



# **Standards for Supported Accommodation**

**May 2022 Revision**

## 1. Introduction

Bristol City Council commissions a broad range of supported accommodation to help people recover from homelessness, and for care leavers. This revised document setting out Bristol's standards for supported accommodation, builds on the West of England Accommodation Standards and the previous standards released in 2017 that focussed on four key areas: living environment and the community, internal finishes, external components and energy efficiency.

To ensure that all accommodation meets this standards, Bristol City Council has developed these standards, considering relevant legislation and government guidance.

## 2. Application and scope of the Standards

These standards set out the minimum standards required of the accommodation that Bristol City Council commissions as Supported Accommodation for the prevention and relief of homelessness. The standards will apply to Registered Providers, and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Organisations. It is recognised that there may be exceptional situations when it will not be possible to meet these standards. A degree of flexibility will sometimes be possible if other compensating features are present or if there is a clear plan to meet these standards in a reasonable timeframe.

Furthermore, there may be additional requirements depending on the specific needs of the service being procured. For example, staffed schemes will require office space from which support workers can be based, the requirements for which are covered under section '9. Staffed schemes.'

The Property Inspection Schedule which is included in Appendices under 'Appendix 6: Property Inspection Schedule', complies with and is underpinned by the following standards and regulations:

- The West of England Accommodation Standards (included in Appendices)
- The first criterion of the [Decent Homes Standard](#) – the [Housing Health and Safety Rating System \(HHSRS\)](#) which replaces the Housing Fitness Standard with the implementation of Part 1 of the [Housing Act 2004](#). The HHSRS is a risk assessment procedure and does not set a standard but identifies a number of hazards which should trigger remedial action.
- All the other criteria of the Decent Homes Standard: in a reasonable state of repair, have reasonably modern facilities and services, and provide a reasonable degree of 'thermal comfort'. This is due to the fact that people accessing supported housing are likely to come within the definition of 'vulnerable' within the guidance on implementation of the Decent Homes Standards and therefore fall within these.
- [Houses in Multiple Occupation \(HMO\)](#) regulations, and the [West of England Rent with Confidence Accreditation Scheme](#)
- The additional standards detailed in this document in the next section, which complement the regulations. Taken together, these standards will ensure that the accommodation commissioned for supported accommodation is of sufficient quality and will engender effective recovery from homelessness and the further development of independence skills.
- Bristol, North Somerset & South Gloucestershire [Principles for Adversity and Trauma-Informed Practice](#) (included in Appendices)
- Bristol's [Space standards and other requirements for residential development Practice Note](#)

## 3. Property location

- All properties should be situated in geographical areas of Bristol that offer good access to local amenities, transport links and community-based services, in addition to access to greenspace as outlined in subsection 'XI. Access to local greenspace' under section '4. External factors and components.'

## **4. External factors and components**

### **I. Structure**

- The building envelope and structure must be structurally stable, free from disrepair, completely weather tight and in good repair and condition.

### **II. External walls and windows**

- External decoration must be sound and in good repair.
- Any defective joinery needs to be properly repaired or renewed and decorated.
- Rendered surfaces and parapet walls must be in good condition with copings and flashings secure and complete.
- All brickwork must be sound and vertical with continuous pointing.
- Chimney stacks must be in good repair with chimney pots securely fixed.

### **III. Roofs and rainwater goods**

- Roofs and rainwater goods must be in a good and serviceable condition.
- Any loose slates, tiles or aerials, which either present a possible hazard or that may cause defects to the property, must be made safe.
- Gutters and down pipes must be securely fitted, in good condition and clear of blockages.

### **IV. Soil pipes and drainage**

- Soil and waste pipes must be in a good and serviceable condition and securely fixed to the structure.
- There must be no evidence of leaks or damage to the soil or waste pipes and seals at ground level must be good.

### **V. Doors**

- Internal glass doors in houses must be glazed with safety glass.
- Living rooms and bedrooms with patio or French doors must have an additional window that can be opened for ventilation.

### **VI. Windows**

- Windows must provide adequate light and ventilation to the room.
- Each habitable room must be provided with an area of clear glazing equivalent to at least one-tenth of its floor area.
- Windows should be openable, undamaged, free from decay and well decorated.
- Glazing should be securely fixed with sound putty and made waterproof.
- Curtain tracks are to be provided to all clear glazed windows.

### **VII. Outbuildings**

- Sheds and outbuildings must be structurally sound empty. They should have a lockable door that needs to close and be secure.
- Sheds, outbuildings, greenhouses, purpose-built conservatories and lean-tos that are poorly constructed, in disrepair or that present a potential danger to the occupants or are unsafe must be removed.
- External toilets that are functioning properly can be retained. Those not working should be removed and the services and wastes sealed and capped off.

## **VIII. Garages**

- If the property has a garage, it must form part of the letting. The garage will need to be in a good, safe condition and clear of any belongings or rubbish/waste.

