



Eden Housing Association

Decent Homes PLUS

The Eden Standard

Eden's Decent Homes Plus Standard ensures that your home is maintained and improved above the minimum standard set by the Government.

This booklet has been prepared to explain what our standard is...

Our Decent Homes Plus Standard ensures that we provide you with good quality, affordable housing, within a safe and secure environment.

We have nearly completed a full stock condition survey of all our properties and will use the information gathered to ensure your home benefits from modern facilities and has an efficient heating and hot water system, delivering affordable warmth to you and your family. The surveys have confirmed our properties are in good condition and we are confident the modernisation and maintenance programmes we have put in place will ensure your home continues to meet the Decent Homes standard.

Please let us know if you think your home has not yet had a stock condition survey so that we can arrange for one to be carried out. Although the Decent Homes Plus Standard sets out our service standards to you, some repairs are your responsibility and you may be liable to pay for them. We will let you know when this is the case.

We have included some of the main ones in this booklet.

For more details on your repair obligations please read your tenancy agreement.

We will let you know what our future plans are, make sure you can access this information easily and consult with you before starting work. We want you to tell us what you think about our services, how they affect you and what improvements you want to see.

Housing Health & Safety

Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

Government Standard

The Government requires all registered housing providers to carry out an HHSRS assessment of your home. It is recommended that the survey is included in the Stock Condition Surveys, which we will undertake from time to time.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

This initiative has been developed to ensure that your home is safe by identifying possible risks and taking steps to remove or reduce those risks. Our aim is to make your home safer. We will undertake a full review of each home whether it is occupied or unoccupied and we will incorporate the work into our Repairs and Planned Improvement Programmes.

Asbestos Management

Government Standard

The current Decent Homes Standard does not require asbestos surveys to be carried out. However, landlords are required to keep an Asbestos Register and let residents and contractors know where asbestos can be found in your home.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

We have an Asbestos Register which will begin to record the type and location of asbestos containing materials in your home. We will inspect your home, usually before major work starts. We will provide you with a summary of the report, at your request. We have also produced a leaflet on asbestos and included information on our website. If you would like information on asbestos in your home or require a survey to be undertaken, please contact our Property team

Asbestos Containing Material

Government Standard

When an asbestos containing material is found, landlords can either encapsulate and monitor the material or remove it, depending on its condition.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

If the asbestos containing material is in poor condition, we will arrange to have it removed by a licensed contractor. If we plan to carry out major work in your home, we will remove the asbestos material rather than encapsulate it.

Communal Water Supplies

Government Standard

Although this is not covered by the current standard, we have a duty to ensure that we provide safe supplies of water

Decent Homes Plus Standard

We will regularly check and test our communal water supplies to ensure they are free from Legionella bacteria and provide clean, safe water.

Disrepair

Your Responsibilities

You are responsible for repairing and maintaining any equipment, fixtures and fittings that you choose to install in your home. Before you undertake any home improvement work, you should always contact us first to discuss your proposals. We will give you free, professional advice and let you know how best to proceed with the work. If you do not ask our permission or carry out any unauthorised work, we reserve the right to charge you for the cost of reinstating and making good.

Roof Structure

Government Standard

Your home will not meet the current standard if more than 10% of the roof structure requires replacement or 30% requires strengthening.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

We will ensure that your roof is inspected periodically. If found to be in poor condition and beyond economic repair, your roof will be replaced and upgraded to meet current Building Regulations. If you have any concerns about the condition of your roof please contact us immediately.

Roof Coverings

Government Standard

Your home will not meet the current standard if 50% or more of the roof covering requires repair or replacement.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

We will ensure that your roof is kept in a good state of repair at all times. We will repair or replace your roof covering if required. We will carry out the repair or replacement of fascias, soffits and bargeboards in advance of the Cyclical Decoration Programme.

Chimneys

Government Standard

Your home will not meet the current standard if your chimney is in poor condition and needs to be partially or fully rebuilt.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

Your chimney will be carefully inspected periodically. If found to be in poor condition, we will re-point it. If beyond repair, we will either partially or completely rebuild it, or remove it altogether.

If you have an open hearth fire or a closed appliance and use solid fuel to heat your home, we will ensure the chimney is regularly swept and cleared of any obstruction every year. However, if the appliance is your own, it is your responsibility to have it repaired and maintained.

Your Responsibilities

You are also responsible for damage caused to the hearth, the grates, baskets and surrounds.

