



Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)



The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is the new risk assessment procedure for residential properties.

It replaced the Housing Fitness Regime from the 6 April 2006 in England, and in Wales later in the year.

HHSRS also replaces the Fitness Standard as an element of the Decent Homes Standard.

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Language Line

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Arabic

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Polish

Temos uma assinatura com a Language Line, um serviço de interpretação por telefone que nos permite comunicar com os nossos clientes cuja língua materna não é o inglês. Se necessitar de informação ou de assistência noutra língua deve contactar-nos.

Portuguese

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Russian

What is HHSRS?

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The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is a new risk assessment tool used to assess potential risks to the health and safety of occupants in residential properties in England and Wales. The legislation came into effect in England on 6 April 2006 and will come into effect in Wales later in 2006. HHSRS replaces the Housing Fitness Standard, which was set out in the Housing Act 1985.

Why is it needed?

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The new assessment method focuses on the hazards that are most likely to be present in housing. Tackling these hazards will make more homes healthier and safer to live in. The Fitness Standard does not deal with, or deals inadequately with, cold and falls for example.

Who does it affect?

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All owners and landlords, including social landlords. The private sector contains some of the worst housing conditions and owners and landlords should be aware that any future inspections of their property will be made using HHSRS. Private landlords and managing agents are advised to assess their property to determine whether there are serious hazards that may cause a health or safety risk to tenants. They should then carry out improvements to reduce the risks. Public sector landlords also need to incorporate HHSRS into their stock condition surveys. To be decent, homes should be free of category 1 hazards. This does not mean that social landlords have to reassess their stock before 6 April. Landlords should incorporate HHSRS into their next planned stock condition survey and deal with category 1 hazards during planned refurbishment.

Tenants should be aware of the new approach taken by local authorities to deal with bad housing conditions. They still have discretion over the action they take but they are more likely to prioritise cases where there is some evidence of serious hazards.



How does it work?

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A risk assessment looks at the likelihood of an incident arising from the condition of the property and the likely harmful outcome. For example, how likely is a fire to break out, what will happen if one does? The assessment will show the presence of any serious (category 1) hazards and other less serious (category 2) hazards. To make an assessment, local authority inspectors will make reference to the HHSRS “Operating Guidance”. During an inspection they may take notes manually or may use a programme on a hand held computer.

How is it enforced and what are the penalties?

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If a local authority discovers serious category 1 hazards in a home, it has a duty to take the most appropriate action. Local authorities are advised to try to deal with problems informally at first.

But if this is unsuccessful, they could require a landlord to carry out improvements to the property. For example by installing central heating and insulation to deal with cold, fix a rail to steep stairs to deal with the risk of falls, or mend a leaking roof. Local authorities also have powers to prohibit the use of the whole or part of a dwelling or restrict the number of permitted occupants. Where hazards are modest they may serve a hazard awareness notice to draw attention to a problem. Where an occupier is at immediate risk, the authority can take emergency remedial action.

A property owner who feels that an assessment is wrong can discuss matters with the inspector and ultimately will be able to challenge an enforcement decision through the Residential Property Tribunal.

Failure to comply with a statutory notice could lead to a fine of up to £5,000.

1. Damp & Mould Growth

Threats to mental & physical wellbeing from living with dampness, mould & fungal



growths and dust mites.

Most Vulnerable: 14 years or less

2. Excess Cold

Threats to health from exposure to sub-optimal indoor temperatures.

Most Vulnerable: 65 years plus

3. Excess Heat

Caused by excessively high indoor temperatures.

Most Vulnerable: 65 years plus

4. Asbestos & MMF

Caused by exposure to asbestos and manufactured



mineral fibres (MMF).

Most Vulnerable: No specific group

5. Biocides

Threats to health from those chemicals used to treat mould growth and timber in dwellings.

Most Vulnerable: No specific group

6. Carbon Monoxide & Fuel Combustion Products

Hazards due to high levels of CO, NO₂, SO₂ & smoke in the atmosphere.



Most Vulnerable: For CO - 65 years plus, for NO₂, SO₂ & smoke - no specific group

7. Lead

Threats to health from the ingestion of lead.

Most Vulnerable: Under 3 years

8. Radiation

Threats to health from radon gas, airborne, or dissolved in water. E.g., leakage from microwaves might be considered.

Most Vulnerable: People aged 60-64 who have had a lifetime exposure to radon

9. Uncombusted Fuel Gas

The threat of asphyxiation due to fuel gas escaping into the atmosphere within a dwelling.

Most Vulnerable: No specific group

10. Volatile Organic Compounds

VOC's are diverse group of organic chemicals which includes formaldehyde that are gaseous at room temperature, and are found in a variety of materials within the home.

