

## **Appendix A – Decent Homes definition**

### **Section 4 - A decent home - summary of the definition**

A decent home meets the following four criteria:

#### **a - It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing**

- 4.2 Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those containing one or more hazards assessed as serious ("Category 1") under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

#### **b - It is in a reasonable state of repair**

- 4.3 Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those where either:
- one or more of the key building components are old and, because of their condition, need replacing or major repair; or
  - two or more of the other building components are old and, because of their condition, need replacing or major repair.

#### **c - It has reasonably modern facilities and services**

- 4.4 Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those which lack three or more of the following:
- a reasonably modern kitchen (20 years old or less);
  - a kitchen with adequate space and layout;
  - a reasonably modern bathroom (30 years old or less);
  - an appropriately located bathroom and WC;
  - adequate insulation against external noise (where external noise is a problem);
  - adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats.
- 4.5 A home lacking two or less of the above is still classed as decent therefore it is not necessary to modernise kitchens and bathrooms if a home passes the remaining criteria.

#### **d - It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort**

- 4.6 This criterion requires dwellings to have both effective insulation and efficient heating.

Source: **A Decent Home - Definition and guidance for implementation**  
CLG, **June 2006 - Update**

## **Luton Private Sector Renewal Strategy Appendix B**

### **Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)**

#### **THE HAZARD PROFILES**

##### **A PHYSIOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS**

###### **Hygrothermal Conditions**

- 1 Damp and mould growth
- 2 Excess cold
- 3 Excess heat

###### **Pollutants (non-microbial)**

- 4 Asbestos (and MMF)
- 5 Biocides
- 6 Carbon Monoxide and fuel combustion products
- 7 Lead
- 8 Radiation
- 9 Uncombusted fuel gas
- 10 Volatile Organic Compounds

##### **B PSYCHOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS**

###### **Space, Security, Light and Noise**

- 11 Crowding and space
- 12 Entry by intruders
- 13 Lighting
- 14 Noise

##### **C PROTECTION AGAINST INFECTION**

###### **Hygiene, Sanitation and Water Supply**

- 15 Domestic hygiene, Pests and Refuse
- 16 Food safety
- 17 Personal hygiene, Sanitation and Drainage
- 18 Water supply

##### **D PROTECTION AGAINST ACCIDENTS**

###### **Falls**

- 19 Falls associated with baths etc
- 20 Falling on level surfaces etc
- 21 Falling on stairs etc
- 22 Falling between levels

###### **Electric Shocks, Fires, Burns and Scalds**

- 23 Electrical hazards
- 24 Fire
- 25 Flames, hot surfaces etc

###### **Collisions, Cuts and Strains**

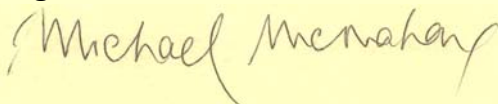
- 26 Collision and entrapment
- 27 Explosions
- 28 Position and operability of amenities etc
- 29 Structural collapse and falling elements

# Customer Service Standards - Adaptations Team

We always strive to offer you the best customer service possible. As you have applied for assistance with an adaptation or Disabled Facilities Grant, I wanted to let you know what you can expect from us.

Our officers will be professional and courteous in their dealings with you and I hope you find your experience of our service exceeds your expectations. If for any reason we fall short of the level of service you expect, please let your case officer know immediately. If after this you still feel we are not meeting your expectations, please contact me directly on 01582 54 62 01 or email me on [headofhousing@luton.gov.uk](mailto:headofhousing@luton.gov.uk) so that I can investigate.

Regards



**Michael McMahon**  
Head of Housing



Our commitments to you:

- Treat you in a respectful, understanding and professional manner at all times.
- Acknowledge your initial enquiry within **3 working days** of a referral being made to us.
- If you are a homeowner, we will arrange to carry out a survey of your property by appointment within **30 working days** of a referral being made.
- We financially assess our customers to find out what (if anything) they are required to pay towards the cost of adaptations. We will do this as part of your case within **30 working days** of a completed survey.
- Issue you with an approval document within **30 working days** of a completed financial assessment.
- If you choose to use our agency service, we will arrange for works to commence within **60 working days** of approval being issued (Please note that complex cases such as extensions that require planning permission may take significantly longer than this).
- If you choose to use our agency service, we will arrange for works to be completed within **90 working days** of commencement (Please note extensions and larger works may take longer than this).
- We will visit you again to ensure your adaptations are still operating correctly within **180 days** of completion of major works.