Gutters

Government Standard

The condition, repair and replacement of gutters and downpipes is not included in the current standard.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

All your gutters and rainwater downpipes will be inspected and, if necessary, they will be repaired or replaced in advance of the Cyclical Decoration Programme.

Your Responsibilities

We are responsible for the normal day-to-day maintenance and repair of gutters and drainage gullies. It is important that you let us know, as soon as possible, if you have defective gutters or gullies so that we can attend to the problem. In the event of gutters and gullies becoming blocked or damaged as a result of tenant misuse or vandalism, we will charge you for the cost of repairing or replacing them.

Walls (Structure)

Government Standard

Your home will not meet the current standard if more than 10% of the wall structure requires replacement or 30% requires repair.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

We will ensure that the structure of your walls are inspected periodically. If you have any concerns about the condition of your wall structure please contact us immediately.

Walls (Finishes)

Government Standard

Your home will not meet the current standard if 50% of the external wall finishes require re-pointing or renewal.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

We will ensure that your external wall finishes are inspected periodically. If they are found to be in poor condition they will be repaired or replaced.

External Decoration

Government Standard

There is no specific standard relating to redecoration in the current Decent Homes Standard. However, as your landlord, we are responsible for painting the external fabric of your home and communal areas in blocks of flats.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

As part of the ongoing improvement programme the outside of your home and all the communal areas will be inspected at least once every 5 years and, if necessary, redecorated and/or washed down. You will be given a range of colours to choose from when we redecorate

Your Responsibilities

You are responsible for the internal decoration of your home including minor plaster repairs to walls and ceilings. If you consider the condition of the plaster covering your internal walls and ceiling is in poor condition, please let us know and we will send a surveyor to inspect it.

Windows

Government Standard

Your home will not meet the current standard if at least one window requires replacing or two windows require repair. (This excludes easing, repainting and re-glazing).

Decent Homes Plus Standard

We promise that if any window unit in your home is in poor condition we will repair or replace it. In addition, all window units more than 35 years old and/or in poor condition will be replaced with a modern equivalent that meets the current Building Regulations and Secured by Design standards. We will fit window restrictors to all windows above ground floor level.

Your Responsibilities

You are responsible for the glazing in your home. If the glass is broken by you, a member of your household or a visitor to your home, you will have to pay for it to be replaced.

You are also responsible for maintaining and replacing damaged curtain rails, battens and tracks in your home.

External Doors

Government Standard

Your home will not meet the current standard if the main external door is old and in poor condition. The standard states that if you live in a house or bungalow, your external door is likely to last 40 years. If you live in a flat or maisonette, the communal entrance door it is likely to last 30 years.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

We will ensure that all external doors, if found to be in poor condition, will be repaired or replaced with a modern equivalent. Furthermore, doors which are more than 25 years old and in poor condition will be replaced. We will ensure that all replacement doors will meet current Building Regulations and Secured by Design standards

Your Responsibilities

You are responsible for replacing lost or broken keys. If you wish to install a cat flap you must seek our permission first.

Heating Boilers

Government Standard

If your central heating boiler is 15 years old or more and in poor condition, it will fail the current standard.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

We will ensure that all boilers more than 15 years old, found to be in poor condition and beyond economic repair will be replaced. We will replace your boiler with a modern equivalent that has an energy efficient A-rating. You will be given both verbal and written advice on how best to use your new boiler and its controls. We will also provide you with an Energy Performance Certificate to show you how much money you have saved.

Heating Distribution

Government Standard

The current standard expects your central heating system to last 40 years. If you have another form of heating, this is expected to last for 30 years.

Your Responsibilities

You are responsible for ensuring your heating and hot water systems are adequately protected against frost, through the use of

Decent Homes Plus Standard

We will ensure that if your home has an old and inefficient gas-fired, electric, oil or solid fuel system, typically more than 30 years old, it will be replaced with a modern, fully-controlled heating system. If a new wet system cannot be installed, we will consult with you on alternative solutions.

background heating and lagging of pipework.

If you are going away from your home in the winter months for a few weeks or longer, please contact the Property team who will be able to advise you on what to do.

Annual Gas Safety Checks

Government Standard

Although this is not covered by the current standard, landlords are required to carry out annual gas safety checks by law.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

We promise to check your gas, oil-fired boiler or solid fuel appliance every year. We will even inspect and report on your own gas-fired appliances completely free of charge. We will leave a copy of the report with you and organise any repair and maintenance work that is required. However, if the appliance is your own, it is your responsibility to have it repaired and maintained.

