

Decent Homes Surveys

Government guidelines for Decent Homes say that homes must:

- Have reasonably modern facilities, normally taken as an adequate kitchen that is no more than 20 years old and a bathroom no more than 30 years old. (Note: where both of these elements fail the standard there is no requirement to replace both; usually it is the kitchen that is done)
- Be in a reasonable state of repair
- Be warm
- Meet the basic legal fitness standard

Decent Homes inspections are being carried out on an estate-by-estate basis with a view to works across M-K being complete by the deadline of 2010. The initial survey of each property is carried out by a surveyor from HBS, who assesses its condition using a standard template. Requirements for any other work should be noted at the same time. Once the data has been collected, all the results are entered into a database and, in conjunction with the contractor, Apollo (or Potton for windows and doors), the works for that estate are costed. Subsequently the work is issued formally to the contractor who makes contact with the tenants to carry out a detailed inspection of the work to be done in each property. For new kitchens or bathrooms the specialist sub-contractor will do a design there-and-then on a lap-top and a copy is printed out and left with the tenant. Once work commences the contractor's Resident Liaison Officer visits the tenant and becomes the main point of contact to ensure that work is carried out satisfactorily.

Doors and windows work is being done on a separate programme to the kitchens, bathrooms and other works so that the contractors do not get in each other's way. The assessment for adequacy of heating and insulation of properties has been carried out by visiting a number of archetypal properties and extrapolating the data gathered. This work has already been completed. In all cases, an electrical safety test will also be carried out and, where work is carried out, a safety certificate is issued.