## **IX. Boundary walls**

- All boundaries that enclose children's play areas must be continuous with a minimum height of 1 metre. They must be sound and free from defects with any poorly secured panels or posts repaired, and they cannot be topped with broken glass, spikes or barbed wire.
- Side and rear access gates must be in good condition and fitted with a latching device and bolts at the top and bottom.
- If occupants request access from the outside, combination padlocks can be fitted.
- Side and rear boundaries to railway tracks, roads or other potential dangers must have secure fencing that is 2 metres in height.

## **X. Refuse disposal**

- In line with Bristol City Council's waste disposal methods, space needs to be made for the storage of refuse. It is likely to require a bin store/ space outside the accommodation for either a wheelie bin or a dustbin, as well as recycling boxes.

## **XI. Gardens and access to local greenspace**

- Gardens forming part of properties must be free of debris and reasonably well maintained.
- Anything that presents a significant hazard must be removed from garden areas.
- Patios, paths and other concrete areas should be in good repair.
- Ponds must be filled in.
- Large trees and vegetation should be pruned or lopped (subject to any tree preservation orders).
- Any vertical and near vertical drops in the garden greater than 1 metre must be protected by secure fencing.
- Consideration should be given to the use of the garden space for practical purposes such as growing produce.
- Gardens should provide a place for relaxation.
- Where properties may not have access to private gardens, these properties should be situated in the vicinity of local greenspace or near to parks for recreation, exercise and fresh air which all aid good health and wellbeing.

## **5. Accessibility**

- All properties should provide a warm welcome to residents and provide a sense of home to engender good levels of engagement with support offered and create a living environment of which residents can feel proud.
- Prior to making a referral to a property, the accommodation should be assessed for its suitability based on the needs of the individual resident.
- All properties should be free of hazards and safety of all residents and staff should be ensured.
- Properties should present a design and layout that is free of barriers that might limit its suitability for clients presenting mobility and other physical accessibility issues. Furthermore, all properties should provide entrances and exits that are accessible for the clients staying in the accommodation.
- All properties should reduce digital exclusion by making sure that residents have access to the internet through a DSL, cable or fibre connection.

## **6. Ecology and waste**

- All properties will offer support to residents around managing utilities (gas and electricity) and water efficiently.

- Domestic waste and recycling services will be promoted and used for all properties. Furthermore, residents will be supported to minimise waste and recycle their waste properly.
- Residents will be encouraged by Public Health partners to use active (walking, running, cycling) and public transport where appropriate, to minimise the impact of CO2 emissions and pollution to land, water and air.
- Residents will be encouraged to engage in gardening activities where there is on-site access to green space at properties.

## **7. Internal living environment and interior finishes**

### **I. Facilities**

- Kitchens provided in shared and self-contained accommodation:
  - All floor surfaces must be reasonably smooth and impervious and capable of being readily cleansed (corners and junctions should be sealed and covered to avoid uncleanable areas)
  - All wall surfaces must be smooth and capable of being readily cleaned
  - All kitchen areas must be provided with adequate lighting, particularly over the facilities and appropriate means of ventilation to the whole kitchen area and in particular the cooking area, this shall be either to the external air by a window or by a suitably sited mechanical ventilation system
  - The storage units should be in a good serviceable condition and have a realistic lifespan for the term of the lease/tenancy
  - A dry good storage cupboard should be provided. Note: the space in any cupboard below a sink will not be considered acceptable for this purpose
  - Where kitchens are shared, there should be provision of food storage facilities (either refrigerated or dry food storage) within the unit of accommodation
  - A refrigerator with an adequate freezer compartment (or where the freezer compartment is not adequate – adequate separate freezer(s) should be provided), for every three persons there should be a standard domestic refrigerator of at least 100 litres capacity and a freezer compartment of at least 15 litres or a tall upright for every 5 persons
  - Appropriate refuse storage disposal facilities should be provided including non-food recycling disposal, food waste disposal (with instructions) in line with Bristol City Council's [Clean Streets Campaign](#)
- Toilet and personal washing facilities:
  - Baths (if provided) should be free of chips, rust or staining, and adequately supported
  - Basins and baths must be well sealed to the tiled splash back with waterproof silicone sealant
  - Tiled splash backs must be in good condition
  - Toilet pans and seats must be clean, free of cracks or chips and should be well secured to the floor
  - Soil pipes to the toilet, bath and basin(s) should be free flowing and watertight
  - Showers over baths must have full height tiles, and a good waterproof surround
  - A safety rail must be fitted in units where a person with a mobility issue is housed
  - Shower cubicles and trays must be of good quality, with full height tiles well sealed to the tray and raised off the ground level on a plinth to allow access to the waste trap
  - A shower and no bath may be acceptable in studio flats and 1 bed units

### **II. Lighting**

- All habitable rooms shall be provided with an area of clear glazing situated in a window and/or door
- All rooms should have a lighting pendant or batten holder with bulb points with a simple on/off switch
- Fluorescent lighting is only acceptable in the kitchen
- External lighting should be provided where necessary for the safety and security of residents
- Artificial lighting to staircases, landings and passages shall be controlled from a sufficient number of appropriately placed switch outlets. If a time switch system is used, the time period shall be reasonable and appropriate to the circumstances of the resident(s)

