

Decent Homes

Background:

English House Conditions Survey 2001 calculated that there are £1.6 MILLION non-decent homes in UK, mostly lacking the standard of “thermal comfort” required.

Average cost of improvement per property £7,200. (NB: ALMO credit to fund improvements equivalent to £5,500 per property).

Government Target of all rented properties to meet new DH standard by 2010, 1 in 3 to meet standard by 2004.

Actions required of social landlords:

- Assess current condition of stock and compare to DH standard
- Plan improvements and investment required to achieve standard on time and continuing maintenance programme afterwards to keep properties at the standard for 30 years
- Plan other improvements as part of a single integrated planning process
- Consult with tenants & other stakeholders to agree a viable / affordable plan
- Set out implementation plan – year on year and monitor progress
- Use the full range of sources of advice and assistance [Community Housing Taskforce – Nat Fed HA's – Consultancies etc]

Context:

Part of recognition of £19bn backlog of repair in social housing stock

Part of Neighbourhood Renewal agenda

Decent Homes definition:

- A Current statutory minimum standard
- B Reasonable state of repair
- C Reasonably modern facilities & services
- D Provide reasonable degree of thermal comfort

A) Fitness *

1. Free from serious disrepair
2. Structurally stable
3. Free from dampness prejudicial to health of occupants
4. Adequate lighting, heating, ventilation
5. Adequate piped supply wholesome water
6. Effective drainage – foul – waste – surface water
7. Suitably located WC for exclusive use
8. Bath or Shower, washand basin, hot & cold supply
9. Facilities for food preparation & cooking including sink with H & C supply

* Changing to new HHSRS

B) Reasonable Repair

- 1 or more key components old & need replacing or major repair
or
- 2 or more other components old & need replacing or major repair

Key Building Components

	Life expectancy (years)	'Poor condition'
Roof structure	50	Replace 10% & strengthen 50%
Roof finish	50	Replace or repair 50%+
Chimneys	50	1 needs partial rebuild or +
Ext' wall structure	80	Replace 10% or repair 30%or +
Ext' wall finish	60	Replace / Repoint / Renew 50%
Brickwork	30	Spalling
Ext' windows	40	Replace 1 or Repair 2
Ext' doors	40	Replace 1
Electrics	30	Replace or major repair
CH Boilers	15	Replace or major repair
Storage Heaters	30	Replace or major repair
'Other' Building Components		
Kitchens	30	Major repair or replace 3 or more elements
Bathrooms	40	Major repair or replace 2 or more elements
CH distribution	40	Replace or major repair

C) Reasonably modern facilities & services

Home will fail this test if it lacks 3 or more of:

- Kitchen under 20 years old
- Kitchen with adequate space & layout
- Bathroom under 30 years old
- Appropriately located bathroom & WC
- Adequate noise insulation
- Adequate size & layout common entrance (flats)

D) Reasonable degree of thermal comfort

Programmable gas or oil CH (* 50mm loft insulation)

- Electric storage heaters or programmable LPG or solid fuel (*200mm loft insulation)
- Similar efficient systems (e.g. renewable)

Plus cavity insulation & required loft insulation *

NB: Energy efficient boiler = SEDBUK A to C rating

Application of standard:

Can DH standard be deferred?

ONLY when improvements:

- Go against wishes of current occupants
and
- Occupiers' H and S not at risk
and
- Structure not undermined

Major reasons for failing DH standard:

Insufficient thermal comfort	83%
Lack of modern facilities	19%
Disrepair	18%
Unfitness	15%

Investment Planning

- Ensure data collection (various sources / supplemented as required)
gives an accurate picture – all inspected within last / every 4-5 years
- Which fail now
- Which will fail over next 30 years
- Cost of necessary works over period now to 2010
- Cost of works over next 30 years in total

Options for local authorities:

- Use own resources
- LSVT / partial transfer
- ALMO
- PFI