

Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

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What is it?

- A risk based tool for assessing hazards in the home
- Introduced in the 2004 Housing Act
- It provides a trigger mechanism for mandatory enforcement against a landlord/owner
- Government guidance on how the HHSRS works, worked examples, enforcing and applying the HHSRS.

How Does It Work?

- The assessment of hazards is based on likelihood of an occurrence that *could* cause harm and the *probable* severity of outcomes
- It focuses on potential hazards
- It considers the effect of the defect or deficiency, it's not just about defects
- It generates a numerical score which allows comparison of full range of hazards.

What Did We Do Before?

- The Fitness Standard (Housing Act 1985)
- (a) it is structurally stable;
- (b) it is free from serious disrepair;
- (c) it is free from dampness prejudicial to the health of the occupants (if any);
- (d) it has adequate provision for lighting, heating and ventilation;
- (e) it has an adequate piped supply of wholesome water;
- (f) there are satisfactory facilities in the dwelling-house for the preparation and cooking of food, including a sink with a satisfactory supply of hot and cold water;
- (g) it has a suitably located water-closet for the exclusive use of the occupants (if any);
- (h) it has, for the exclusive use of the occupants (if any), a suitably located fixed bath or shower and wash-hand basin each of which is provided with a satisfactory supply of hot and cold water; and
- (i) it has an effective system for the draining of foul, waste and surface water;

Principles

- The emphasis is entirely on the risks to health and safety (the Government's intention was that housing standards should reduce the cost to the NHS)
- The system does not consider the feasibility or the extent of remedial action
- Costs of remedial action can be minimal but outcomes may be potential major e.g. broken step, missing handrail
- Costs could be prohibitive and unpractical e.g. poorly converted loft with ladder in an owner occupied house

29 Hazards

- Damp and mould
- Excess cold
- Excess heat
- Asbestos
- Biocides
- Carbon Monoxide and fuel combustion products
- Lead
- Radiation
- Uncombusted fuel products
- Volatile organic compounds
- Crowding and space
- Entry by intruders
- Lighting
- Noise
- Domestic hygiene, pests and refuse
- Food safety
- Personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage
- Water supply
- Falls in baths
- Falls on the level
- Falls on steps and stairs
- Falls between levels
- Electrical hazards
- Fire
- Hot Surfaces
- Collision and entrapment
- Explosions
- Ergonomics
- Structural Collapse and Falling Elements

Responsibility for Deficiencies and Hazards

Hazards can result from

1. Deficiencies due to design, construction, maintenance
2. Behaviour of the occupant
3. Both the above

The HHSRS is only concerned with 1 and 3

Banding The Hazard Scores

- Introduced to avoid too much emphasis on the precise numerical hazard score
- Ten hazard bands A to J with A being the most dangerous and J being the most safest
- Bands A to C are Category 1 hazards
- Bands D to J are Category 2 hazards

Reason For Assessment

- Enforcement
 - Hazard awareness notice
 - Improvement notice
 - Prohibition order
 - Emergency remedial action
 - Demolition Order
 - Accreditation
- Reduce homelessness
- Suitability for occupation
- Leasing

Example 1



Example 2



Example 3



Example 4



Example 5



Strengths

- Comprehensive assessment of the potential health problems associated with a dwelling.
- Specifically targeted at identifying anything that could cause harm or ill health; therefore improving the health and well being of residents
- Based on assessing risk to the most vulnerable; namely, those under 5 and over 65 years of age.
- Not a pass or fail: It is concerned with avoiding, or minimising, potential hazards.
- A comprehensive range of enforcement options
- Potential cost savings.

The Cost of Poor Housing to the NHS

Hazard	Number of Category 1 hazards, England	Average repair cost per dwelling (£)	Total cost to repair (£)	Savings to the NHS per year if hazard fixed (£)	Payback (years)
Excess cold	1,325,088.00	4,574.00	6,061,192,123.00	848,398,538.00	7.14
Falls on stairs	1,352,837.00	857.00	1,159,516,031.00	207,099,936.00	5.6
Falls on the level	543,848.00	780.00	424,061,206.00	127,832,318.00	3.32
Falls between levels	239,930.00	927.00	222,382,484.00	84,308,287.00	2.64

Weaknesses

- Low awareness
- Poor understanding
- Complicated standards
- Complex calculations
- No minimum standards

Review

- In October 2018 the Minister announced that the HHSRS would be reviewed:
- The review will also look at whether to introduce minimum standards for common health and safety problems
- In July 2019, the MHCLG announced an intention to carry out further work
- In March 2021 RH Environmental Ltd appointed to carry out a two-year research project.
 - Review of operating guidance, enforcement guidance and training
 - Development of a simpler means of banding HHSRS assessment results.
 - New recommended minimum standards.
 - Assessment into the amalgamation or removal of existing hazard profiles.
 - Review HHSRS ‘Landlords Guidance’ and new ‘Tenants Guidance’.