

The Decent Home Standard

Guidance Notes re Private Sector Leasing Scheme

The Housing Green Paper, Quality and Choice: a decent home for all; set out the commitment that all social housing must meet specified standards of decency by 2010.

A decent home must satisfy all of the following four criteria:

Criteria A - It must meet the current statutory minimum standard for housing.

I.e. It must be free of any Category 1 hazards, as set out In the Governments Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) Introduced in April 2006. (Category 1 hazards are those considered serious enough to trigger a duty on Local Authorities (LAs) to take enforcement action)

Criteria B - It must be in a reasonable state of repair.

Criteria C - It must have reasonably modern facilities and services.

Criteria D - It must provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

Smoke Detectors - The Council has specific requirements regarding smoke detectors. All properties must have 2 mains powered (hard-wired with battery back-up) smoke detectors fitted to the ceiling of the hallway and the first floor landing. However, in some cases the Council may agree that smaller flats can be fitted with 1 hard-wired smoke detector.

Properties over two storeys, or larger properties, or those with outbuildings/extensions/unusual layout, must also have a proportionate number of extra mains powered smoke detectors (as above) which must also be Interlinked (radio or wired) to ensure audibility In all parts of the property.

Other - please note that following an Inspection by the Council's Accommodation Officers or your Surveyor there may be some specific Works required to be carried out depending upon the state of the property.

The main guidance LAs and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) are expected to refer to on implementing the Decent Homes Standard is *A Decent Home: the definition and guidance for implementation* and *Decent Homes: capturing the Standard at the local level*.

In more detail;

Criteria A - It must meet the current statutory minimum standard for housing.

A property will meet this standard only if it is free from any serious hazards posed to occupiers' health and safety (Category 1 hazards.)

The framework and methodology for assessing such hazards is set out in Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004. Supplementary guidance is provided in the government publication: "Housing Health & Safety Rating System - Operating Guidance (Published, February 2006, ISBN 13:978 185112 846 4)

29 hazard types are specified and these fall into four groups each reflecting basic health requirements in housing:

A. Physiological Requirements:

Damp and mould growth

1. Exposure to house dust mites, damp, mould or fungal growths.

Excess cold

2. Exposure to low temperatures.

Excess heat

3. Exposure to high temperatures.

Asbestos and MMF

4. Exposure to asbestos fibres or manufactured mineral fibres.

Biocides

5. Exposure to chemicals used to treat timber and mould growth.

Carbon monoxide and fuel combustion products

6. Exposure to -

- (a) carbon monoxide;
- (b) nitrogen dioxide;
- (c) sulphur dioxide and smoke.

Lead

7. The ingestion of lead.

Radiation

8. Exposure to radiation.

Uncombusted fuel gas

9. Exposure to uncombusted fuel gas.

Volatile organic compounds

10. Exposure to volatile organic compounds.

B. Psychological Requirements:

Crowding and space

11. A lack of adequate space for living and sleeping.

Entry by intruders

12. Difficulties in keeping the dwelling or HMO secure against unauthorised entry.

Lighting

13. A lack of adequate lighting.

Noise

14. Exposure to noise.

C. Protection Against Infection:

Domestic hygiene, pests and refuse

15. (1) Poor design; layout or construction such that the dwelling or HMO cannot readily be kept clean.

(2) Exposure to pests.

(3) An inadequate provision for the hygienic storage and disposal of household waste.

Food safety

16. An inadequate provision of facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food.

Personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage

17. An inadequate provision of -

(a) facilities for maintaining good personal hygiene;

(b) sanitation and drainage.

Water supply

18. An inadequate supply of water free from contamination, for drinking and other domestic purposes.

D. Protection Against Accidents:

Falls associated with baths etc

19. Falls associated with toilets, baths, showers or other washing facilities.

Falling on level surfaces etc

20. Falling on any level surface or falling between surfaces where the change in level is less than 300 millimetres.

Falling on stairs etc

21. Falling on stairs, steps or ramps where the change in level is 300 millimetres or more.

Falling between levels

22. Falling between levels where the difference in levels is 300 millimetres or more.

Electrical hazards

23. Exposure to electricity.

Fire

24. Exposure to uncontrolled fire and associated smoke.

Flames, hot surfaces etc

25. Contact with—

(a) controlled fire or flames;

(b) hot objects, liquid or vapours.

Collision and entrapment

26. Collision with or entrapment of body parts in, doors, windows or other architectural features.

Explosions

27. An explosion at the dwelling or HMO.

Position and operability of amenities etc

28. The position, location and operability of amenities, fittings and equipment.

Structural collapse and falling elements

29. The collapse of the whole or part of the dwelling or HMO.

A Surveyor must therefore check if there are any faults in the property which contribute to any of these 29 hazards

Note 1 - Whilst these are a brief summary of the hazards found in housing, the above list is not exclusive. Regard must be had to all 29 hazard types when assessing housing under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System. (Refer to Operating Guidance.)

Note 2 - Electrical and Gas safety certificates will also have to be provided separately by an owner prepared by recognised professionals

Criteria B - It must be in a reasonable state of repair.

