



RRA Guidance sheet

HHSRS 2026 GUIDE FOR LANDLORDS

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#OnYourSide



What is HHSRS?

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is the statutory risk assessment system used by Local Authorities to assess housing conditions within residential properties.

Introduced under the Housing Act 2004, HHSRS is designed to identify hazards that could affect the health, safety or wellbeing of occupants.

Rather than focusing on whether something simply complies with regulations, HHSRS assesses risk and the likelihood of harm occurring.

The revised HHSRS came into effect in June 2026 and applies to all residential rental properties in England.



Why HHSRS Matters to Landlords

HHSRS is increasingly becoming the benchmark against which property standards are judged.

It is used during:

- Selective Licence inspections
- Additional Licence inspections
- HMO Licence inspections
- Complaint investigations
- Reactive enforcement visits
- Improvement Notice assessments
- Renters' Rights Act enforcement activity

Where significant hazards are identified, Local Authorities have powers to take enforcement action.

For Category 1 hazards, intervention is generally mandatory.

For Category 2 hazards, intervention remains discretionary.



Understanding the New 21 Hazards

Protection Against Accidents

1. Falls on the level
2. Falling on stairs
3. Falling between levels
4. Fire and explosions
5. Flames, hot surfaces and scalds
6. Collisions, entrapment and ergonomics
7. Structural collapse and falling elements
8. Electrical hazards

Physiological Requirements

9. Excess cold
10. Radiation
11. Damp and mould growth
12. Lead
13. Indoor air pollutants
14. Excess heat
15. Asbestos and manufactured mineral fibres

Protection Against Infection

16. Domestic hygiene
17. Water supply

Psychological Requirements

18. Crowding and space
19. Entry by intruders
20. Noise
21. Lighting



New Risk Ratings

The previous A–J scoring bands have been replaced with:

High Risk

Equivalent to Category 1 hazards.

Medium Risk

Equivalent to lower Category 2 hazards.

Low Risk

Minor concerns requiring monitoring.

This simpler system is intended to make inspection outcomes easier to understand and communicate.

Baseline Indicators

A significant addition to HHSRS is the introduction of baseline indicators.

These are practical standards that Local Authorities may use when assessing deficiencies.

Examples include:

Heating

Properties should be capable of maintaining:

- 21°C in living areas
- 18°C in other habitable rooms

during cold weather conditions.



Damp and Mould

Properties should:

- Be weatherproof
- Be free from persistent damp
- Have effective rainwater disposal
- Show no significant mould growth

Stairs

Staircases with four or more risers should have suitable handrails.

Windows

Upper floor windows should include suitable fall prevention measures where required.

Fire Detection

Appropriate smoke and heat detection systems should be installed, maintained and tested.

Hot Water

Adequate hot water should be available with measures to reduce scalding risks.



How Local Authorities Will Use HHSRS

Officers may use HHSRS when:

- Inspecting licensed properties
- Responding to tenant complaints
- Investigating damp and mould reports
- Reviewing disrepair allegations
- Assessing overcrowding concerns
- Determining enforcement action

Inspectors will consider:

- Property condition
- Maintenance standards
- Safety provisions
- Vulnerable occupiers
- Likelihood of harm
- Severity of potential harm

The emphasis is increasingly on evidence and risk management rather than simple compliance.



Using HHSRS During Property Preparation

Before marketing a property, landlords should review:

Structure

- ☐ Roof condition
- ☐ External walls
- ☐ Chimneys
- ☐ Boundary walls
- ☐ Drainage

Damp and Mould

- ☐ Visible mould
- ☐ Water ingress
- ☐ Condensation risks
- ☐ Ventilation

Heating

- ☐ Heating operational
- ☐ Controls functioning
- ☐ Hot water available

Electrical Safety

- ☐ EICR available
- ☐ Sockets secure
- ☐ Consumer unit satisfactory

Fire Safety

- ☐ Smoke alarms tested
- ☐ Heat alarms tested
- ☐ Escape routes clear

Security

- ☐ Door locks operational
- ☐ Window locks working
- ☐ External lighting provided



Incorporating HHSRS into Routine Inspections

During every inspection consider:

Internal

- ☐ Damp
- ☐ Condensation
- ☐ Leaks
- ☐ Loose flooring
- ☐ Damaged stairs
- ☐ Broken handrails
- ☐ Lighting levels
- ☐ Fire safety equipment

External

- ☐ Roof defects
- ☐ Gutters
- ☐ Paths
- ☐ Trip hazards
- ☐ Boundary security

Tenant Concerns

- ☐ Recorded
- ☐ Investigated
- ☐ Actioned
- ☐ Followed up

Photographs should always accompany inspection reports.



Recommended Documentation

Landlords should retain:

Compliance Documents

- EPC
- Gas Safety Certificate
- EICR
- Licensing documentation

Maintenance Records

- Contractor reports
- Invoices
- Repair logs

Inspection Records

- Inspection reports
- Photographs
- Video evidence where appropriate

Complaint Records

- Complaint log
- Correspondence
- Investigation notes
- Resolution records

Good documentation can be critical if enforcement action or disputes arise.



To Conclude

The revised HHSRS should not be viewed solely as an enforcement tool.

Landlords who use the framework proactively during property preparation, inspections and complaint handling will be better positioned to:

- Reduce risk
- Protect tenants
- Demonstrate compliance
- Avoid enforcement action
- Meet future Decent Homes Standard expectations

The safest approach is to inspect your property as though a Local Authority officer were inspecting it tomorrow.



Disclaimer

This guidance is provided for general information purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.

Legislation and government guidance may change and individual circumstances may vary.

Landlords should seek independent legal or professional advice where required.