### **III. Ventilation**

- All habitable rooms shall be ventilated directly to external air by a window

### **IV. Water supply**

- A stop tap is to be provided in a conveniently accessible position

### **V. Laundry facilities**

- Space for a washing machine (ideally in a kitchen or utility room) is required. Hot and cold feeds, a suitable electric socket and a waste pipe should be provided in this space
- Washing machines in bathrooms are not acceptable
- Laundry rooms should be provided where no facilities within the unit(s) of accommodation exist

### **VI. Security measures**

- Door and gate locks & other external security factors:
  - Front entrance doors, rear doors and individual self-contained bed sits/flats should have locking doors with night latch, and where possible, a suited mortice deadlock that is openable from the inside without a key using a thumb turn release
  - Individual rooms in shared houses should have a yale and deadlock with handle provided
  - Properties/blocks with an intercom with electronic door release should not have a mortice lock
  - External doors must be of a solid core timber or metal framed UPVC construction or specialist laminated security doors in which all glazing is either wired or toughened laminated glass. They should be fitted with a five-lever mortice deadlock (if there is no intercom)
  - Ground floor and upper storey windows accessible from ground floor level must be of sound construction and fitted with window locks
  - Where key operated locks are fitted, residents should be provided with keys
  - Where a gate from a yard or a garden leads into a public footpath, the gate must be fully secured
  - Hedges around external doors and windows must be kept trimmed low wherever practical to avoid providing screening for burglars
  - All fencing and walls must be properly maintained

### **VII. Furnishing standards and storage space**

- All furnishings and furniture must be clean and in a reasonable condition, and comply as appropriate with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations
- All rooms in the property should be adequately furnished for the purpose intended and adequate storage space provided for the number of service users in the property
- Communal lounges should be domestic in style and have a TV (where requested by occupants and agreed with the provider as part of the service charge)
- There should be sufficient circulation space to allow access between habitable rooms
- Facilities should be provided in individual rooms/bedsits/flats for TVs
- Any large or potentially dangerous mirrors should be removed
- Small bathroom mirrors can be retained but they must be well fixed and secured

### **VIII. Internal finishes**

- All walls, woodwork and ceilings and metalwork should be clean and in good decorative order with a minimum of scuffs, marks or abrasions
- Wallpaper should be free from tears, marks or gaps
- Any areas of live plaster, damp penetration, cracks, excessive condensation, mould growth or structural movement must be remedied and made good

- All floors should be level and even, and free from trip hazards and dampness
- Floor finishes in kitchens, bathrooms and WCs should be good quality sheet vinyl ideally
- Floor finishes must be good quality and in good repair
- Carpets are preferred in the remainder of the dwelling, including any stairs
- Stairs, banisters and handrails must be strong and well fixed
- Stairs must be clean and well painted where necessary
- Handrails must be provided
- Effective sound insulation should be provided

## **8. Energy efficiency**

- All properties must be provided with, as a minimum, hot water tank and pipe lagging (where exposed) and fitted with adequate insulation to roof void areas.
- Any refurbishment of the property will include energy efficiency measures. These may include but are not limited to:
  - Double glazing where appropriate draught stripping to doors and windows, except windows in kitchens and bathrooms.
  - Cavity wall insulation of the appropriate thickness and effectiveness.
  - Low energy light bulbs such as compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) and light emitting diodes (LEDs).
  - 250mm loft insulation where possible and certainly for larger roof areas.
  - Thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs) and room thermostat to central heating system.
  - Cylinder thermostat to any hot water cylinder.
  - Under floor insulation where cellar ceiling has been removed.
  - Any new developments should consider any ecological and environmental implications by completing and being informed by an Eco Impact Assessment.
  - Energy efficient appliances and portable appliances with A or B rating.
  - Thermal insulation boarding to attic ceiling slopes when replaced or to exposed walls.
  - Where possible, a condensing boiler or fan flued combination boiler.

## **9. Staffed schemes**

- Where a supported housing scheme is staffed, it must provide:
  - Adequate and secure office space that is separate from the communal and living areas of the accommodation to ensure the security and safety of staff, and confidentiality and protection of data discussed or stored in the office space in line with GDPR requirements.
  - Appropriate IT and access to internet through a DSL, cable or fibre connection.
  - Basic kitchen and food preparation facilities for staff including a fridge, microwave and washing up basin.
  - Where possible, a separate rest room for staff to relax and take a break away from their desks.
  - Where possible, at larger staffed schemes and hostels, outdoor space that is exclusive to the scheme.

