



Salford City Council  
**Housing, Health and Safety  
Rating System (HHSRS)  
- a landlords guide**

**Renting with confidence IN Salford**

# FOR RENT



## Foreword

**The Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is a new approach to assessing health and safety risks in residential properties.**

It will enable Salford City Council to address health and safety hazards more effectively and take appropriate action based on an assessment.

This booklet explains how the new system works. It gives details of the 29 hazards that will be assessed and describes the actions that Salford City Council can take in response to a hazard.

## Section 1

### How does the HHSRS work?

HHSRS assesses 29 hazards that are found in the home, from damp and mould growth to structural collapse. Each hazard is given a score which will fall into one of 10 bands from band A to band J. Scores that fall into band A indicate a serious hazard whereas scores in band J indicate that the hazard is much less severe. Where there is no hazard, a score will not be recorded.

Scores in bands A to C are classed as **category 1 hazards** and the local authority is obliged to take action.

Scores in bands D to J are **category 2 hazards** and the local authority can use discretion whether to take action.

The score is based on the risk to the potential occupier or visitor who is most vulnerable to that particular hazard. For example, the elderly are most vulnerable to hazards relating to stairs. A home that is safe for those most vulnerable to that particular hazard is safe for all.

The system provides a separate score for each individual hazard and does not provide a single rating for the property or building as a whole.

### When will an assessment take place?

Salford City Council proactively inspects the private rented sector across the city. Although officers from the Housing Market Support team have Powers of Entry to all residential properties, we will normally make arrangements to undertake an assessment of a given property by agreeing a mutually convenient time with the occupant or landlord.

### What are the hazards and how will they be assessed?

Section 2 gives a brief overview of all the hazards covered by the HHSRS. Full details of how to assess a hazard are available to download at [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/housinghealth](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/housinghealth)

Alternatively, call 08701 226 236 to order a copy of this document.

## Section 2

### The 29 hazard profiles

The hazards that will be assessed are as follows:

#### A. Physiological requirements

##### Hygrothermal conditions

##### 1. Damp and mould growth

This category covers threats to health associated with an increased presence of house dust mites and mould or fungal growths resulting from dampness and/or high humidity. It includes threats to mental health and social well-being which may be caused by living with the presence of damp, damp staining and/or mould growth. Lack of adequate ventilation contributes to the increase in dust mites and higher relative humidity.

##### 2. Excess cold

This category covers the threats to health from excessively cold indoor temperatures. A healthy indoor temperature is around 21c, although cold is not generally perceived until the temperature drops below 18c.



Roof spaces that lack any form of insulation, such as this one, can be fitted with loft insulation to stop heat escaping through the roof.

##### 3. Excess heat

This category includes threats from excessively high indoor air temperatures. Where temperatures exceed 25c, mortality increases and there is an increased risk of strokes.

##### Pollutants (non-microbial)

##### 4. Asbestos and Manufactured Mineral Fibres (MMF)

This category covers the presence of, and exposure to, asbestos fibres and MMF within properties.



Asbestos fibres should never become exposed as shown in this photograph.

##### 5. Biocides

This category covers threats to health from those chemicals used to treat timber and mould growth in properties. While biocides include insecticides and rodenticides to control pest infestations (e.g. cockroaches or rats and mice), this is not considered for the purposes of the HHSRS.

## 6. Carbon monoxide and fuel combustion products

This category includes hazards resulting from the presence of excess levels in the atmosphere within the property of:

- a) carbon monoxide
- b) nitrogen dioxide
- c) sulphur dioxide and smoke

Gas appliances should be checked and there should be a current Gas Safety Certificate. Ensure adequate ventilation is provided by airbricks and vents out to external air.



**This water heater doesn't have adequate ventilation which can be seen by the damage to the wall and ceiling**

## 7. Lead

This covers the threats to health from the ingestion of lead from paint and water pipes. Poisoning from lead water pipes is not a particular problem in hard water areas.



**Old lead pipework may pose a threat**

Check old paint that may be lead based and accessible to children.

## 8. Radiation

This covers the threats to health from radon gas and its daughters. Radon gas is primarily airborne, but it can also be found in water.

## 9. Uncombusted fuel gas

This category covers the threat of asphyxiation resulting from the escape of fuel gas into the atmosphere within a property. Check gas or oil fired appliances and heaters.

Lack of maintenance and a poor seal between appliance and flue are common. Check possible obstruction of the flue or chimney and ensure the flue discharge is not within one metre of a window that can open.

