Review of the HHSRS

Huw Williams
RHE Global

The process

- Invitation to tender issued by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)
- Short turn around time for submissions of expressions of interest but quick award of contract- 14 week contract period upto MHCLG Project Board Presentation (4th April 2019)
- RHE Global successful bidder
- Project Team set up
    - Project Lead – Prof David Ormandy assisted by Dr. Stephen Battersby
    - Project Manager – Ian Marriner, RIAMS Editor and ex- HoS
    - Alan Davies RHE – Research Consultant (formally with Ceredigion CC)
    - 3 Workshop Facilitators (all HHSRS Trainers)
- Draft report being prepared (by 12th March) with view to swift finalisation and submission

Aim of the scoping review

To identify the extent to which the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) needs to be updated and revised

(including exploring the scope for setting minimum standards as part of the HHSRS framework, or scrapping the HHSRS altogether)

Why?

The aims of the scoping project

- Identify which parts of the HHSRS are out of date and need to be revised
- Demonstrate whether there would be scope for introducing a sampling and cloning approach
- Indicate whether the current penalties for non-compliance are appropriate and proportionate
- Show whether there is a need for additional worked examples in the guidance
- Help establish the feasibility of using digital technology to develop an app for the HHSRS
- Consider whether minimum standards should be included in the framework

Consultation

- 5 regional workshops for LA's (105 delegates)
- First Tier Tribunal Workshop
- Landlords Workshop - (RLA / NLA and Regional Landlord Accreditation Groups)
- Survey questionnaires
  - Regulators survey (92 responses)
  - Tenants representatives (26)
  - Trainers (5)
- 3 conference call workshops
- Written representations
  - CIEH
  - National Housing Federation
  - Building Research Establishment
  - Generation Rent
  - Care & Repair England
  - National Landlords Association
  - Public Health England
  - Community Housing Cymru (CHC)
  - Shelter
  - Fire Safety Unit (Home Office)

Feedback

- With a consultation exercise that seeks the views from such a wide range of stakeholders, there will inevitably be matters that give rise to wide range of views and opinions. The reasons behind the opinions expressed will be many and varied.
- Grateful for the responses and input into the process and level of engagement reflects the level of importance attached to housing matters in general.
- The various responses are being collated and a draft report prepared.

Consultations Feedback

Consistent messages across organisations and interests

- **Support for the general principles** of the HHSRS and link between health and housing
- Appreciation of **need to update** due to health, property and building technology advancements
- **Closer links** to other legislation – Fitness for Habitation (Tenancy Law), Management Regulations and Fire Safety requirements examples
- **Enable better engagement** with landlords, tenants and other housing professional groups and support agencies - Simplification, Transparency, Consistency in its application
- **Greater use of digital technology** and open access to HHSRS Guidance, Worked Examples and innovations/ good practice for all interested parties.

Observations

- Qualifications and competency
- Maintaining and demonstrating competence
- Ensuring consistency of approach (Are all services and individual officers using all the legislative interventions that are at their disposal and in a consistent manner?)
- Do we always do the right things and in the right way?
- Are we being innovative and adopting modern approaches that will secure continual improvement? (RSL - Mobile phones for noise investigations)
- Are we telling the story sufficiently well (stats and narrative)

Next steps

- This has been a significant piece of work and completed in a very short turn around period.
- Chivvying and chasing to get as many responses in as possible
- The various responses are being collated and a draft report prepared.
- Final report will be submitted to MHCLG for consideration