

Frequently asked questions

How can I find out if my home is included in the Decent Homes Programme?

Unfortunately, there is no confirmed programme beyond what we are currently working on, which will take us to the end of the financial year. See table below for these estates.

Which estates are receiving Decent Homes in 2011/2012?

In the North; Tipton, Wednesbury & West Bromwich:	In the South; Oldbury, Rowley Regis & Smethwick:
St Clements House and Wimberger House - West Bromwich	Elmcroft, Ashcroft and Birchcroft – Smethwick
Stone Cross Estate - West Bromwich	Old Chapel Estate - Smethwick
Wood Green Estate – Wednesbury	Queen’s Head Estate, Smethwick
Bilston Road Estate - Wednesbury	Riddins Estate, Cradley Heath
Mesty Croft - Wednesbury	Langley, Oldbury

Details of the remaining programme, which consists of estates that have not been visited by Decent Homes will be made available when the Council make a formal decision on the future programme. This is likely to be early next year.

Will my rent increase to pay for the Decent Homes work?

No. Rent increases are separate to the Decent Homes improvement works.

Do you install showers as part of the Decent Homes work?

Pipework and electrical wiring is installed where bathrooms are refurbished. However, a shower unit is not supplied by Sandwell Homes.

I am unable to use the bath, can I have a low level shower tray fitted as part of the Decent Homes work?

Where a bathroom is identified as needing to be replaced, and is inaccessible by the tenant, the survey team will discuss options of either a standard shower tray, curtain and shower unit, or make a referral to an Occupational Therapist.

How long does the work take?

For all internal works we aim to complete within 7 weeks.

How can I identify Sandwell Homes or Construction Partner employees?

Employees wear identity cards. Always ask to see this before allowing access to your home.

What about disturbance to my decorations?

Where the works cause damage to your decorations, a Project Officer will issue decoration vouchers following an inspection of the property after the work has been completed. For elderly and / or disabled customers an additional 2 rooms will be decorated but any remaining rooms will remain the responsibility of the tenant.

What is the Decent Homes Standard?

The Government has set a target to ensure that all council housing meets standards of decency, originally a target for the end of 2010 was set, this has since been extended to 2012. To be defined as 'decent', a home must meet the current statutory minimum standard for housing, be in a reasonable state of repair, have reasonably modern facilities and services and have both effective insulation and efficient heating.

Do I have the right to refuse work?

Yes, although there is a refusal strategy we encourage customers to take up the offer of the improvements if at all possible. Nevertheless, tenants can refuse the works because of various reasons but still have to have a PIR (periodic inspection report on the condition of the electrics) and provided that comes back as safe the customer will be left alone.

Can I have my bathroom replaced but not my kitchen?

The survey team will determine what works need to be undertaken, tenants can refuse individual elements, this is usually because they have their own. The only exception will be that if the rewire is required it must be carried out for health and safety reasons, we will not carry out any further work if the tenant refuses us access for the rewire.

Will I have to move out whilst work is taking place?

We aim to carry out all works whilst you remain in your home.

What if I am on holiday or in hospital?

When the survey team meet you, you are asked to identify any holiday or hospital appointments and schedule work around these commitments.

Will I be consulted about the work and given any choice in style and design?

There are a number of choices that the survey team will offer, dependant on the works required.

I will be having some redecorating work carried out. Can I choose my own wallpaper?

Redecoration of the kitchen and bathroom is undertaken if you have these rooms improved. There is a selection of wallpapers for each room. There is also a selection if you qualify for the addition 2-room decorations.

When will I get new windows?

If there are existing timber or metal windows, we will change these to PVCu windows. Single glazed windows are not replaced.

Why can't I have the same work as my neighbour?

Each property is surveyed individually to determine the condition of all the elements.

I'm disabled, can my home be adapted?

Are you have difficulty in gaining access to your home, or using the facilities in your home? Advice and specialist equipment can be provided by the council to help you remain independent in your home. See below for details of who to contact.

Who can I contact for further information regarding disabilities?

There is now only one number to contact for all your adult social care needs, making it quicker and easier to access Adult & Social Care services: Sandwell Council ASSIST - **0845 352 2266** or visit the Health and Social Care section of the Sandwell Council website www.sandwell.gov.uk (or click here link:

http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/209/needs_assessment_by_social_services/989/assessment_of_health_and_social_care_needs)