## 10. Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)

VOCs are a diverse group of organic chemicals which include formaldehyde. These are gaseous at room temperature, and are found in a wide variety of materials in the home.

## B. Psychological requirements

### Space, security, light and noise

#### 11. Crowding and space

This covers hazards associated with lack of space within the property for living, sleeping and normal family/household life. There should be adequate space for occupants to live and have privacy. There should be adequate space for sleeping, living, recreation and eating.



**This bedroom is too small to sleep four people.**

#### 12. Entry by intruders

This covers difficulties in keeping a property secure against unauthorised entry and the maintenance of defensible space. Good quality door and window locks should be provided to stop intruders.

## 13. Lighting

This category covers the threats to physical and mental health associated with inadequate natural and/or artificial light. It includes the psychological effect associated with the view from the property through glazing. Adequate light should be provided within the room sufficient for the purpose to which the room is being used and to avoid accidents. Psychologically it is important to have sufficient daylight in the room.

## 14. Noise

This category covers threats to physical and mental health resulting from exposure to noise inside the property or within its boundary.

## C. Protection against infection

### Hygiene, sanitation and water supply

#### 15. Domestic hygiene, pests and refuse

This category covers hazards which can result from:

- a) poor design, layout and construction such that the property cannot be readily kept clean and hygienic;
- b) access into, and harbourage within the property for pests; and
- c) inadequate and unhygienic provision for storing and disposal of household waste.

Ensure soil and waste drainage is in good repair. Floors and other surfaces should be capable of being cleaned.

#### 16. Food safety

This covers threats of infection resulting from inadequacies in provision and facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food. There must be adequate work surfaces for food preparation, sufficient storage capacity for storing food and cooking utensils, and the condition of surfaces should be checked. Hot and cold water must be provided.

## 17. Personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage

This category covers threats of infection and threats to mental health associated with personal hygiene, including personal washing and clothes washing facilities, sanitation and drainage. It does not include problems with pests associated with defective drainage facilities. Check that there are adequate bath or shower facilities and washbasins, these should be clean and capable of being kept clean. Hot and cold water must be provided. There should be adequate facilities for occupants to keep clean and wash and dry their clothes.



This sink has no direct supply of either hot or cold water which is unacceptable.

## 18. Water supply for domestic purpose

This category covers the quality and adequacy of the supply of water within the property for drinking and domestic purposes such as cooking, washing, cleaning and sanitation. It also includes threats to health from contamination by bacteria, protozoa, parasites, viruses, and chemical pollutants. (Contamination by radon and lead are dealt with separately.) The quality of water supplied from public mains is outside the HHSRS assessment and is subject to separate controls.

## D. Protection against accidents

### Falls

## 19. Falls associated with baths, showers or similar facilities

This category includes any fall associated with

a bath, shower or similar facility. The bath should be slip resistant. Handles should be provided. There should be adequate drying space outside the bath or shower.

## 20. Falls on the level

This category covers falls on any level surface such as floors, yards and paths. It also includes falls associated with trip steps, thresholds or ramps, where the change in level is less than 300mm. Ensure paths and floor coverings are in good condition. Any change in floor levels must be clearly defined and the area well lit.



Uneven paving slabs may pose a significant hazard

## 21. Falls associated with stairs and steps

This covers any fall associated with stairs, steps and ramps where the change in level is greater than 300mm. It includes falls associated with:

- internal stairs or ramps within the property;
- external steps or ramps within the grounds of the property;
- internal common stairs or ramps within the building containing the property and giving access to the property, and those to shared facilities or means of escape in case of fire; and
- external steps or ramps within the grounds of the building containing the property and giving access to the property, and those to shared facilities or means of escape in case of fire.

It includes falls over guarding (balustrades) associated with the stairs, steps or ramps.



**This staircase does not have any handrails which poses a threat to safety, particularly to older people.**

However, it does not include falls over guarding to balconies or landings, nor does it include falls associated with trip steps, thresholds or ramps where the change in level is less than 300mm.

## 22. Falls between levels

This category covers falls from one level to another, inside or outside a property, where the difference in levels is more than 300mm. It includes falls out of windows, falls from balconies or landings, falls from accessible roofs, into basement wells, and over garden retaining walls.

It does not include falls associated with stairs, steps or ramps. Nor does it include falls from furniture or ladders.

