

Appendix 1

SECTION 41

A decent home – summary of the definition

Introduction

4.1 The definition of what is a decent home has been updated to reflect the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) which replaced the Housing Fitness Standard on 6 April 2006. Landlords will find it helpful to refer to the two volumes of statutory guidance on HHSRS¹. The general principles of application have been expanded as set out in paragraph 4.4 below and paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6 clarify what properties are covered by the Decent Home standard. A decent home meets the following four criteria:

a) It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing

4.2 Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those containing one or more hazards assessed as serious ('Category 1') under the HHSRS.

b) It is in a reasonable state of repair

4.3 Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those where either:

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

c) It has reasonably modern facilities and services

4.4 Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those which lack three or more of the following:

- A reasonably modern kitchen (20 years old or less);
- A kitchen with adequate space and layout;
- A reasonably modern bathroom (30 years old or less);
- An appropriately located bathroom and WC;
- Adequate insulation against external noise (where external noise is a problem); and
- Adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats.

1 *Housing Act 2004, Part 1*. Statutory Guidance has been given to local authorities under section 9 – The HHSRS Operating Guidance and Enforcement Guidance – and is available from DCLG and at www.communities.gov.uk/hhsrs

4.5 A home lacking two or fewer of the above is still classed as decent, therefore it is not necessary to modernise kitchens and bathrooms if a home meets the remaining criteria.

d) It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

4.6 This criterion requires dwellings to have both effective insulation and efficient heating. It should be noted that, whilst dwellings meeting criteria b, c and d are likely also to meet criterion a, some Category 1 hazards may remain to be addressed. For example, a dwelling meeting criterion d may still contain a Category 1 damp or cold hazard.