## **10. Appendices**

### **Appendix 1: Legislation**

The Defective Premises Act 1972

The Building Act 1984

Landlord and Tenant Act 1987

Environment Protection Act 1990

Housing Act 2004

## **Appendix 2: Regulations**

The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended)

The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 2002 (as amended)

General Product Safety Regulations 1994

The Plugs and Sockets etc (Safety) Regulations 1994

Institution of Electrical Engineers Wiring Regulations

Unfair Terms and Consumer Contracts Regulations 1999

The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006

Health and Safety (safety signs and signals) Regulations 1996

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

## Appendix 3: West of England Accommodation Standards

<i>If your answer is in a grey shaded box, the property <u>may</u> not meet the minimum legal requirements so you should take action to make sure the property is compliant with the law.</i>			
<b>1. Planning</b>	Do you have the correct planning permission for the current use of the property? Some newly shared houses may need planning permission.	Yes or N/A	No
<b>2. EPC</b>	Does the property have a current Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)?	Yes	No
	Is the EPC band F or G?	Yes	No
<b>3. Heating</b>	Does the property have a fixed heating system (i.e., gas boiler and radiators, or storage heaters) in good repair, with sufficient power output to heat all bedrooms and any lounges, a timer or programmer and a device to control room temperature – e.g., thermostat?	Yes	No
	Is the heating easily controllable by the tenant?	Yes	No
<b>4. Food Safety</b>	Does the property have adequate; hot and cold water, a surface to prepare food, food storage and provision for cooking and refrigeration?	Yes	No
<b>5. Insulation</b>	Do the windows and doors appear to be in good repair and free from excessive draughts?	Yes or N/A	No
	If there is a loft or loft room, is it insulated sufficiently (100mm minimum if gas central heating or 200mm minimum if electric heating)?	Yes or N/A	No
<b>6. Fire</b>	If there are shared communal parts (halls, stair landings, shared kitchens or living rooms etc.) a written Fire Safety Risk Assessment is required.  Has a written Fire Safety Risk Assessment been completed?	Yes or N/A	No
	For houses occupied by a family, does the property have a mains operated fire alarm system, or 10-year life sealed battery smoke detectors in hallways and landings on each level?	Yes or N/A	No
	For 3 storey family houses, does the property have mains wired interlinked smoke detectors located in the ground floor hall, first floor landing and second floor landing?	Yes or N/A	No
	For shared houses or bedsit accommodation, do fire precautions meet requirements of LACORS guidance on Fire Safety?	Yes or N/A	No
<b>7. Gas</b>	Is there a satisfactory current Landlord Gas Safety certificate for all gas appliances provided?  Expiry Date:	Yes	No

<b>8. Solid Fuel/Oil</b>	Evidence of servicing and maintenance of all solid fuel appliances by a HETAS/OFTEC engineer within the last 12 months.	Yes or N/A	No
	Is there a Carbon Monoxide alarm in each room with a solid fuel appliance?	Yes or N/A	No
<b>9. Electricity</b>	In the last 5 years has the property had a current satisfactory electrical condition report which indicates that the property is free from dangerous or potentially dangerous faults?  A legal requirement in a House in Multiple Occupation expected to be required by law for all rental properties.  Expiry Date:	Yes	No
	On a visual inspection of the electrical installation and appliances, are there any obvious hazards such as broken or loose sockets, burn marks, unavoidable overloading, exposed wires or live conductors, cracked or broken light pendants, or sockets too close to water?	Yes	No
<b>10. Security</b>	Do the windows and doors appear to be in a good condition, and can they be adequately sealed?	Yes	No
<b>11. Condensation &amp; Mould</b>	Is there sufficient ventilation in the kitchen, bedrooms, living room and bathroom (an operable window or mechanical extractor fan in a kitchen or bathroom)? In some cases, you may need secure means of ventilation such as trickle vents.	Yes	No
	Is there extensive black mould growth in any room (over a whole wall or more)?	Yes	No
<b>12. Personal Hygiene</b>	Is there at least one inside flushing toilet in working condition?	Yes	No
	Is there a wash hand basin with hot and cold running water in the same room as each toilet?	Yes	No
	Is there at least one bath with hot and cold running water or a shower cubicle with a working shower?	Yes	No
<b>13. Furniture</b>	Does any furniture and soft furnishings supplied comply with the legal fire-resistant standard? E.g., sofas, mattresses must have labels proving they comply.	Yes or N/A	No
<b>14. Falls</b>	Is the property free from tripping and falling hazards? E.g., stairs with no hand rails, raised and uneven floor surfaces, windows that should have window restrictors to prevent falls.	Yes	No
<b>15. Asbestos</b>	If there are any shared common parts to the building, has a competent person assessed whether there are any Asbestos containing materials that you need to manage?	Yes or N/A	No

