

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how the agency identifies, manages, and mitigates Category 1 hazards in residential rental properties in line with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and the Renters' Rights reforms.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All managed properties
- All staff involved in lettings, inspections, maintenance, and compliance
- All landlords using agency management services

3. Legal Framework

The agency operates in accordance with:

- Housing Act 2004 (HHSRS)
- Renters' Rights Act (latest reforms)
- Local authority enforcement powers and guidance

Category 1 hazards are defined as hazards assessed under HHSRS as posing a serious and immediate risk to health or safety (Bands A–C).

4. Hazard Categories

The agency recognises the following hazard groups under HHSRS:

4.1 Physiological Hazards

- Damp and mould growth
- Excess cold or heat
- Carbon monoxide and combustion risks
- Asbestos and harmful substances

4.2 Psychological and Security Hazards

- Overcrowding
- Poor security (intrusion risk)
- Noise and inadequate lighting

4.3 Hygiene and Sanitation

- Pest infestations
- Poor drainage or sanitation
- Unsafe water supply

4.4 Falls and Injury Risks

- Unsafe stairs or steps
- Slips and trips on level surfaces
- Falls from height

4.5 Structural and Fire Risks

- Electrical hazards
- Fire hazards
- Structural instability
- Unsafe layout or fitting

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Letting Agency

- Conduct regular property inspections (minimum every 6 months)
- Maintain accurate records of inspections and repairs
- Act promptly on reported hazards
- Escalate serious risks immediately

5.2 Landlords

- Ensure properties meet legal safety standards
- Authorise and fund necessary repairs
- Respond promptly to agency recommendations

5.3 Tenants

- Report hazards promptly
- Allow reasonable access for inspections and repairs

6. Risk Identification

Hazards may be identified through:

- Routine inspections
- Tenant reports
- Contractor feedback
- Local authority notifications

All staff must be trained to recognise HHSRS hazards and escalate concerns.

7. Risk Assessment

When a hazard is identified:

- Assess likelihood of harm
- Assess severity of outcome
- Determine if hazard meets Category 1 threshold

If uncertain, seek professional or environmental health guidance.

8. Response to Category 1 Hazards

8.1 Immediate Actions

- Treat as urgent priority
- Notify landlord immediately
- Arrange emergency works if required

8.2 Timescales

- Immediate risk (e.g. gas, fire, structural): same day action
- Severe health risk: action within 24–48 hours

8.3 Temporary Measures

Where full repair is delayed:

- Provide temporary heating, safety barriers, or alternative accommodation if necessary

9. Repairs and Remediation

- Use qualified contractors
- Ensure works meet safety standards
- Verify completion through follow-up inspection

10. Record Keeping

The agency will maintain:

- Inspection reports
- Hazard assessments
- Communication logs with landlords/tenants
- Repair records and invoices

Records must be retained for a minimum of 6 years.

11. Escalation and Enforcement

If landlords fail to act:

- Issue formal written notice
- Consider withdrawal of management services
- Cooperate with local authority enforcement where required

12. Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually or when legislation changes.

13. Non-Compliance

- Failure to follow this policy may result in:
- Disciplinary action (staff)
- Termination of landlord agreements

14. Key Principle

- The agency prioritises tenant health and safety above all else. Category 1 hazards must always be treated as urgent and non-negotiable compliance issues.

HAZARD CATEGORIES

Below is the official 29 hazard categories—these are the things inspectors assess. Any of these can become a Category 1 hazard depending on severity.

1. Physiological (health-related)

1. Damp and mould growth
2. Excess cold
3. Excess heat
4. Asbestos and manufactured mineral fibres (MMF)
5. Biocides (toxic chemicals)
6. Carbon monoxide and fuel combustion products
7. Lead
8. Radiation (e.g. radon gas)
9. Uncombusted fuel gas
10. Volatile organic compounds (VOCs)

2. Psychological / space & security

11. Crowding and space
12. Entry by intruders (security issues)
13. Lighting (poor natural/artificial light)
14. Noise

3. Hygiene, sanitation & water supply

15. Domestic hygiene, pests and refuse
16. Food safety
17. Personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage
18. Water supply

4. Falls (major enforcement category)

19. Falls associated with baths etc.
20. Falls on level surfaces
21. Falls on stairs and steps
22. Falls between levels

5. Structural / physical hazards

23. Electrical hazards
24. Fire
25. Flames, hot surfaces and materials
26. Collision and entrapment (e.g. doors/windows)
27. Explosions
28. Position and operability of amenities (e.g. unsafe layout)
29. Structural collapse and falling elements

Category 1 Definition

A hazard becomes Category 1 when:

- The likelihood of harm + severity of outcome is high (bands A–C)
- It presents a serious or immediate risk to occupant health/safety

Typical real-world Category 1 examples:

- Severe damp & mould affecting respiratory health
- Dangerous electrics or fire risks
- Unsafe stairs or structural instability
- Carbon monoxide exposure
- Extreme cold due to lack of heating