Most Vulnerable: No specific group

11. Crowding and Space

Health hazards linked to a lack of living space for sleeping and a normal family/household life.

Most Vulnerable: No specific group

12. Entry by Intruders

Problems keeping a dwelling secure against unauthorised entry, and the maintenance of defensible space.

Most Vulnerable: No specific group



13. Lighting



Threats to physical and mental health linked to

inadequate natural and/or artificial light. It includes the psychological effect associated with the view from the dwelling through glazing.

Most Vulnerable: No specific group

14. Noise

Threats to physical and mental health caused by noise exposure inside the dwelling or within its cartilage.

Most Vulnerable: No specific group

15. Domestic Hygiene, Pests & Refuse

Health hazards due to poor design, layout and construction to the point where the dwelling cannot readily be kept clean and hygienic; access into and harbourage within dwelling for pests; inadequate and unhygienic provision for



storing and disposal of household waste.

Most Vulnerable: No specific group

16. Food Safety

Threats of infection due to inadequate facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food.



Most Vulnerable: No specific group

17. Personal Hygiene, Sanitation & Drainage

Threats of infection and threats to mental health associated with personal hygiene, including personal washing and clothes washing facilities, sanitation and drainage.

Most Vulnerable: Under 5 years

18. Water Supply for Domestic Purposes

The quality and adequacy of the water supply for drinking and for domestic purposes such as cooking, washing, cleaning and sanitation.

Most Vulnerable: No specific group

19. Falls Associated with Baths etc.

Falls associated with a bath, shower or similar facility.

Most Vulnerable: 60 years plus

20. Falls on the Level

Falls on any level surface such as floors, yards and paths. It also includes falls associated with trip steps, thresholds or ramps, where the change in level is less than 300mm.

Most Vulnerable: 60 years plus

21. Falls Associated with Stairs and Steps

Falls associated with stairs, steps and ramps where the change in level is greater than 300mm. It includes falls on stairs or internal ramps within the dwelling, internal common stairs or ramps within a building, access to the dwelling and to shared facilities or means of escape in case of fire. It also includes falls over stair, step or ramp guarding (balustrading).



Most Vulnerable: 60 years plus

22. Falls between Levels

Falls from one level to another, inside or outside a dwelling, where the difference in levels is more than 300mm. For example, falls out of windows, falls from balconies or landings, falls from accessible roofs, into basement wells, and over garden retaining walls.

Most Vulnerable: Under 5 years

23. Electrical Hazards

Hazards from electric shock or electricity burns, including from lightning strikes.



Most Vulnerable: Under 5 years

24. Fire

Threats from uncontrolled fire and smoke. It includes injuries from clothing catching alight, which appears to be common when people attempt to put out a fire. It does not include clothing catching alight from a controlled fire by reaching across a gas flame or an open fire used for space heating.

Most Vulnerable: 60 years plus

25. Hot Surfaces & Materials

Burns or injuries caused by contact with a hot flame or fire, and contact with hot objects or hot non-water based liquids, and scalds - injuries caused by contact with hot liquids and vapours. It includes burns caused by clothing catching alight from a controlled fire or flame.

Most Vulnerable: Under 5 years

26. Collision & Entrapment

This includes risks of physical injury from: Trapping body parts in architectural features, e.g. trapping limbs or fingers in doors / windows; Colliding with objects e.g. glazing, windows, doors, low ceilings and walls.

Most Vulnerable: Under 5 years



27. Explosions

Threat from the blast of an explosion, from debris generated by the blast, and from the partial or total collapse of a building as the result of an explosion.

Most Vulnerable: No specific group

28. Ergonomics

Threats of physical strain associated with functional space and other features at dwellings.

Most Vulnerable: 60 years plus

29. Structural Collapse & Falling Elements

The threat of the dwelling collapsing, or a part of the fabric falling because of inadequate fixing or disrepair, or as a result of adverse weather conditions. Structural failure may occur internally or externally.

Most Vulnerable: No specific group



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A Summary of Landlord Responsibilities

- Maintain exterior of dwelling and all structural elements
- Maintain interior facilities that are part of the dwelling
- Provide all equipment necessary to supply the utilities safely and correctly
- Ensure all bathroom facilities are correctly installed and properly maintained
- Maintain all drains, waste pipes, rainwater goods, inlet gullies and inspection chambers
- Provide a hygienic kitchen environment including sinks, draining boards, worktops, cooking facilities, cupboards, shelves, and food storage facilities
- Maintain air bricks, trickle vents, opening lights to windows and mechanical and non-mechanical ventilation equipment
- Regularly maintain central heating and hot water systems

How to get in touch with us:

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Call in and see us at the Council
Offices in Priory Road, Spalding -
any weekday from 8.30am to 5.15pm,
except on Fridays when we
close at 4.45pm.

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