Our expectations of you:

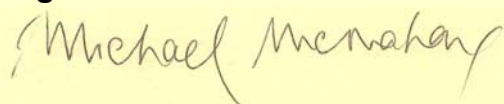
- That you will show our officers the same courtesy and respect they show you. We will not tolerate abuse or threatening behaviour against our staff.
- That you respond to requests for documents and information in a timely manner. Failure to do so may result in your application being delayed.
- Keep us informed of any changes in your circumstances.

# Customer Service Standards – Private Sector Housing Enforcement

We always strive to offer you the best customer service possible. As you have applied for assistance from our Housing Enforcement team, I wanted to let you know what you can expect from us.

Our officers will be professional and courteous in their dealings with you and I hope you find your experience of our service exceeds your expectations. If for any reason we fall short of the level of service you expect, please let your case officer know immediately. If after this you still feel we are not meeting your expectations, please contact me directly on 01582 54 62 01 or email me on [headofhousing@luton.gov.uk](mailto:headofhousing@luton.gov.uk) so that I can investigate.

Regards



**Michael McMahon**  
**Head of Housing**



Our commitments to you:

- Treat you in a respectful, understanding and professional manner at all times.
- Respond by phone to your initial service request within **1 day** for urgent priority requests, and **5 days** for all other requests (for a full list of potential hazards and their priority rating, go to [www.luton.gov.uk/housingenforcement](http://www.luton.gov.uk/housingenforcement)).
- Begin informal correspondence with your landlord within **5 days** for urgent items, and **15 days** for all other requests.
- Begin formal legal action against your landlord if necessary within **20 days** of informal action failing.
- Advise you of the timescales given to your landlord to complete the works.
- Complete works ourselves when your landlord has failed to do so within **60 days** of your landlord failing to comply with a formal notice.

Our expectations of you:

- That you will show our officers the same courtesy and respect they show you. We will not tolerate abuse or threatening behaviour against our staff.
- That you respond to requests for documents and information in a timely manner. Failure to do so may result in your application being delayed.
- Keep us informed of any changes in your circumstances.

## Appendix 2 to Executive Report

### Private Sector Renewal Strategy 2010 Action Plan

| By whom<br>(Lead Officer)   | Partners to<br>assist in delivery | Resources                       | Action/ Target<br>and by when  | Performance<br>Indicator | Measurement of<br>Achievement  | Link to<br>Sustainable<br>Communities<br>Strategy   |
|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|---|
| <p><b>Priority;</b> Review the existing Decent Homes Assistance policy to target MSOA with the poorest housing and most significant health inequalities</p>   |                                   |                                 |  |                          |  |   |
| <p><b>Commentary</b> The existing Decent Homes Assistance is available Borough-wide and take-up of the loan-based scheme is slow. A large waiting list exists across the Borough. The JSNA has identified areas of the Borough where very significant Health inequalities exist with the poorest housing.</p>                 |                                   |                                 |  |                          |  |   |
| Environmental Health Manager  | Luton Housing Partnership         | From existing revenue resources | <p>Review completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report to Executive September 2010</li> <li>• Implemented October 2010</li> </ul> | NI 137/139               | <p>Action plans targeted to tackle health inequalities</p> <p>Improved take-up</p> <p>Reduction of health inequalities</p> | <p>Improving housing conditions for existing and new housing</p> <p>Improving the health of children and young people</p> |
| <p><b>Action</b> Review the effectiveness of the Houseproud Scheme</p>  |                                   |                                 |  |                          |  |   |
| <p><b>Commentary</b> The Houseproud Scheme is offered through the Council's partner – the Home Improvement Trust and is an equity release scheme. Available across the Borough to owner-occupiers over 60 or of any age where the household contains a disabled person. Linked to Decent Homes Assistance priority above.</p> |                                   |                                 |  |                          |  |   |
| Environmental   | Home                              | From existing                   | Review   |                          | Report to  | Improving   |

| By whom (Lead Officer)  | Partners to assist in delivery               | Resources                       | Action/ Target and by when   | Performance Indicator | Measurement of Achievement   | Link to Sustainable Communities Strategy  |
|---|--|---------------------------------|--|-----------------------|--|---|
| Health Manager  | Improvement Trust                            | revenue resources               | complete by October 2010   |                       | Executive  | housing conditions for existing and new housing   |
| <b>Priority:</b> Launch Landlord Accreditation scheme   |  |                                 |  |                       |  |   |
| <b>Commentary</b> The private rented sector in the town is 10% of the entire stock and the aim is to improve the quality of accommodation by encouraging landlords to seek accreditation of their accommodation, which will be a quality mark for prospective tenants about the quality of the accommodation and the standards of management. |  |                                 |  |                       |  |   |
| Environmental Health Manager  | PS landlord forum; Luton Housing Partnership | From existing revenue resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch Autumn 2010;</li> <li>• Review take up and impact Autumn 2011</li> </ul> | NI 187                | Accreditation scheme agreed and in place<br><br>Increasing numbers of Landlords seeking accreditation<br><br>Training sessions for Landlords<br><br>Publicity for Scheme – | Improving housing conditions for existing and new housing<br><br>Promoting healthy living |