<b>16. Repair</b>	Is the property in a reasonable state of repair?	Yes	No
<b>17. HMO</b>	If the house or flat is shared by 3 unrelated people, is it well managed? This includes decoration, cleanliness, maintenance, equipment and facilities in good condition and common parts free from obstruction.	Yes or N/A	No
	Is there an adequate number of amenities for the number of occupiers (i.e., bathrooms, toilets and kitchens)?  Please note, it is a criminal offence if HMO Management Regulations are not met unless the manager has a reasonable excuse.	Yes or N/A	No
<b>18. Licensing (mandatory)</b>	If the accommodation is within an area subject to a discretionary licensing scheme, does it need a licence?	Yes or N/A	No
	If yes, do you have a or have you applied for a licence?	Yes or N/A	No
<b>19. Licensing (discretionary)</b>	If the house or flat is: 1) three or more storeys, 2) occupied by five or more unrelated people who 3) share facilities with others, it is likely to require a licence.  If yes, do you have or have you applied for a licence?	Yes or N/A	No
<b>20. Overcrowding</b>	If the accommodation is within an area subject to a discretionary licensing scheme, does it need a license?	Yes	No
	Will the number of people occupying meet the bedroom standard?	Yes	No
	Is the living area big enough for the household occupying to carry out normal activities including space for a child to carry out educational activities like homework?	Yes	No
	Do the bedrooms meet or exceed an area of 6.5m squared (single) and 9.5m squared (double)?	Yes	No

## Appendix 4: Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Principles for Adversity and Trauma Informed Practice

The following principles were developed through discussions with people with lived experience, with input from staff and clinicians and through drawing on Adversity and Trauma Informed literature (SAMHSA, 2014a, & Chart by the Institute of Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care (ITTIC, 2015) to create the current version of the principles below.

<b>Safety</b>
Organisations provide a supportive, safe & nurturing environment for everyone that accesses it & promotes physical, emotional & psychological safety. All areas are welcoming, privacy is respected & there is a focus on every interaction creating a sense of safety.
<b>Choice &amp; Clarity</b>
People have choice & control. Individuals, families, friends, carers & staff are given clear & appropriate messages about their rights & responsibilities.
<b>Collaboration</b>
Decisions are made with people & not for them & power is shared wherever possible. Individuals are invited to help design, deliver & evaluate services in a meaningful way.
<b>Trustworthiness</b>
Staff seek to build trust through being consistent & reliable & through healthy & respectful interpersonal boundaries.
<b>Empowerment</b>
Individuals' strengths, skills & resilience are recognised & organisations believe in & cultivate people's empowerment & resilience. There is a culture of acknowledging people's efforts & worth at each & every contact.
<b>Inclusivity</b>
Organisations actively seek to recognise & address inequalities, oppression & exclusion. People's diverse needs are identified (e.g., gender, age, ability, sexuality, ethnicity, cultural) & responded to sensitively & with humility. Organisations understand the influence & impact of wider contexts in society & of historical trauma.

## Appendix 5: Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is the method used by local authorities to assess housing conditions. The Housing Act 2004 Part 1 establishes the HHSRS as the current statutory assessment criterion for housing and it is based on the principle that:

*Any residential premises should provide a safe and healthy environment for any potential occupier or visitor.*

The system applies to **all** dwellings including owner occupied, privately rented and Council and Housing Association dwellings. Local authorities are required to keep housing conditions in privately owned property under review and also have a duty to inspect a property where they have reason to believe that this is appropriate to determine the presence of health and safety hazards.

The HHSRS is not a standard, which the property must meet, as was the case with the previous fitness standard, but it is a system to assess the likely risk of harm that could occur from any 'deficiency' associated with a dwelling.

A deficiency is a variation from the ideal standard and may be due to an inherent design or manufacturing fault, or due to disrepair, deterioration or lack of maintenance. Unnecessary and avoidable hazards should not be present. It acknowledges, however, that some hazards may exist and provides a method of deciding whether or not the degree of risk is acceptable.

The use of a formula produces a numerical score, which allows comparison of all the hazards. This score is known as the Hazard Score and, irrespective of the type of hazard, the higher the score the greater the risk.

Environmental Health Officers undertake assessments, and they must decide for each hazard what is:

- The likelihood, over the next twelve months of an occurrence e.g., falling downstairs, electrocution etc. that could result in harm to a member of the vulnerable group; and
- The range of potential outcomes from such an occurrence e.g., death, severe injury etc.

When an assessment is made, the current occupiers are ignored, and the assessment is based on the likely effect of the hazard on the relevant vulnerable age group (except for the 'crowding and space' hazard where the actual occupants are considered). For some hazards there is no relevant group, but for many hazards it may be either the young or the elderly.

### Hazards

A hazard is any risk of harm to the health or safety of an actual or potential occupier that arises from a deficiency. The system is concerned with disease, infirmity, physical injury, and also includes mental disorder and distress. There are 29 hazards, which need to be considered, and these have been divided into 4 groupings: Physiological, Psychological, Protection against Infection and Protection against accidents.

Physiological requirements:

- Damp and mould growth
- Excess cold
- Excess heat
- Asbestos and manufactured mineral fibre
- Biocides
- Carbon monoxide and fuel combustion products
- Lead
- Radiation
- Un-combusted fuel gas

- Volatile organic compounds

Psychological requirements:

- Crowding and space
- Entry by intruders
- Lighting
- Noise

Protection against infection:

- Domestic hygiene, pests and refuse
- Food safety
- Personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage
- Water supply

Protection against accidents:

- Falls associated with baths etc.
- Falling on level surfaces etc.
- Falling on stairs etc.
- Falling between levels
- Electrical hazards
- Fire
- Flames and hot surfaces etc.
- Collision and entrapment
- Explosions
- Position and operability of amenities etc.
- Structural collapse and falling elements.