Electrical Rewire

Government Standard

Your home will meet the current standard if you have an electrical system less than 30 years old and free from major disrepair.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

If your home is more than 30 years old, we will undertake to repair or replace your electrical wiring installations if it is in poor condition. Periodic electrical tests will be carried out every 7 years on your home to ensure that it is always safe for you to use and that it complies with the current wiring regulations. We will undertake any upgrade work and issue you with an Electrical Safety Certificate.

Your Responsibilities

You are responsible for replacing and maintaining the following electrical items in your home:

- Electrical plugs
- Light bulbs, fluorescent tubes and starter packs
- Fuses to electrical appliances
- Telephone lines
- Resetting circuit breakers

You are also responsible for the installation, maintenance and repair of TV aerials, satellite dishes and digital set-top boxes in your home. However, we are responsible for communal systems within blocks of flats.

Periodic Electrical Testing Safety Checks

Government Standard

There is no specific requirement within the standard to undertake periodic electrical testing.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

All of our homes receive a periodic electrical safety check every 7 years or at change of tenancy whichever is the sooner. Where necessary, we will fit a residual current device (RCD) or circuit breaker as part of the electrical upgrade programme

Smoke Detectors & Fire Alarm Systems

Government Standard

The current standard does not require smoke detectors or a fire alarm system to be installed.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

Your property will have mains powered smoke detectors installed. We will regularly inspect them as part of a service contract or when your annual gas safety and periodic electrical tests are undertaken. If your home is served by a communal fire alarm system, this will be regularly serviced and maintained as part of our planned servicing contract.

All portable electrical appliances owned by us will be tested every year to ensure they remain safe to use.

Your Responsibilities

If you have a battery operated smoke detector, you should check that it is working properly at least once a week. You are responsible for replacing the batteries when they run out. We would prefer to replace your battery operated smoke detector with a mains powered one, free of charge. Please call our Property team to discuss this. The contact number can be found at the back of this booklet.

Bathrooms

Government Standard

The current standard requires your bathroom to be replaced after 40 years, if it is in poor condition.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

Over the next 5 years we will be replacing bathrooms that are more than 30 years old. Bathroom fittings less than 30 years old and in poor condition will be repaired or, if beyond economic repair, replaced. If your bathroom is to be replaced, you will be given a selection of floor and wall finishes to choose from.

If you like, we will fit an over bath shower or, if you live in older person accommodation, we can replace your bath with a level access shower. We will also fit thermostatically controlled mixer valves to ensure you and your family are protected from scalding. Please let us know if you are disabled and/or have special mobility needs.

Your Responsibilities

You are responsible for any damage to bathroom fixtures and fittings caused by misuse, neglect or vandalism. Fixtures and fittings include such items as baths, basins, cisterns and WC's.

You are also responsible for replacing chains and plugs to baths, sinks and basins.

If you wish to install a shower or an extractor fan you must ask our permission first. You will be responsible for the cost of installation, maintenance and repair.

Kitchens

Government Standard

The current standard requires your kitchen to be replaced after 30 years, if it is in poor condition.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

Over the next 5 years we will be replacing kitchens that are more than 20 years. If your kitchen is less than 20 years old and in poor condition it will be repaired, or if beyond economic repair, replaced.

If your kitchen is to be replaced you will be consulted on the design and layout of the kitchen and given a selection of colours, floor and wall finishes to choose from.

Your Responsibilities

You are responsible for any damage caused to kitchen units and any fixtures and fittings associated with them, including chains and plugs to sinks and basins.

If you wish to replace your kitchen units or add new ones to an existing kitchen, you must seek our permission first.

If you are installing a gas cooker, the appliance must be fitted with a Flame Safety Device (FSD) and be fitted by a Gas Safe (formerly CORGI) registered engineer.

If you wish to install a new cooker hood or any other form of extract device, including natural or mechanical fans, you must ask our permission first. In any event, for your own safety, the appliance must be fitted by a qualified tradesperson.

The installation, repair and maintenance of washing machines, dishwashers, tumble dryers and other such appliances are your responsibility unless we have installed them.