| By whom (Lead Officer)  | Partners to assist in delivery       | Resources                       | Action/ Target and by when  | Performance Indicator | Measurement of Achievement       | Link to Sustainable Communities Strategy                  |
|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---|
|   |                                      |                                 |   |                       | factsheets, leaflets and website |   |
| <b>Priority</b> Refresh the Private Sector House Condition survey   |                                      |                                 |   |                       |                                  |   |
| <b>Commentary</b> Evidence of the housing conditions of the private sector is key to developing appropriate strategies. The Council has a good record of carrying out regular Borough wide condition surveys on a 5 yearly cycle. The 2006 survey, was refreshed in 2009 using the BRE-SPP model and will require refreshing by 2014. The results of the survey will be used to review the strategy and programmes of work in the private sector in the town. |                                      |                                 |   |                       |                                  |   |
| Environmental Health Manager  | BRE<br><br>Luton Housing Partnership | From existing revenue resources | Summer 2013   | Contract agreed       | Resources allocated              | Improving housing conditions for existing and new housing |
|   |                                      |                                 | Summer 2014, survey completed,<br><br>Autumn 2014 – strategy review completed |                       |                                  |   |
| <b>Priority</b> Work towards reducing overcrowding in the private sector:   |                                      |                                 |   |                       |                                  |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By working on a proactive basis to identify cases of overcrowding ;</li> <li>• To evaluate the potential and scope for offering financial assistance to home owners to make better use of the internal space within their homes to reduce the impact of overcrowding</li> </ul>  |                                      |                                 |   |                       |                                  |   |

| By whom<br>(Lead Officer)  | Partners to<br>assist in delivery | Resources   | Action/ Target<br>and by when   | Performance<br>Indicator | Measurement of<br>Achievement   | Link to<br>Sustainable<br>Communities<br>Strategy    |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Commentary</b> The house condition survey estimated that 7.6% of the housing in the Borough was overcrowded |                                   |   |   |                          |   |  |
| Environmental<br>Health Manager  | Letting agencies                  | From existing<br>resources<br><br>Migrant Impact<br>Funding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using the MIF worker to develop and implement a programme of proactive checks on overcrowded households from May 2010 to March 2011</li> <li>• Develop a loft conversion scheme to reduce overcrowding by December 2010</li> <li>• interim report on the Town</li> </ul> |                          | <p>Lower levels of overcrowding by the end of the MIF contract</p> <p>Inspection programme of non-licensable HMOs</p> <p>Loft-conversion loan agreed by Executive</p> | Improve housing conditions to promote healthy living |



| By whom<br>(Lead Officer)  | Partners to<br>assist in delivery   | Resources  | Action/ Target<br>and by when   | Performance<br>Indicator   | Measurement of<br>Achievement   | Link to<br>Sustainable<br>Communities<br>Strategy   |
|--|---|--|---|--|---|---|
|  |   |  | population<br>composition<br>is due at the<br>end of<br>September<br>with the final<br>report<br>expected in<br>October |  |   |   |
| <b>Priority</b> Extend the Home Improvement Agency Pilot   |   |  |   |  |   |   |
| <b>Commentary</b> The Home Improvement Agency has operated a Pilot basis and is providing invaluable assistance to vulnerable households, and promoting independence as well as providing a training opportunity for 16-18 year olds not in employment education or training |   |  |   |  |   |   |
| Environmental<br>Health Manager  | Age Concern,<br>Beds Fire<br>Service, CAB,<br>EAGA plc,<br>Eastern Training | Funding from<br>the medium term<br>financial plan<br>and the SP<br>programme | Review Pilot<br>September<br>2010,<br>commission long<br>term HIA by<br>April 2011                                      | NI 187/142/117<br>(16- 18 year olds<br>NEET assisted<br>by partner social<br>enterprise) | Pilot scheme<br>monitored and<br>resulting in<br>positive<br>outcomes<br>assessed.<br><br>HIA fully<br>operational by<br>April 2011 | Improving<br>housing<br>conditions<br>for existing and<br>new housing<br><br>Promoting<br>healthy living<br><br>Supporting<br>people to live<br>independently |

