

# Decent and Safe Homes in the East Midlands

This initiative is being championed by the 3 cities of Derby, Leicester and Nottingham who made a successful bid for funding from the Government Office East Midlands. The project will invite all 40 local authorities and landlord groups in the East Midlands to become partners and the benefits will be shared across the region.



## Raise awareness of the Housing Act 2004

**Owner/Occupiers and Tenants:** Local events will be held in the 3 cities promoting awareness of the changes brought about by the Act. Look out for an event in your area.

**Housing Professionals and all groups with an interest in housing:** Training of local authority staff, elected members and all others who work in housing will be undertaken at each of the 3 cities and throughout the region

**Landlords:** Free training will be provided to landlords at centres within each of the 3 cities. There will be a landlord's information pack produced and the establishment of a web site.



## Licensing harmonisation

Working with the local authority partners, a system of exchanging information and reviewing procedures will be established, this will provide for greater harmonisation of the standards applied to licensed accommodation. Landlords and tenants will gain greater consistency of the standards required throughout the region. A web site will be developed as a resource for getting and exchanging information.



## Accreditation

Accreditation is a voluntary means of improving conditions in the private rented sector. Landlords can choose to join a scheme which has agreed property and management standards. A few schemes operate in the region, particularly in the student sector. Scheme operators, landlord and tenants will be consulted and a framework for the introduction of Accreditation Schemes in the region will be established. This will make it easier for other schemes to be started and for the schemes to operate in closer agreement.

An East Midlands Private Sector Housing Initiative funded by the Government Office East Midlands

# The Housing Act 2004

## How it affects you

The Housing Act 2004 will create a fairer and better housing market for all those who own, rent or let residential property while protecting those most vulnerable.



# The Housing Act 2004

This act introduces some radical reforms to housing which affects owner/occupiers, tenants, landlords, local authorities and all others with an interest in housing.

## Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

This is a new system for deciding whether a house is healthy and safe. The likelihood of 29 hazards is assessed and the likelihood of injury or ill health from each is calculated. This replaces the fitness standard for houses. The categories of hazards are:

Damp/mould growth (2)	Radiation	Noise	Fire
Excess heat/cold (2)	Uncombusted fuel gas	Hygiene (2)	Hot surfaces
Asbestos	VOCs	Food safety	Entrapment
Biocides	Crowding & space	Water supply	Explosions
Carbon monoxide etc	Intruders	Falls (4)	Ergonomics
Lead	Lighting	Electrical	Structural

## Home Information Pack

From 2007 every home sold will require a home information pack which includes all the relevant information needed at the start of the home buying and selling process including a home condition report, proof of title and all relevant permissions and approvals. The Pack is likely to include the following documents, most of which are currently provided later in the sale:

- *terms of sale*;
- *evidence of title*;
- *replies to standard preliminary enquiries made on behalf of buyers*;
- *copies of any planning, listed building and building regulations consents and approvals*;
- *for new properties, copies of warranties and guarantees*;
- *any guarantees for work carried out on the property*;
- *replies to local searches*; and
- *a home condition report based on a professional survey of the property, including an energy efficiency assessment*



The Home Information Pack will make buying and selling a home less uncertain.

## Home Condition Report

A home condition report is required in every home information pack. This will have to be done by a qualified inspector who will report on the condition of the house including an energy efficiency assessment.

## Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

These include bed-sits and other houses/flats which are occupied by people from more than one family. A new definition brings many houses into this category, including student shared houses.

Standards for amenities, room sizes and management apply to these houses.

## Licensing of HMOs

Larger higher risk HMOs must be licensed by the local authority. There is a power for local authorities to license smaller HMOs to address particular problems that may exist.



## Selective Licensing of Private Landlords

Problems such as low housing demand or anti-social behaviour can be dealt with by the selective licensing of landlords by the local authority.

## Right to Buy

Changes to the scheme include extending the initial qualifying period and a right of first refusal by the social landlord on resale.

## Park Homes

Protection is given to tenants of park homes to prevent exploitation and harassment of occupants, many of which are vulnerable or elderly. Disabled facilities grants can be given for mobile homes and caravans.

## Tenancy Deposit Schemes

Where a deposit is required these will be safeguarded by a scheme sponsored by the Government.

## Gypsies and Travellers

The accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers have to be locally assessed by the local authority and a strategy produced detailing how these needs can be met.



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