### **Landlords' responsibilities**

As the HHSRS is not a standard there is no model guidance available to follow, although there is some guidance available for fire safety. Each property will have its own hazards depending upon its location, age, construction, design, state of repair etc. but landlords must take steps to make sure that the dwelling provides both a safe and healthy environment.

For enforcement purposes and subject to the terms of established Management Agreements between Service Provider and Landlord:

The landlord is responsible for the provision, state and proper working order of:

The exterior and structural elements of the dwelling:

- This includes all elements essential to the dwelling including access, amenity spaces, the common parts within the landlord's control, associated outbuildings, garden, yard walls etc.

The installations within and associated with the dwelling for:

- The supply and use of water, gas and electricity
- Personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage
- Food safety
- Ventilation
- Space heating; and
- Heating water

It includes fixtures and fittings but excludes moveable appliances unless provided by the landlord.

In multi-occupied buildings the owner, or manager, is responsible for stair coverings, e.g., carpets.

## **HHSRS Enforcement**

If a hazard presents a severe threat to health or safety, it is known as a Category 1 Hazard (hazard bands A to C). If a local housing authority considers that a category 1 hazard exists on any residential premises, they must take the appropriate enforcement action in relation to the hazard.

Less significant threats to health and safety are known as Category 2 Hazards (hazard bands D to J) and a local authority may take appropriate enforcement action to reduce the hazard to an acceptable level.

Although statutory action is mandatory for Category 1 hazards and discretionary for Category 2 hazards, the actual choice of the appropriate course of action is also up to the council to decide and again will depend on our enforcement policy and the particular circumstances of the case.

Bristol City Council's enforcement policies state that action will be taken on band A – C hazards (category one). However, the policies also go on to say that action will normally be taken on band D hazards (category 2) unless there is a specific reason not to act. We may still act on Hazards of Band E or below in certain circumstances.

We must however consider the statutory enforcement guidance and the options available include:

- Serving a hazard awareness notice, which merely advises that a hazard exists, but does not demand works are carried out
- Serving an improvement notice requiring remedial works
- Making a prohibition order, which closes the whole or part of a dwelling or restricts the number of permitted occupants
- Suspending these types of notice for a period of time
- Taking emergency action themselves
- Demolition
- Designating a clearance area

### **More information on certain hazards**

The hazards most likely to exist in all types of dwellings are:

- Damp and mould growth
- Excess cold
- Crowding and space
- Entry by intruders
- Falling on level surfaces etc.
- Fire

However, this will vary depending on, amongst other things, the location, the type, the state of maintenance and age of the property.

The following outline of certain hazards provides an insight into how the HHSRS operates and what factors are considered when an assessment is made by the local authority. The scoring system of the HHSRS allows all hazards to be rated against each other for importance within any dwelling. The inclusion or exclusion of any hazard in this section is not an indication of its relative importance. All 29 hazards have the potential to result in harm.

### **Fire**

The most vulnerable age group is all persons aged 60 years or over.

There are approximately 70,000 fires each year reported to the fire authorities, but it is considered that only about 20% of fires are reported. It has been estimated that fires occur in about 3% of all dwellings per year. In 2005 there were 300 deaths with most deaths associated with being overcome by smoke and fumes. Over 80% of accidental fires in dwellings result from occupier carelessness or misuse of equipment or appliances, etc.

Over 65% of fires start in the kitchen, about 10% start in bedrooms and sitting rooms, and 10% start in living and dining rooms. Around 90% of fires are confined to the rooms where they started.

There is a greater risk of a fire occurring in flats and bedsits than in houses, where there is also a higher risk of the fire resulting in harm. An adult living in either a self-contained flat or bed-sit accommodation in a three or more-storey building is around 10 times more likely to die in a fire than an adult living in a two-storey house.

Factors to consider include the design, layout and condition of the dwelling, which should be such to reduce the risk of fire starting carelessly, the spread of any fire and allow effective means of escape in case of fire. The correct design, installation and maintenance of equipment and appliances, especially those provided for cooking and heating; the maintenance and presence of adequate and sufficient electrical outlets; and the use of residual electric current devices (circuit breakers).

The presence or absence of a fire detection and alarm system affects the level of harm suffered. The death rate from dwellings with alarms is less than half of that for non-alarmed dwellings.

The HHSRS Operating Guidance (originally provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government, which is now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) states that properly working alarms, connected to smoke or heat detectors are probably most effective at saving lives in the event of a fire. They provide early warning to the occupants, allowing them to escape before they are overcome by fumes or burned.

For any form of multi-occupied buildings, there should be adequate fire protection to the means of escape and between each unit of accommodation, appropriate fire detection and alarm system(s), and, as appropriate, emergency lighting, sprinkler systems or other fire-fighting equipment.