A home will meet this criterion unless

1. One or more of the **key** building components are old and because of their condition need replacing or major repair, or
2. Two or more of **the other** building components are old and because of their condition need replacing

Key building components are

External Walls

Roof structure and covering

Windows/doors

Chimneys

Central Heating boilers

Gas fires

Storage heaters

Plumbing

Electrics

If any of the above are old and need replacing/major repair then remedial action must be taken because the property is not of a decent standard

Other building components are/include:

Kitchen Units

Bathroom generally

Central heating parts

If two or more of these are old and need replacing/major repair then remedial action must be taken because the property is not of a decent standard

N.B 'Old' means older than its standard lifetime

'Poor condition' means if they need major work, either full replacement or major repair

Criteria C - It must have reasonably modern facilities and services

A home will not meet this criterion if it lacks 3 or more of the following:

1. A kitchen which is 20 years old or less
2. A kitchen with adequate space and layout (e.g. large enough to fit sink, cupboards, cooker, worktops)
3. A bathroom which is 30 years or less
4. An appropriately located bathroom and WC (e.g. It can't be accessed via a bedroom, or if located outside, or if no sink and enters from kitchen)
5. Adequate noise Insulation (Is it near rail/road/air traffic or factory?)
6. Adequate size and layout of common entrance areas for blocks of flats (e.g. must not have narrow access ways or steep stairs)

Criteria D - It must provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

This criterion requires a home to have both **efficient heating** and **effective Insulation**.

Efficient Heating means

1. Any gas or oil programmable central heating, or
2. Electric storage heaters, or
3. Programmable LPG/solid fuel central heating, or
4. Warm air system, or
5. Under-floor system, or
6. Similar efficient heating systems

N.B the system must ensure that the home is warm enough for the occupant. A rating system under SAP is a minimum of more than 35 (using 2001 SAP methodology)

Effective Insulation means

1. Cavity wall Insulation OR Loft Insulation of minimum thickness 50mm if it has gas or oil central heating, or
2. Cavity wall Insulation and Loft Insulation of minimum thickness 200mm if it has electric space heating

Swindon Borough Council's Decent Homes Standard – Checklist for Surveyors Inspecting Under Private Sector Leasing Scheme

Based on minimum requirements as set out in 'A Decent Home Definition & Guidance for Implementation – 2006' by Department for Communities and Local Government

Property Address:

Owner:

Wherever possible please reply '**Yes**' or '**No**' or '**See Attached**' (and then provide further details separately)

Criteria A – Free from ALL 'Category 1 Hazards' as set out In the Governments Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) Introduced in April 2006

Is the Property:	Yes	No
1. Structurally Stable		
2. Free from Serious Disrepair		
3. Free from dampness or mould growth		
4. Secure from risk of intrusion		
5. Safe from the risk of fire and affords means of escape		
6. Of adequate space for living and sleeping		

Does the property have:	Yes	No
7. Adequate lighting (natural and artificial)		
8. Adequate noise insulation		
9. Adequate facilities for refuse storage		
10. Adequate heating		
11. Adequate ventilation		

12. Adequate drinking water
13. Effective drainage for foul-waste/
surface-water
14. Suitably located WC
15. Suitably located bath or shower and
wash-hand-basin all with hot and cold water
16. Satisfactory facilities for preparation and
cooking of food with a sink and hot and
cold water.
17. Safe barriers against fires, flames and hot
objects

Smoke Detectors - Please refer to Guidance Notes

Yes

No

Does the property have satisfactory mains powered
(hard-wired with battery back-up) **Smoke Detectors**

Is the property free from:

Yes

No

18. Unreasonable risk of falls between
levels, on steps or stairs, on level surfaces
or in baths/showers
19. Electrical hazards
20. Pollutants such as Asbestos, MMF fibres
Carbon monoxide (and fuel combustion
Products), Biocides, Volatile organic
compounds, Radiation & Lead
21. Risk from explosion
22. Risk of entrapment

Criteria B – It must be in a reasonable state of repair

Are any of the following 'old' (ie older than years shown) **and** in need of replacing or
major repair?

Key building components -

N.B any 1 item will fail the standard

Yes

No

1. External Walls (80)
2. Roof structure and covering
(50 for house, 30 for flats)

3. Windows & Doors
(40 for house, 30 for flats)
4. Chimneys (50)
5. Central Heating Boilers (15)
6. Central Heating distribution
System (40)
7. Gas Fires (30)
8. Storage Heaters (30)
9. Electrics (30)

**Other building components -
N.B 2 or more Items will fail the standard**

Yes

No

1. Kitchen Units (30)
2. Bathroom generally (40)
3. Central heating parts (40)

**Criteria C - It must have reasonably modern facilities and services
3 or more Items will fail the standard**

Does the property have

Yes

No

1. A kitchen which is 20 years old or less
2. A kitchen with adequate space and layout
(E.g. large enough to fit sink, cupboards, cooker,
worktops)
3. A bathroom which is 30 years old or less
4. An appropriately located bathroom and
WC (e.g. it can't be accessed via a bedroom,
located outside, or if no sink and
enters from kitchen)
5. Adequate noise Insulation
(Is it near rail/road/air traffic or factory?)
6. If Applicable,
Adequate size and layout of common
Entrance areas for blocks of flats (eg must
not have narrow access ways or steep stairs)

Criteria D - It must provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

This criterion requires a home to have both **efficient heating** and **effective Insulation**.

Does the property have (Efficient Heating) i.e.	Yes	No
1. Any gas or oil programmable central heating, or		
2. Electric storage heaters, or		
3. Programmable LPG/solid fuel central heating, or		
4. Warm air system, or		
5. Underfloor system, or		
6. Similar efficient heating systems		

N.B the system must ensure that the home is warm enough for the occupant.

Does the property have (Effective Insulation) i.e.	Yes	No
1. If has gas or oil central heating, Cavity wall Insulation OR Loft Insulation of minimum thickness 50mm or		
2. If has electric space heating Cavity wall Insulation AND Loft Insulation of minimum thickness 200mm		

Signed by.....

Firm.....

Address.....

..... Tel.....

Date.....