

PREPARING YOUR PROPERTY FOR YOUR HOUSING HEALTH & SAFETY RATING SYSTEM INSPECTION

As part of the licensing process the property will be inspected for deficiencies which contribute to 29 hazards as described in the Housing Act 2004. The 29 hazards include Excess Cold, Damp & Mould, Fire and hazards about falls amongst others.

You can prepare for the inspection by reading the government guide “Housing health and safety rating system (HHSRS): guidance for landlords and property-related professionals” which is available at www.gov.uk – click on the Publications tab and type HHSRS in the search box to find it.

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System is a risk based assessment but there are several common issues which are being found in properties inspected in North Ormesby:

1. Issues with staircases. Some staircases have been found with no handrails or to have bannisters and guarding with large gaps which could allow children to climb the guarding or fall through it. To remedy this you can ensure that steps and stairs have securely fixed handrails covering the full flight of stairs and that guarding does not have large gaps (bigger than 10cm) between rails or spindles.
2. Issues with windows. Many properties in North Ormesby have bottom opening windows. While these windows are designed for escape in the event of fire they offer an increased risk of people falling from them especially if they are easy to access due to low sill heights. To remedy this you can fit window restrictors with an over-ride facility, to easily accessible, bottom opening windows so that windows cannot open more than 10cm unless being used in an emergency.
3. Issues with smoke detection. Some properties have been found to have inadequate smoke detection or detection which has been damaged and is no longer working properly. As well as being a legal requirement smoke detection is important to provide early detection of a fire and allow safe escape. There should be at least one smoke detector to every habitable storey of a property, more if the property is a House in Multiple Occupation or if the property has a non-standard layout.
4. Issues with damp & mould. Some properties have been found to have damp and mould because of condensation. This is usually found in rooms where day-to-day living causes the air to become saturated with moisture such as bathrooms and kitchens. These rooms are often heated less than habitable rooms such as living rooms. Ensuring that there is adequate ventilation, heating and insulation can help reduce condensation and fitting extract ventilation should be considered where condensation is a problem.