

Background

Over recent years Housing Associations have made a concerted effort to achieve the target of having no dwellings that fail the four main criteria of the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. These Criteria state that a dwelling should:

- 1) meet the current statutory minimum legal standard for housing
- 2) be in a reasonable state of repair
- 3) have reasonably modern facilities and services
- 4) provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

When the Decent Homes Standard first came into being the first criteria, the minimum legal standard, was the Fitness Standard as detailed in Section 604 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended in 1989).

Since April 2006 the measure for the first criteria is the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), as detailed in the Housing Act 2004. Any dwelling with a Category 1 Hazard, as defined by the Act and the supporting Operating Guidance, fails the Decent Homes Standard.

This represents a significant change of approach in the measurement of housing standards and the method of assessment required to determine whether a dwelling is decent or not.

The following tables from the EHCS 2006 report show that in RSL stock the overall level of non-decency is 28.7% and that 11.1% of RSL stock fail due to Category 1 Hazards.

Table 1: Decent homes including HHSRS as the statutory component, 2006

	decent	non-decent	all homes	decent	non-decent	all homes
numbers (000s):				percentage (000s):		
owner occupied	9,969	5,473	15,442	64.6	35.4	100.0
privaterented	1,313	1,298	2,611	50.3	49.7	100.0
all private	11,282	6,771	18,053	62.5	37.5	100.0
LA	1,285	801	2,086	61.6	38.4	100.0
RSL	1,320	530	1,850	71.3	28.7	100.0
allsocial	2,605	1,331	3,936	66.2	33.8	100.0
all tenures	8,887	8,102	16,989	63.2	36.8	100.0

The HHSRS covers a much wider range of housing deficiencies than the former Fitness Standard: inadequate heating, condensation, falling on stairs, on the level and between levels, carbon monoxide, asbestos, fire, poor electrical installations, badly sited cookers and more.

Table 1: Homes not meeting the statutory component of the Decent Homes standard: Fitness and the Housing Health and Rating System (HHSRS), 2006

	fitness	HHSRS	fitness	HHSRS
numbers (000s):			percentage (000s):	
owner occupied	457	3,452	3.0	22.4
privaterented	250	797	9.6	30.6
private	707	4,249	3.9	23.5
LA	118	297	5.6	14.2
RSL	57	206	3.1	11.1
social	175	503	4.4	12.8
all tenures	882	4,752	4.0	21.6

This approach is based on a principle that a dwelling which is safe for the most vulnerable is safe for all.

CPC is a nationally recognised training organisation with particular expertise in training housing professionals in the use of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

CPC was appointed by the IDeA to conduct three rounds of HHSRS training for Local Authority officers in 2006, funded through CLG, and continues to provide such training to both Local Authorities and Housing Associations nationwide.

We provide both a half day strategic briefing aimed at senior management to fully understand the implications for strategic management and stock control; and a two day course, including a practical assessment, for surveying staff.

CPC also offers training on Decent Homes to assist Local Authorities and Housing Associations in understanding the full implications and measurements under this standard.

Full details of these and all our courses can be found on our website www.cpcltd.com, by application to training@cpcltd.com or by telephoning 0207 015 8562.

CPC Ltd is a leading provider of housing consultancy, stock condition surveys and training, working in both the private and public sector housing markets.

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CPC Training

Are you Decent?

The implications of the
HHSRS for achieving
Decent Homes targets

