

# MHCLG Consultation on a reformed Decent Homes Standard for social and privately rented homes

ISPA response

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## Overview for members

MHCLG is [consulting](#) on a modernised Decent Homes Standard for both the social rented sector (SRS) and private rented sector (PRS) in England.

While this predominantly covers issues such as hazards, disrepair or damp and mould, government is also proposing to introduce best practice guidance to sit alongside the DHS, including information to landlords on ways in which they could choose to “go further” than the minimum standard.

## Section 5 – Guidance

### Additional best practice guidance

*“The DHS sets a minimum standard for rented accommodation. However, we recognise that there is an opportunity to use guidance to encourage and support landlords to go further in improving quality.*

*“We are considering producing a further piece of guidance to accompany the DHS, with examples of best practice across tenures on several topics which we have set out in Table 5. Subsequent guidance will specify where it is tenure specific. Following this guidance will be voluntary (unlike statutory guidance for local authorities). Proposed topics to include within this additional best practice guidance listed below have been informed by previous sounding boards conducted.”*

<b>Digital Connectivity</b>	Guidance on how to improve a property’s digital connectivity, to improve national coverage and help fix digital exclusion. Such as via access to better broadband.
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## Response

### Question 38:

**a) What information and/or topics would you like included in the proposed additional best practice guidance for social and private landlords and tenants? (Select all that apply)**

- Digital connectivity

### Question 39:

**If you have any other views on this specific topic you would like to share, please do so here:**

On behalf of the fixed telecoms sector, ISPA supports the inclusion of digital connectivity in the proposed best practice guidance accompanying the reformed Decent Homes Standard (DHS), and

endorses the consultation's intent "to improve national coverage and help fix digital exclusion ... via access to better broadband."

Connectivity is crucial to the modern digital economy and a key driver of investment. We therefore appreciate MHCLG's recognition that reliable, gigabit-capable broadband is a foundation for modern life, underpinning work, education, healthcare and social participation. Industry shares in this view, and is actively engaged in ensuring that households across the whole of the UK have access to future-proof digital connectivity, investing between £3bn and £6bn each year into rollout [according](#) to Ofcom statistics, working to provide the infrastructure which will help solve digital exclusion.

The rollout of full fibre gigabit broadband is the one of the largest and most vital of the UK's infrastructure projects currently underway, and whilst we recognise that this is predominantly a private sector project, public sector support and the right regulatory environment for investment is critical to achieving its aims.

The regulatory landscape for telecoms is already inherently complex, and therefore we strongly support the voluntary nature of this guidance to avoid additional burden on the sector, which is in a point of flux as providers race to connect the "final third".

We welcomed the cross-departmental government approach as set out in the Digital Inclusion Action Plan and believe this supports that wisely. In responding to the associated Digital Inclusion consultation, we called for close collaboration between Government departments, as well as with the industry, and we echo that call here as well. Any ambition to encourage greater connectivity should take into account existing barriers our members are facing, or have identified that they will face in the long-term.

We strongly recommend that, in order to ensure this guidance is effective, MHCLG officials actively engage with ISPA and our members as well as the wider telecoms industry; Ofcom; and counterparts in DSIT. For example, work is currently ongoing to address ongoing issues associated with broadband providers gaining access to multi-dwelling unit buildings, which we expect would intersect with this guidance.

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#### **About ISPA**

The Internet Services Providers' Association (ISPA UK) is the trade body for the UK internet industry. Our 150+ members build and operate the fixed and wireless networks and retail services that keep homes and businesses connected across the UK.