



The Private Sector Housing – Who are we

We previously released an article to advise that the Private Sector Housing team had moved to Strategic Housing, and what the roles of each officer will be. There have since been some update to the team, which now operates with 11 staff members:

- Team Leader
- Private Sector Housing Lead Officer
- Empty Homes Lead Officer
- Environmental Health Officer
- Home Energy Conservation Officer
- Insight & Improvement Officer
- Private Sector Enforcement Officers x 4
- Private Sector Support Officer

All of whom play a key role in meeting Dacorum Borough Council's vision on a daily basis.

Over the past two years the service has been reviewed. Key procedures and policies have been implemented to ensure we are offering a structured and consistent service to allow families in the borough access to suitable, affordable and secure housing.

The team continue to demonstrate that they are committed to ensuring that all Dacorum residents live in homes that are safe and meet the required standards. Though we also recognise most landlords want to be compliant and provide a good standard of home to their tenants.

The team works with a variety of individuals and organisations, including but not limited to;

- Landlords
- Owner Occupiers
- Tenants
- Estate Agents
- Housing Associations/Registered Providers
- Police, Fire Service and Immigration – Home Office
- Other Local Authorities
- Dacorum Internal Departments
- National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA)

Private Sector Housing has a range of enforcement options available to them, primarily through government legislation within the Housing Act 2004 and other relevant legislation. This allows us to ensure property standards are met by all involved. These options are assessed on each individual case, as the service strives to educate and proactively work with Landlords, Estate Agents, Housing Associations and Tenants.

For more details on the enforcement options, please see the [Enforcement Policy](#) on our website.

Our service remit can be split into 4 main functions, Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO), Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), Home Energy and Empty Homes. We actively work within our powers and legislations to ensure the safety of residents.

Houses of Multiple Occupation

In Dacorum, we require a license for any rented property defined as having five or more people living across two or more households and sharing common facilities. Any rented property with three or more people living across two or more households and sharing common facilities is also classified as a HMO but does not require a license. Any property that falls under either of these categories is required to adhere to The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006. The team deals with the processing of all HMO license applications, as well as investigating any suspected HMOs. We perform property conditions inspections at 2 and 4 years intervals into the 5 year span of the license.

Housing Health Safety Rating System

When inspecting HMOs and single family dwellings, we use HHSRS to assess any of the potential hazards detailed below to the health and safety of occupants and their visitors in residential properties. HHSRS hazards can be grouped as follows:

<p>Protection Against Infection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Domestic hygiene, pests and refuse - Food safety - Personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage - Water supply 	<p>Psychological Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crowding and space - Entry by intruders - Lighting - Noise
<p>Physiological Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Damp and mould growth - Excess cold - Excess heat - Asbestos, Biocides and Carbon Monoxide 	<p>Protection Against Accidents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Falls: baths/stairs and steps/on the level/between levels - Electrical hazards - Fire - Hot surfaces and materials - Collision and entrapment:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Lead- Radiation- Uncombusted fuel gas- Volatile Organic Compounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Explosions- Position and operability of amenities- Structural collapse and failing elements
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These hazards are assessed and scored as per the HHSRS risk assessment tool as either a Category 1 or Category 2 hazard. Local Authorities are obliged to act on any Category 1 hazard.

The team will complete property condition assessment in relation to any of these hazards using this tool. We will advise recommendations to landlords, owners and tenants and take the necessary enforcement action where required.

Home Energy

We also provide support and guidance regarding Home Energy within Dacorum. This is achieved by liaising and notifying landlords of their responsibilities on energy efficiency ratings in their properties. We also advise on any heating and insulation grants that owner occupiers, private tenants and landlords may be entitled to. By working with other councils through a variety of platforms and forums, we are able to learn best practice and keep up to date on new pending legislation on climate change and other areas affecting home energy efficiency.

Empty Homes

The team's next focus will be to work and review Empty Homes across the borough, raising awareness of how and where to report them. We currently receive council tax reports on all properties that have been registered as empty for a period of two or more years. We will now be looking at identification of these properties at an earlier stage of 6 months after being reported as empty; potentially requiring less repairs to be undertaken. The aim is to bring the properties back into use to become someone's home and provide an income to the owner.

If you have any concerns/complaints about your property, or require further advice please visit [Our Website](#) or alternatively contact the team directly: via email on pshousing@dacorum.gov.uk or call us on 01442 228574.