Modern Facilities

Appropriately Located Bathroom and WC

Government Standard

If you have a first floor bathroom and the only WC is situated on the ground floor, it must have a wash hand basin fitted or it will fail the current standard.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

Over the next 5 years we will be fitting a wash hand basin in all ground floor WCs situated inside the property, where possible.

Adequate External Noise Insulation

Government Standard

The current standard requires landlords to provide adequate levels of noise insulation, where external noise is a problem.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

If you suffer from a notifiable noise nuisance, as determined by HHSRS, we will carry out improvement work to reduce the nuisance.

Digital Switchover

Government Standard

Although not part of the standard, the Government intends to replace all analogue TV signals with a better and more efficient transmission system. The UK will be fully digital by 2012.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

We have replaced communal aerials with an Integrated Reception System (IRS). This means, if you currently watch TV through a communal aerial, you now have the choice of either accessing the basic free-to-view channels or the full menu of subscription and interactive services.

Thermal Comfort

Non-Efficient Heating

Government Standard

If your oil or gas fired central heating system does not have programmable controls, or you do not have electric storage, solid fuel or a similar heating system, then your home does not meet the current standard.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

When we replace the heating system in your home, the system will be designed to meet the Energy Saving Trust's approved standard for reliability and safety. This includes room thermostats, programmers and thermostatically controlled radiators or heat emitters. Where we install electric storage or another form of heating system, we will ensure it meets the Energy Savings Trust - Good Practice Guide (CE185 /GPG345) as our minimum standard.

Non-Effective Insulation (Loft Insulation)

Government Standard

If your home has a gas/oil fired central heating system, then the current standard requires that you have a minimum of 50mm (2") loft insulation or effective cavity insulation. If your home is heated with an electric storage/LPG/programmable solid fuel central heating system, the current standard requires that your home has both cavity insulation (where possible) and 200mm (8") of loft insulation.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

Your loft insulation will be upgraded to at least 200mm (8"), irrespective of the heating system.

Non-Effective Insulation (Cavity Insulation)

Government Standard

If your home has been built with cavity wall construction, then the current standard may require your home to have effective cavity insulation, depending on the heating system installed in your home.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

We will undertake a survey to ensure your home can have cavity wall insulation (usually if your home is built of cavity construction) irrespective of heating type. This will help reduce your energy bills.

Energy Efficiency Rating – SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure)

Government Standard

If your home has a SAP rating of less than 35, then your home does not meet the current standard. You may be exposed to periods of excessive cold that could be harmful to you and your family.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

The Government has set a SAP rating for all tenanted homes in the UK. If your home has a SAP rating of less than 35, we will carry out work to try to ensure it meets the current national average. Overall, the average SAP rating of our housing stock is very good and is well above the national average of 48*.

*English House Condition Survey 2006 (SAP 2005 Methodology).

Environmental Improvements

Neighbourhood Improvements

Government Standard

The current standard recognises that security is important to residents and has included it within the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

We will improve the security of our estates through various improvement programmes in order to meet Secured by Design standards. You will be invited to join us on our annual walkabout of your estate and encouraged to give us your views on how we could improve the appearance and security of your neighbourhood.

Security Lighting

If you live in a bungalow designated for an older person, we will fit one Passive Infrared (PIR) motion sensor light to the front or back of your home.

Your Responsibilities

Paths, Paving and Parking

We are normally responsible for the main path to the front door of your home and any paths, driveways and parking which services a communal block of flats. You are responsible for the paths leading to your garden, shed or greenhouse. If you wish to install a new drive or parking space at your home, you must ask our permission. You will normally be responsible for the cost of this work, including the cost of any statutory consents required. You will also be responsible for any future maintenance, repair and renewal unless we accept liability.

Fencing, Washing Lines and Rotary Driers

You are responsible for the maintenance and repair of any fences, posts, trellising and screening that you install, unless there is a significant hazard on the other side, such as a steep drop or stream. We are responsible for fencing, posts and screening that we install in communal areas as part of the original development or planned improvement programme. You are responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of washing lines, rotary driers and posts unless we provide them as part of a communal facility. Where fencing, posts, screens and/or boundary enclosures belonging to your home have been damaged as a result of vandalism or misuse, we reserve the right to charge you for their repair or replacement.

Garages, Sheds, Stores and Greenhouses

You are responsible for the installation, maintenance, repair and removal of garages, sheds, store or greenhouses at your home unless we provide them. Before you erect any of these structures you must ask our permission. We will happily provide you with advice on what you need to do and who you need to contact.