| By whom<br>(Lead Officer)   | Partners to<br>assist in delivery   | Resources               | Action/ Target<br>and by when   | Performance<br>Indicator | Measurement of<br>Achievement  | Link to<br>Sustainable<br>Communities<br>Strategy  |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|--|
| <p><b>Action</b> Improve efficiency in delivering DFGs and decent homes assistance in the private sector</p>  |                                     |                         |   |                          |  |  |
| <p><b>Commentary</b> An internal review of administrative processes has been undertaken in relation to delivery of DFGs, the proposal is to extend the end to end review into the delivery of other grants offered by PSH</p> |                                     |                         |   |                          |  |  |
| Environmental Health Manager  | OT team, LEX Team Approved Builders | From existing resources | Scoping and review of current systems completed using LEX, work in progress to implement new electronic mobile working. Complete by Autumn 2010 | NI 187/137               | Improvement in the performance on delivering DFGs<br><br>Reduction of homes not meeting decency standards<br><br>Faster and more accurate processing of claims | Improving housing conditions for existing and new housing<br><br>Tackling the key risk areas that affect health<br><br>Develop a financially sound and efficient council |
| <p><b>Action</b> Improve conditions in Houses in Multiple Occupation</p>  |                                     |                         |   |                          |  |  |
| <p><b>Commentary</b> Maintaining a high level of inspection is seen as a key factor in maintaining standards in this traditionally poor end of the private sector to let market</p>   |                                     |                         |   |                          |  |  |

| By whom<br>(Lead Officer)  | Partners to<br>assist in delivery                       | Resources                  | Action/ Target<br>and by when  | Performance<br>Indicator | Measurement of<br>Achievement  | Link to<br>Sustainable<br>Communities<br>Strategy                     |
|--|---|----------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|---|
| Environmental<br>Health Manager  | PS landlord<br>forum<br><br>Bedfordshire<br>authorities | From existing<br>resources | All licensable<br>HMOs licensed<br>Summer 2012<br><br>Review licence<br>fees Sept 2010<br><br>Harmonise<br>standards in<br>HMOs across<br>Bedfordshire<br>April 2011 |                          | Licenses issued<br><br>Scale of<br>Charges<br>amended<br><br>New standards<br>adopted                                | Improving<br>housing<br>conditions<br>for existing and<br>new housing |
| <b>Priority</b> Improve Thermal Comfort  |   |                            |  |                          |  |   |
| <b>Commentary</b> Poor thermal comfort is the single biggest reason for non decency in the private sector – the Council will continue to promote thermal comfort initiatives |   |                            |  |                          |  |   |
| Environmental<br>Health Manager  | HIA team;<br>Warm Front<br><br>HIA team;<br>Local       | From existing<br>resources | Improved<br>Thermal Comfort<br><br>Continue to<br>support these<br>initiatives   | NI 187/117               | Improved take-<br>up of Healthy<br>Heating (Warm<br>front top-ups)<br><br>Improved take-<br>up of Healthy<br>Heating | Improving<br>housing<br>conditions<br>for existing and<br>new housing |

| By whom<br>(Lead Officer)   | Partners to<br>assist in delivery                             | Resources  | Action/ Target<br>and by when  | Performance<br>Indicator | Measurement of<br>Achievement   | Link to<br>Sustainable<br>Communities<br>Strategy         |
|---|---|--|--|--------------------------|---|---|
|   | Contractors<br><br>HIA team;<br>Age Concern<br><br>Warm Front |  |  |                          | (Emergency Heating)<br><br>Improved take up of radiator loan scheme<br><br>Improved numbers of clients receiving loft and/or cavity wall insulation |   |
| <b>Commentary:</b> The Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP) involves households, local groups and energy suppliers working together to deliver energy efficiency measures across an entire community. |   |  |  |                          |   |   |
| Environmental Heath Manager   | British Gas PLC<br>Wates Living Space                         | Combination of contributions from the energy supplier and Council existing resources | Undertake an appraisal of the potential for a CESP scheme to be developed within a Lower Super Output Area within the Borough. | NI 187/ 117              | Option Appraisal completed  | Improving housing conditions for existing and new housing |