## Electric shocks, fires, burns and scalds

### 23. Electrical hazards

This covers hazards from shock and burns resulting from exposure to electricity, including lightning strikes. It does not include risks associated with fire caused by deficiencies to the electrical installations, such as ignition of material by a short-circuit.



**This continuous leak is an electrical hazard.**

### 24. Fire

This category covers threats from exposure to uncontrolled fire and smoke at a property. It also includes injuries caused by clothing catching alight from an uncontrolled fire or flame.

### 25. Hot surfaces and materials

This category covers threats of:

- a) burns – injuries caused by contact with a hot flame or fire, and contact with hot objects or hot non-water based liquids;
- b) scalds – injuries caused by contact with hot liquids and vapours.

It includes burns caused by clothing catching alight from a controlled fire or flame, when reaching across a gas flame or open fire used for heating. It does not include burns resulting from an uncontrolled fire at a property.



Cookers should comply with safety guidelines.

### Collisions, cuts and strains

#### 26. Collision and entrapment

This category includes risks of physical injury from:

- a) trapping body parts in architectural features, such as trapping limbs or fingers in doors or windows; and
- b) striking or colliding with objects such as architectural glazing, windows, doors, low ceilings and walls.

#### 27. Explosions

This covers the threat from the blast of an explosion, from debris generated by the blast, and from the partial or total collapse of a building as the result of an explosion.

#### 28. Position and operability of amenities

This category covers threats of physical strain associated with functional space and other features at the property.

#### 29. Structural collapse and falling elements

This category covers the threat of whole property collapse, or of an element or part of the fabric being displaced or falling because of inadequate fixing, disrepair, or as a result of adverse weather conditions. Structural failure

may occur internally or externally within the property's boundary, threatening occupants, or externally putting at risk members of the public.



Loose tiles pose a threat to passers by.

## Section 3

### Salford City Council's response to hazards

The Housing Act 2004 gives local councils extensive powers to intervene where they consider housing conditions to be unacceptable on the basis of the impact of health and safety hazards on the most vulnerable potential occupier or visitor.

The actions available to Salford City Council in relation to both Category 1 and Category 2 hazards include: -

1. Serving an Improvement Notice
2. Making a Prohibition Order
3. Serving a Hazard Awareness Notice
4. Making a Demolition Order
5. Declaring a Clearance Area

However, making a Demolition Order or declaring a Clearance Area in relation to Category 2 hazards can only be done in circumstances prescribed by regulations.

In addition to the above, the following actions are also available in relation to a Category 1 hazard: -

6. Taking emergency remedial action
7. Serving an Emergency Prohibition Order

The council will decide which course of action is most appropriate in all circumstances, but will take into consideration the wishes of both tenants and owners, including the extent to which they are willing and able to carry out or tolerate repairs.

Where it is considered appropriate, the requirements of both Improvement Notices and Prohibition Orders can be suspended until a time or the occurrence of an event.

#### 1. Improvement Notice

An Improvement Notice specifies the remedial action necessary to deal with the hazard and requires the person on whom it is served to take that action within a specified period of time.

The council may carry out the necessary work and recover its costs if the notice is not complied with. Alternatively it may commence proceedings for an offence, or it may do both.

An Improvement Notice becomes operative after 21 days unless there is an appeal against it.

#### 2. Prohibition Order

A Prohibition Order may prohibit the use of part or all of the premises for some or all purposes. This may be an appropriate course of action where conditions present a serious threat to health or safety but where remedial action is considered unreasonable or impractical either because of cost or other reason.

Prohibition Orders may include:

- specifying the maximum number of persons that should occupy the property where it is too small for the actual household in occupation;
- specifying the maximum number of persons who should occupy the property where there are insufficient facilities (e.g. personal washing facilities, sanitary facilities, or food preparation or cooking facilities) for the numbers in occupation;
- prohibiting the use of a property by a specified group (until improvements have been carried out), where a property is hazardous to some people, but relatively safe for occupation by others.

A Prohibition Order becomes operative at the end of the period of 28 days from the date on which it was made, unless there is an appeal against it.

### **3. Hazard Awareness Notice**

Typically, a Hazard Awareness Notice would be a response to a remote or minor hazard, where the council simply wishes to draw attention to the desirability of remedial action. However, it is also a possible (though exceptional) response to a category 1 hazard where works of improvement, or prohibition of the use of the whole or part of the premises is not practicable or reasonable.

This type of notice does not require any action by the recipient. Instead it provides advice about steps that could be taken voluntarily.

