



DEFINITION OF THE DECENT HOMES AND DECENT HOMES 'PLUS' STANDARD

A DCLG 'Decent Homes Standard'

A 'decent home' is a property that meets a minimum standard set by the DCLG (formerly ODPM) by 31st December 2010 and is maintained to that standard thereafter. The property must meet the landlord's and the tenant's priorities and meet the following four criteria:

- Is free from Category 1 Housing Health & Safety Rating risks
- Be in a reasonable state of repair
- Have acceptable and modern facilities and services
- Provide an acceptable level of thermal comfort

Further definitions of these criteria are provided below:

1. Free from Category 1 Housing Health & Safety Rating (HHSRS) hazards

The HHSRS was introduced in the Housing Act 2004 and replaced the original 'Fitness Standards' as Criteria 1 of the Decent Homes Standard in April 2006.

It uses a risk assessment approach to provide a system (not a standard) to enable risks from hazards to health and safety in dwellings to be removed or minimised.

The HHSRS addresses all the key issues that affect health and safety and it provides an analysis of how hazardous a property is (potentially). The key principle of the system is that a dwelling (including the structure and associated outbuildings and garden, yard and/or amenity space) and means of access should provide a safe and healthy environment for the occupants and, by implication, for any visitors.

It should be recognised that all properties contain hazards (stairs, electrical outlets etc) and it is not possible (or desirable) to remove all hazards. The emphasis is to minimise the risk to health and safety as far as possible either by removing the hazard altogether or minimising the effect, as appropriate.

The HHSRS system assesses a number of hazards, including:

- Dampness, excessive cold/heat
- Pollutants e.g. asbestos, carbon monoxide, lead
- Lack of Space, security, lighting or excessive noise
- Poor hygiene, sanitation, water supply
- Accidents – falls, electric shocks, fires, burns, scalds
- Collisions, explosions, structural collapse

All risks identified are 'scored' in respect of the likelihood of an event occurring (e.g. a fall down some stairs) and the likely outcome of harm that may occur. Category 1 hazards are typically those that are deemed more likely to occur than normal and would typically result in serious harm.

2. A reasonable state of repair. If one or more of the key building components are old and because of their condition need replacing or major repair

Should any of the following key elements be in poor condition, they could have an immediate effect on the integrity of the building and cause further deterioration in other components.

- External wall structure
- Wall finish/applied surface (pointing or render)
- Chimney stacks
- Roof structure
- Roof covering
- External doors
- Windows
- Central Heating system
- Central Heating Boiler
- Electrical supply system

3. Reasonably modern facilities and services

A dwelling will fail this Decent Homes criterion if it lacks three or more of the following:

- Kitchen units less than 20 years old.
- A kitchen with adequate space and layout.
- Bathroom fittings less than 30 years old.
- An appropriately located bathroom and WC.
- Adequate noise insulation.
- Adequate size and layout of common areas to blocks containing flats

4. Reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

A dwelling must have efficient heating and effective insulation to pass the Standard.

Dwellings that have gas/oil central heating systems installed should have cavity wall insulation (where possible) and a minimum of 200mm loft insulation.

Dwellings that have electric storage heaters/LPG or programmable solid fuel central heating systems will have cavity wall insulation (where possible) and a minimum of 200mm of loft insulation.

B CHESTER & DISTRICT HOUSING TRUST DECENT HOME 'PLUS' STANDARD

The DCLG Decent Homes Standard is a minimum standard of housing provision. Recognising that this may not fully meet residents aspirations, Chester & District Housing Trust have, in consultation with residents and other stakeholders, developed a Decent Homes 'Plus' Standard, which exceeds the Government's minimum standards in certain areas but will not include environmental work to estates, security improvements or adaptations for disability. These works are contained within other planned investment work streams.

Of course, Chester & District Housing Trust will continue to use the DCLG standards as a base measurement of its stock to assess the impact of properties meeting, failing or potentially failing the minimum Decent Homes standard to 2010 and beyond.

Chester & District Housing Trust's Decent Homes 'Plus' Standard takes into account resident feedback and expectations and set standards accordingly, for example;

Windows	Double Glazing, except where planning restraints exist, for example Conservation Areas or Listed Buildings.
Doors	Energy efficient doors, draught proof and secure
Lighting	External lighting adjacent to doors
Kitchens	Modern kitchen layout with choice of design and colours.. Plumbing for dishwasher if required.
Bathroom	Over bath shower with mixer taps. Shower rail and curtain. 3 tile height splash-back.
Cavity Wall	Insulated where cavity exists
Electric system	Minimum of 2 sockets per habitable room.
Heating	Full heating systems with energy efficient boiler.
Co2 detector	Available to purchase.
Smoke detectors	Mains operated.
Communal Lighting	Adequate energy efficient lighting in all communal areas.
Communications	One Sky digital point for whole block on existing communal systems.