| By whom<br>(Lead Officer)   | Partners to<br>assist in delivery   | Resources                  | Action/ Target<br>and by when   | Performance<br>Indicator   | Measurement of<br>Achievement  | Link to<br>Sustainable<br>Communities<br>Strategy          |
|---|---|----------------------------|---|--|--|--|
|   |   |                            | March 2011  |  |  |  |
| <b>Priority</b> Review cost of Private Sector Housing Service provision to ensure that it is providing good value for money   |   |                            |   |  |  |  |
| <b>Commentary</b> A VFM assessment has been completed for DFGs – remainder of the Private Sector Housing Service to be undertaken within the budget development process. The Adaptations service is being benchmarked with other neighbouring authorities and other authorities |   |                            |   |  |  |  |
| Environmental<br>Health Manager   | LEX Team<br>Other Local<br>authorities within<br>the<br>benchmarking<br>group | From existing<br>resources | Review the<br>outcome of<br>benchmarking<br>of the DFG<br>service Summer<br>2010;<br><br>Carry out a<br>strategic review<br>of the service on<br>the basis of the<br>benchmarking –<br>Autumn 2010<br><br>Complete the<br>VFM review and<br>benchmarking<br>for the<br>remainder of<br>Private Sector | The service is at<br>least<br>comparable in<br>cost terms to<br>other local<br>authority | VFM<br>assessment<br>complete<br><br>Adaptations<br>assessment<br>complete | Develop a<br>financially sound<br>and efficient<br>council |

| By whom (Lead Officer)   | Partners to assist in delivery                                     | Resources               | Action/ Target and by when  | Performance Indicator  | Measurement of Achievement   | Link to Sustainable Communities Strategy          |
|--|--|-------------------------|---|--|--|---|
|  |  |                         | Housing Services – December 2010  |  |  |   |
| <b>Priority Improving Customer Care :</b>  |  |                         |   |  |  |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Customer Satisfaction gathering; and use the results to improve the services provided</li> </ul>                               |  |                         |   |  |  |   |
| <b>Commentary</b> Customer satisfaction questionnaires are carried out for Housing Assistance and Service Requests, with a response rate of approx 40% and 10% respectively. |  |                         |   |  |  |   |
| Environmental Health Manager   | H&CL Communications team<br><br>Sound board<br><br>Landlords Forum | From existing resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved response rates December 2010</li> <li>Respond proactively to all negative feedback – reviewing service developments and improvement on going</li> </ul> | Increase levels of survey responses – reducing levels of negative feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revised satisfaction questionnaires</li> <li>Evidence of resulting service improvement</li> </ul> | Develop a financially sound and efficient council |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening to our customers</li> </ul>   |  |                         |   |  |  |   |
| Environmental Health Manager   | H&CL Communications  | From existing resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the sounding</li> </ul>  | Evidence of regular  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of increasing</li> </ul>   |   |

| By whom (Lead Officer)  | Partners to assist in delivery                                     | Resources               | Action/ Target and by when  | Performance Indicator                     | Measurement of Achievement   | Link to Sustainable Communities Strategy |
|---|--|-------------------------|---|---|--|--|
|   | team<br><br>Sound board<br><br>Landlords Forum                     |                         | board to report on performance and all major policy and procedure changes<br><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual undertake a mystery shopping exercise</li> </ul> | engagement                                | levels of customer satisfaction  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review public information and the PSH website content</li> </ul> |  |                         |   |   |  |  |
| Environmental Health Manager  | H&CL Communications team<br><br>Sound board<br><br>Landlords forum | From existing resources | Maintain the currency of all public information available on PSH services   | Improved and readily accessible web pages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of increasing levels of customer satisfaction</li> </ul> |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff Training</li> </ul>  |  |                         |   |   |  |  |
| Environmental Health Manager  | H&CL Communications Training Team                                  | From existing resources | Annually a programme of staff training will be developed to focus on  | Training programme in place               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of learning and improved performance</li> </ul>          |  |

| By whom<br>(Lead Officer)   | Partners to<br>assist in delivery  | Resources                  | Action/ Target<br>and by when  | Performance<br>Indicator | Measurement of<br>Achievement | Link to<br>Sustainable<br>Communities<br>Strategy             |
|---|--|----------------------------|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
|   |  |                            | continuous<br>professional<br>development,<br>customer care<br>and equalities<br>and<br>safeguarding |                          |                               |   |
| <b>Priority;</b> Develop a system of capturing well being outcomes from the services provided by the PSH Teams  |  |                            |  |                          |                               |   |
| <b>Commentary:</b> Service Standards are in place and monitored for all the key activities provided by the PSH team, the objective refine the data gathering to all evidence positive outcomes. |  |                            |  |                          |                               |   |
| Environmental<br>Health Manager   | H&CL Adult<br>Social Care<br>Improvement<br>Team<br><br>Luton Housing<br>Partnership | From existing<br>resources | A system to<br>capture<br>evidence of<br>outcomes in<br>place by Jan<br>2011                         | System in place          |                               | Improve housing<br>conditions to<br>promote healthy<br>living |