The notice must specify the hazard concerned and the action considered appropriate to deal with it.

### **4. Demolition Order**

A Demolition Order would be made where having regard to the condition of the property and local circumstances, demolition is considered more appropriate than repair or improvement.

### **5. Clearance Area**

The declaration of a Clearance Area is another way in which the council can secure the demolition of property where, having regard to its condition and local circumstances, it would be more appropriate than repair or improvement. The declaration of a Clearance Area would normally involve a group of properties, but can be done in relation to a single property depending on the circumstances.

### **6. Emergency Remedial Action**

Where a hazard presents an imminent risk of serious harm to health or safety, the council may take such steps as are immediately necessary to remove the imminent risk without

giving prior notice to the owner and then recover its costs.

### **7. Emergency Prohibition Order**

An Emergency Prohibition Order imposes the same requirements as a normal Prohibition Order, but would be served instead where there is an imminent risk of serious harm to health or safety. An Emergency Prohibition Order is effective immediately.

## **The appeal process**

If you want to appeal against the enforcement action you have been given, you can take your case to a Residential Property Tribunal (RPT).

RPTs have replaced the role of the County Court in hearing appeals. They can be flexible in allowing appeals and may also mediate between local councils and owners/agents to try to resolve appeals without a formal hearing.

If a notice is not complied with within the time allowed, prosecutions for non-compliance are heard in a magistrates court.

### **How do RPTs work?**

RPTs are a more informal way of considering appeals against notices served under HHSRS. Appeal panels consist of three people - a legal expert, a technical expert and a lay member.

RPTs are informal bodies and do not operate like courts – they hear cases presented by each side (in the case of the HHSRS this will be the landlord or the agent and the council). Parties who appeal to an RPT do not need to be represented by lawyers.

RPTs can allow an appeal (rule in favour of the owner), dismiss an appeal or vary the requirements of a notice or order.

For more information about RPTs you can call  
**0845 100 2614**  
or email:  
**northern.rap@communities.gsi.gov.uk**

Alternatively you can write to:  
Residential Property Tribunal Service  
First Floor  
25 York Street  
Manchester M1 4JB

For more details about any of the information  
contained in this leaflet please contact:

Housing Market Support  
Salford City Council  
4th floor  
Salford Civic Centre  
Chorley Road  
Swinton  
M27 5BY

Tel. **0161 793 3150**  
Email. **housingstandards@salford.gov.uk**

Notes and useful contact details:

This document can be provided in large print, audio, electronic and Braille formats. Please contact the Housing Market Support Team at Salford City Council, telephone number 0161 793 3150.

إذا احتجت للمساعدة في فهم هذه النشرة , برجاء الاتصال بفريق المساواة في مجلس سالفورد ,  
هاتف رقم 0161 793 3150

এই পুস্তিকাটি বোঝার জন্য যদি আপনার সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয় তাহলে সেলফোর্টে কাউন্সিলের ইকুয়ালিটি টিমের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন টেলিফোন নম্বর 0161 793 3150

如果您有關於本宣傳頁的任何問題，請聯繫 Salford 理事會的 Equalities 團隊，電話號碼為 0161 793 3150

જો આ લીફ્લેટ સમઝવા મોટ તમને મદદની જરૂરત હોય, કૃપો કરી ઇકવાલિટીજ ટીમ સર્વોર્ડ કાઉન્સિલનો ટેલિફોન નમ્બર 0161 793 3150 પર સંપર્ક કરો.

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਲੀਫਲੈਟ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਲਫੋਰਡ ਕੌਂਸਲ (Salford council) ਵਿਚ ਇਕੁਅਲਿਟੀ ਟੀਮ (Equalities Team) ਨਾਲ ਫੋਨ ਨੰਬਰ 0161 793 3150 'ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو اس لیف لیٹ کے سمجھنے میں مدد کی ضرورت ہو تو براہ کرم اکیولٹی ٹیم کو سالفورڈ کونسل سے اس ٹیلی فون نمبر 0161 793 3150 پر رابطہ قائم کر سکتے ہیں۔

# Salford City Council

## **Housing Market Support**

4th Floor  
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M27 5BY

**Telephone: 0161 793 3150**

**email: [housingstandards@salford.gov.uk](mailto:housingstandards@salford.gov.uk)**

**[www.salford.gov.uk/fitness-for-habitation](http://www.salford.gov.uk/fitness-for-habitation)**