

HHSRS Enforcement

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) was introduced in England and Wales, as part of the Housing Act 2004. It is a risk-based assessment system used by local authorities in order to assess the severity of 29 health and safety hazards and the likelihood they have of causing harm to both the property and those living in it. A HHSRS score is given following an inspection by one of our officers, and is marked up against each hazard. They are scored A-J. A-C being a Category 1 hazards, the most severe, and D-J being a Category 2, a less serious hazard.

If an inspecting officer does find need for remedial works to be done to a property, there are a few ways in which they may go about taking action.

Informal action is the preferred action of choice for our team. Informal action would be classed as verbal advice, requests, warnings or letters and inspection reports. This form of action will be used when the concerns identified are not considered by the team to be a 'serious risk' to the health and safety of the occupants, as a result of the property. Informal action is quicker, and can be a lot more effective than more serious action. However, the team will only consider it a viable option should we have confidence in the managing agent or landlord, and they in turn are happy to work with our team. Or, if there is evidence that the managing agent or landlord has worked well with our team in the past. We will then allow a reasonable timeframe for the recommended works to be carried out. However, if the works are not carried out within this time, the level of enforcement will be increased.

Statutory action will be taken if a property has one or more category 1 hazards, under the HHSRS. This enforcement action could take the form of any of the following:

- Improvement Notice (including suspended Notices)
- Prohibition Order (including Suspended Orders)
- Hazard Awareness Notice
- Emergency remedial action
- Emergency Prohibition Order
- Demolition Order
- Declaration of a Clearance Area

All of the above will also be accompanied by a statement of reasons, under section 8 of the Housing Act 2004. Notices will be issued alongside a reasonable timescale that will also comply with statutory legislation. Landlords and managing agents will be able to request an extension by contacting the Private Sector Housing team, giving reasons as to why the extension is necessary. This will then be considered by the management team who will respond within 7 days of the request. We will keep in contact with the landlord or managing agent for the duration of the timescale in order to ensure any requirements are complied with.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to keep housing conditions in their area under review, and to inspect properties if they consider it appropriate to do so. The Dacorum Borough Council aim to only take action should we believe it is necessary. Any form of enforcement that we may take against a landlord is intended only to make the property safe for its occupants, and any new occupants that may come in the future. This can often include carrying out any remedial work ourselves, and reclaiming the cost of said work if we deem it necessary to do so.

Our aim is to work with the landlords and managing agents in the Borough, to make Dacorum a safe and compliant area for all prospective and current tenants.