Adaptations

Government Standard

The current standard does not include details of adaptations, although landlords are normally responsible for this work up to £500.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

We will undertake minor adaptations (up to £2,000) in your home if you are elderly, physically or mentally impaired.

Where we receive an Occupational Therapist's referral for a major adaptation over £2,000 and the proposed work is considered to be the most appropriate course of action, we will assist with the adaptations by seeking grants from the Local Authority to enable the work to be undertaken.

If you would like more information on how our Aids and Adaptations scheme operates, please visit our website or phone us to request a leaflet.

Controlled Ventilation

Government Standard

There are no specific requirements in the current standard although landlords should limit condensation and reduce the harmful effects of mould growth.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

We will provide adequate levels of controlled ventilation by installing extractor fans in your home as part of our kitchen, bathroom and major refurbishment programmes.

Your Responsibilities

You are responsible for ensuring condensation in your home is kept under control. Condensation occurs when warm moist air meets a cold surface. Ordinary household activities, such as cooking, bathing and using a tumble drier, can produce condensation when warm moist air meets outside walls or windows. If moist air cannot escape through an open window or extractor fan, it will move around your home until it finds a cold spot, where it will become condensation.

This may eventually lead to mould growth and it is important to remove this by washing down the affected area with a mild bleach solution or proprietary anti-fungicidal wash, as soon as you notice any mould starting to form. Mould growth may well spread unless you take action to both remove the mould itself and reduce the condensation through ventilation.

Water Conservation

Government Standard

There are no specific requirements in the current standard dealing with water conservation.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

We will fit a dual flush cistern to any new WC installed. Electric shower units fitted as part of the modernisation programme will have a 9 litre per minute flow rate.

Communities and Consultation

Leaseholder Consultation

Government Standard

Although not included in the current standard, landlords are required to consult with leaseholders on work costing £250 or more. It is also good practice to consult with our residents on future work.

Decent Homes Plus Standard

We will publish the details of our Planned Improvement Programmes and make them available to you.

Tendering

Where we plan to carry out work, we will invite residents to participate in the tendering process. We will also involve residents in the preparation of contract documentation and encourage them to be part of the contract monitoring team.

Selection of Materials

We are keen to ensure that the products we use have been chosen by our residents. All the products that we present to residents will meet our performance standards and specifications. However, it is important that residents make the final decision. Residents will be able to choose from a combination of suppliers, manufacturers, materials and colours.

Design Standards

We recognise that your home is unique. We will arrange for one of our surveyors to visit you to discuss your needs when we carry out major work. When we replace your kitchen we will prepare design drawings and specifications and seek your approval before we start.

Contractor Notification

Before any planned work starts in your home, our appointed contractor will agree a date and time that is convenient to you. The contractor will confirm this in writing and you will receive a letter at least 2 weeks before the work starts. When the workmen arrive at your home, please ask them for their identification. If they fail to produce identification, please do not let them into your home and contact us immediately.

Satisfaction Surveys

Your satisfaction underpins our desire to continually improve our services. Your views and comments are key to improving our services and those of our contractors. When we carry out major work in your home, we would like you to tell us what you think. We will leave you a survey to complete.

All you need to do is answer the questions and post it back to us in the pre-paid envelope. When the work is complete, we will publish the results in our newsletter and on our website. We will tell you the areas that we need to improve on and how we are going to go about it.

Focus Groups

We have a number of focus groups responsible for selecting contractors, choosing materials and suppliers, reviewing tenants' choices such as kitchen and bathrooms, monitoring contractor performance and undertaking tenants' satisfaction surveys. The focus groups are also responsible for developing service standards in areas such as Decent Homes Plus, energy efficiency and disability adaptations. Residents who participate in the focus groups can claim normal out of pocket expenses.

If you would like to become involved in a Resident Focus Group then please contact the Housing team on: 0800 1833 948

Useful Numbers

Customer Services
0800 1833 948

Repairs Hotline
0800 3581 401

Eden District Council
01768 817 817

Energy Saving Trust
0800 512 012

National Grid UK (Gas Emergency Services)
0800 111 999

United Utilities (Water)
0845 746 2200

Useful Websites

Energy Saving Trust
www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Communities and Local
Government (CKG) - Decent Homes
www.communities.gov.uk

Secured By Design
www.securedbydesign.com