



OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Decent Homes


A Tenant's Guide



housing

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What is the Decent Homes Standard?

The Government has set a target to ensure that all social housing meets standards of decency by 2010. Social housing means homes that are owned by your local authority or a Registered Social Landlord (RSL). RSLs are also sometimes called Housing Associations.

A decent home is one that is wind and weather tight, warm and has modern facilities.



Why make homes decent?

A third of all housing falls below the decent home standard. Over 1½ million households live in social homes that are not decent.

Decent homes are an essential part of a sustainable community. A home and the environment around it has a major impact on the physical and mental health and well being of those that live there.

Poor housing and poor environments can contribute to an area having a bad reputation. They are factors which have contributed to areas becoming unpopular making communities unsustainable.



How does it happen?

Your landlord is responsible for ensuring that your home is decent. This is a commitment supported by the Government.

Local authorities have 4 options to bring their housing up to the decent homes standard. The options are:

- **Keep their housing stock** (Retention) – your local authority will use existing levels of financial resources to bring housing up to the decent homes standard

- **Housing transfer** – the management and ownership of council housing will be moved from your local authority to a Registered Social Landlord. Further information on this option can be found in *Housing Stock Transfer: A Tenant's Guide*
- **Setting up an arms length management organisation (ALMO)** – An ALMO is a company set up by a local authority to deliver its housing management services and improve homes to meet the decent homes target. Extra money is available from the Government to Local Authorities to fund improvement works delivered by high-performing ALMOs. Your home will still be owned by your local authority. Further information on this option can be found in *Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs): A Tenant's Guide*
- **Private finance initiative (PFI)** – PFI is a method by which Government provides financial support for partnerships between the public and private sectors. Your local authority may enter into a PFI agreement to ensure the refurbishment some of its housing. Your home will still be owned by your local authority. Further information on this option can be found in *Housing Private Finance Initiative (PFI): A Tenant's Guide*.



How will it affect me as a tenant?

The decent homes standard ensures that all social tenants have access to and should expect a minimum standard of housing. Work to your home will focus on ensuring that it meets this minimum standard, but you may have other priorities and these need to be taken into account.

When planning for improvements to your home your landlord should be able to take into account work which falls outside the decent homes standard that might be of importance to you and your neighbours. This planning process is called a Stock Options Appraisal and it is important that tenants are involved from the outset. Further information on the Option Appraisal process can be found in the *Option Appraisals – Tenant's Guide*, see Further Information on page 6 of this leaflet.