For specific advice on fire safety requirements in your rented properties please contact the Private Housing Service. National guidance on fire safety has been produced and can be found at [www.privatehousinginformation.co.uk](http://www.privatehousinginformation.co.uk).

## **Excess Cold**

The most vulnerable group is all persons aged 65 years and over. This is by far the most likely hazard to affect a dwelling. For example, the hazard score for a pre-1946 property will on average mean that a category 1 hazard exists and action by local authorities is mandatory.

There are 40,000 excess winter deaths in the UK each year associated with the effects of cold. It is not hypothermia, but respiratory and circulatory diseases in the elderly, which is responsible for most of these deaths. 'The increase in deaths from heart attacks occurs about two days following the onset of a cold spell, the delay is about five days for deaths from stroke, and about 12 days for respiratory deaths.'

Lack of heating also causes increased illness, increased risk of falls, as well as distress and discomfort. Inadequate heating is directly linked to ill health when the internal temperatures start falling below 19°C. It is essential that occupiers be provided with adequate and controllable (preferably central) heating within their accommodation.

British Standards state that a minimum standard of heating is a fixed space-heating appliance to each occupied room. It should be capable of efficiently maintaining the room at a minimum temperature of 18°C, in sleeping rooms, and 21°C in living rooms, when the temperature outside is minus 1°C and it should be available at all times. The adequacy of loft insulation and cavity wall insulation is important and would be considered as part of any HHSRS assessment, as would significant draughts.

## **Falling on Stairs etc.**

The most vulnerable group is all persons aged 60 years or over and men are more likely to die as an outcome of this hazard than women. Although physical injury is the most likely outcome overall, death may occur several weeks or months after the initial fall injury, due to cardio-respiratory illness, including heart attack, stroke and pneumonia.

Several factors can influence the likelihood of an accident including the following:

- Accidents are nearly twice as likely on stairs consisting of straight steps with no winders or intermediate landings
- Accidents are more likely where the pitch of stairs is more than 42 degrees, and the steeper the pitch, the worse the outcome
- An accident is three times more likely to occur on stairs without carpet covering
- The lack of any handrail doubles the likelihood of a fall, even if there is a wall to both sides of the stairs

## **Damp and Mould Growth**

The most vulnerable group is all persons aged 14 years or under. One in eight children suffer with asthma in the UK.

The hazard covers the health effects from house dust mites and mould or fungal growths resulting from dampness and/or high humidity. It includes threats to mental health and social well-being.

The waste from house dust mites and mould spores are both potent airborne allergens and exposure to these over a prolonged period will cause sensitisation of susceptible individuals. Deaths from all forms of asthma in the UK are around 1,500 a year, of which around 60 per cent has been attributed to dust mite allergy.

Ventilation to any room helps prevent condensation by dispersing water vapour generated by normal household activities. It helps to remove pollutants from within the accommodation and helps to control internal temperatures. Dwellings should be warm and dry with good ventilation. The dwelling should be free from rising and penetrating dampness.

Good ventilation is normally achieved by opening windows. As a rough guide the minimum level of natural ventilation would be a window with an open area equivalent to not less than one-twentieth of the floor area.

Current building requirements for new buildings require that in rooms such as kitchens and bathrooms, mechanical ventilation should be provided by ducting to the external air. In existing bathrooms or toilets, which do not have windows, mechanical ventilation must be provided. Mechanical ventilation in bathrooms/WCs should achieve a minimum of 6 litres per second. The system is often linked to the light switch and should incorporate a minimum 15-minute over-run.

The use of mechanical heat recovery ventilation (MHRV) can provide increased ventilation without the associated heat loss. Their use is recommended, as occupiers are more likely to use MHRV to control condensation as they do not result in cooling of the accommodation, and they are energy efficient.

## Appendix 6: Property Inspection Schedule

Please note, accommodation will be inspected to ensure that compliance with these standards is duly met, including mitigations and compensating features should there be areas that do not currently meet the standards for supported accommodation.

<b>Property Inspection Schedule – Supported Accommodation</b>					
<i>This form is to be completed by the relevant Officer of Bristol City Council upon inspection of a property which delivers supported accommodation</i>					
<b>Name and address of property</b>					
<b>Type of accommodation setting (please delete where appropriate)</b>			Shared/Self-contained		
<b>Number of accommodation units provided</b>					
<b>Date of property inspection</b>					
<b>Name of BCC Officer carrying out inspection</b>					
<b>1. External factors and components</b>					
<b>a) Quality and general comment on external factors and components</b>					
<Please insert here>					
<b>b) Scoring matrix</b>					
	Fully met (Y/N)	Partly met (Y/N)	Unmet (Y/N)	Risk (low, medium, high)	Comments
Structure					
External walls and windows					
Roofs and rainwater goods					
Soil pipes and drainage					
Doors					
Windows					
Outbuildings					
Garages					
Refuse disposal					
Gardens and access to local greenspace					
<b>2. Accessibility</b>					
<b>a) Quality and general comment on accessibility</b>					

<Please insert here>

**b) Scoring matrix**

	<b>Fully met (Y/N)</b>	<b>Partly met (Y/N)</b>	<b>Unmet (Y/N)</b>	<b>Risk (low, medium, high)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Does the property provide a warm welcome to residents and provide a sense of home?					
Is there a process in place whereby the accommodation is assessed for suitability based on individual client needs?					
Is the property free of hazards and made safe for all residents?					
Is the property free of any barriers that might limit its suitability for clients that may present with accessibility needs?					
Are all entrances and exits accessible for all residents staying in the property?					

