

Decent Homes Standard – Current Version – Summary Table

	Decent Homes Criteria¹: In order to meet the Decent Homes Standard applicable to Northern Ireland, a dwelling must:
A	meet the current statutory minimum fitness standard for housing - the fitness standard is set out in Article 46 of the Housing (NI) Order 1981.
B	be in a reasonable state of repair
C	have reasonably modern facilities and services
D	provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

¹ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/decent-homes-standard>

a) It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing, as set out in Article 46 of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1981².

For a dwelling to be fit for human habitation it must³:

- be structurally stable
- free from serious disrepair
- free from dampness prejudicial to the health of the occupants (if any)
- have adequate provision for lighting, heating and ventilation
- have an adequate piped supply of wholesome water
- have satisfactory facilities in the house for the preparation and cooking of food, including a sink with a satisfactory supply of hot and cold water
- have a suitably located water-closet for the exclusive use of the occupants (if any)
- have a suitably located fixed bath or shower and wash-hand basin each of which is provided with a satisfactory supply of hot and cold water, for the exclusive use of the occupants (if any) and;
- have an effective system for the draining of foul, waste and surface water

² [Housing \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1981](#)

³ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/minimum-fitness-standards>

b) It is in a reasonable state of repair

Key Components

'Key' building components are those which, if in poor condition, could have an immediate impact on the integrity of the building and include walls, roofs, windows, door and some types of heating.

Dwellings fail to meet this criterion where one or more of the following key building components are old and because of their (poor) condition, need replacing or major repair:

- Wall structure
- Lintels
- Brickwork (spalling)
- Wall finish
- Roof structure and roof finish
- Chimneys
- Windows and external doors
- Heating - central heating boilers
- Heating other (e.g. Gas fires and storage heaters)
- Electrical Systems

b) It is in a reasonable state of repair

Other Components

'Other' building components are those that have a less immediate impact on the integrity of the dwelling and include kitchens, bathrooms and central heating. Their combined effect is therefore considered.

Dwellings fail to meet this criterion where two or more of the following other building components are old and because of their (poor) condition, need replacing or major repair:

- Kitchen
- Bathrooms
- Heating - central heating distribution system

c) It has reasonably modern facilities and services

Dwellings that fail to meet this criterion are those that lack three or more of the following:

Kitchen:

- Reasonably modern (20 years old or less) kitchen
- A kitchen with adequate space and layout

Bathroom and WC:

- Reasonably modern (30 years old or less) bathroom and WC
- Appropriately located bathroom and WC

Common areas for blocks of flats

- Adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats

External Noise

- Adequate insulation against external noise (where external noise is a problem)

d) It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

Providing a reasonable degree of thermal comfort requires efficient heating and effective insulation.

Efficient heating:

- Efficient heating is defined as:
 - Any gas or oil programmable* central heating, or;
 - Electric storage heaters (e.g. off-peak or Economy 7 tariff), or;
 - Programmable* LPG/solid fuel central heating, or;
 - Similarly efficient heating systems that are developed in the future.

(Programmable heating is where the occupants can control the timing and the temperature of the heating).*

Effective insulation:

- For dwellings with gas/oil programmable heating an effective package of insulation is:
 - Cavity wall insulation (if there are cavity walls that can be insulated effectively) OR;
 - Loft insulation** that meets current NI Building Regulations standards (if there is loft space).

(Loft insulation thickness of 50mm is a minimum designed to trigger action on the worst housing).*
- for dwellings heated by electric storage heaters/LPG/programmable solid fuel central heating a higher specification of insulation is required:
 - Cavity wall insulation (if there are cavity walls that can be insulated effectively) AND;
 - Loft insulation** that at least meets current NI Building Regulations standards (if there is loft space at least).

*(** Loft insulation thickness of 50mm is a minimum designed to trigger action on the worst housing).*