

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