**3. Ecology and waste**

**a) Quality and general comment on ecology and waste**

<Please insert here>

**b) Scoring matrix**

	<b>Fully met (Y/N)</b>	<b>Partly met (Y/N)</b>	<b>Unmet (Y/N)</b>	<b>Risk (low, medium, high)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Are residents supported around managing gas and electric utilities and increasing efficiency of water use?					

Are domestic waste and recycling services promoted to residents, and are residents supported to minimise waste and recycle waste properly?					
Do residents use active travel (walking, running and cycling) to minimise the impact of CO2 emissions and pollution to land?					
If there is access to an on-site garden or green space, are residents encouraged to engage in gardening activities?					

#### 4. Living environment and interior finishes

##### a) Quality and general comment on living environment and interior finishes

<Please insert here>

##### b) Scoring matrix

	Fully met (Y/N)	Partly met (Y/N)	Unmet (Y/N)	Risk (low, medium, high)	Comments
<b>Facilities</b>					
Kitchens					
Toilet and personal washing facilities					
<b>Lighting</b>					
Are all habitable rooms provided with an area of clear glazing situated in a window and/or door?					
Do all rooms have a pendant or batten holder with bulb points, with a simple on/off switch?					
Is external lighting provided where necessary, for the safety and security of residents?					
<b>Ventilation</b>					
Are all habitable rooms ventilated directly to external air by a window?					

Water supply					
Is a stop tap provided in a conveniently accessible position?					
Laundry facilities					
Is there space for a washing machine, and is this provided in a kitchen or utility room?					
Security measures					
Door and gate locks & other external security factors					
Furnishing standards and storage space					
Internal finishes					

## 5. Energy efficiency

### a) Quality and general comment on energy efficiency

<Please insert here>

### b) Scoring matrix

	Fully met (Y/N)	Partly met (Y/N)	Unmet (Y/N)	Risk (low, medium, high)	Comments
Is the property provided with a hot water tank and pipe lagging (where exposed) and fitted with adequate insulation to roof void areas?					

## 6. Legislative requirements

	Yes/No	Comments
Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)		
Does the property have a current Energy Performance certificate (EPC)?		
Is the EPC band F or G?		
Heating		
Does the property have a fixed heating system (i.e., gas boiler and radiators, or		

storage heaters) in good repair with sufficient power output to heat all bedrooms and any lounges, a timer or programmer and a device to control room temperature – e.g., thermostat?		
Is the heating easily controllable by the resident?		
<b>Fire Safety</b>		
If there are shared communal parts to the property (halls, stair landings, shared kitchens or living rooms etc.), has a written Fire Safety Risk Assessment been completed?		
Do fire precautions meet requirements of LACORS guidance on Fire Safety?		
<b>Gas Safety</b>		
Is there a satisfactory current Landlord Gas Safety certificate for all gas appliances provided?		
Expiry Date:		
<b>Solid Fuel/Oil</b>		
Has evidence been provided of servicing and maintenance of all solid fuel appliances by a HETAS/OFTEC engineer within the last 12 months?		
Is there a Carbon Monoxide alarm in each room with a solid fuel appliance?		
<b>Electricity</b>		
In the last 5 years has the property had a current satisfactory electrical condition report which indicates that the property is free from dangerous or potentially dangerous faults?		
Expiry Date:		
On visual inspection of the electrical installation and appliances, are there any obvious hazards such as broken or loose sockets, burn marks, unavoidable overloading, exposed wires or live conductors, cracked or broken light pendants, or sockets too close to water?		

## **Appendix 7: References**

London Borough of Camden (2006) Proposed Houses in Multiple Occupation Standards under the Housing Act 2004

London Borough of Camden (2006) Consultation for the London Borough of Camden's Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Standards

Vickery, V. and Mole, V. (2008) Shared Living, What Works in Supported Housing, Carr Gomm & the Housing Corporation

London Borough of Greenwich (2007) Standards for Licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation

London Borough of Bromley (2006) Standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

Manchester Student Homes, The Code of Standards for Landlords and Managing Agents

Derby City Council Guidance for Space Provision for Licensable and Non-Licensable HMOs

Birmingham Housing Department (2007) Property and Management Standards Applicable to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), A Guide for Property Owners, Landlords, Managing Agents, Tenants and Other Stakeholders with Interests in the Private Rented Housing Sector

Lambeth Planning (2007) Guidance and Standards for Housing Development and House Conversions, Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance

Chester District Council Property Standards

ODPM (2005) Hostels Review Toolkit, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister