Energy Essentials | The Latest Rules For Energy Efficiency

In our latest infosheet, we look at the very latest news on EPCs, and how they will work alongside the newly announced details in the updated Decent Homes Standard.

The direction is clear: energy efficiency is becoming a core standard in ensuring a rented home is warm, safe and fit for long-term letting; not just a nice-to-have.

For landlords and agents, this is best understood through three linked frameworks:



1 | EPCs | How a property's energy performance is measured.

2 | MEES | The legal Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards that applies today.

3 | The Warm Homes Plan and Decent Homes Standard | The longer-term baseline for what will be expected in the future.

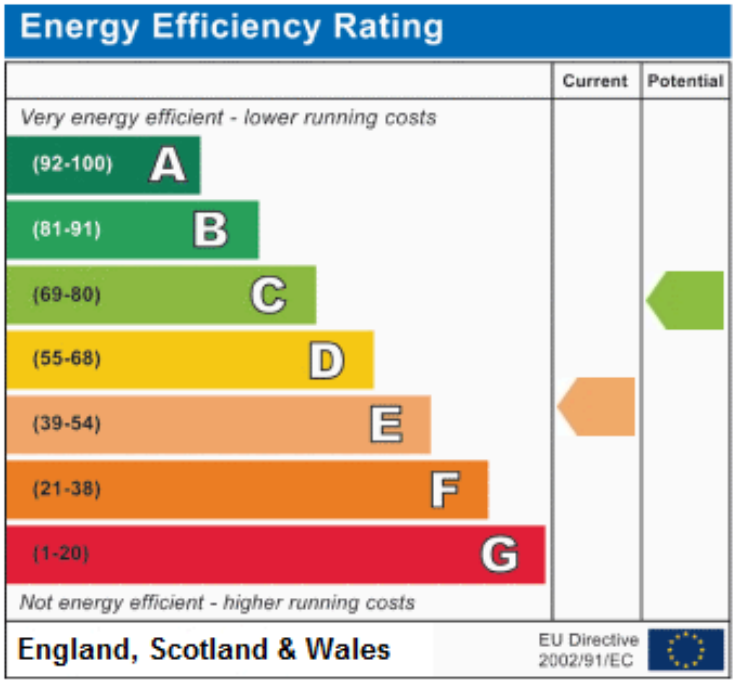
We look at what is changing, what is already enforceable, and the key steps your landlords can take now to prepare confidently for the changes.

EPCs: The Starting Point For Energy Standards

Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) are the foundation of energy regulation in the rental sector.

They provide a rating from A, which is the most efficient; to G which is the least efficient.

An EPC is required whenever a property is built, sold or newly marketed for rent, and is valid for 10 years. In their current form, they receive widespread criticism; however, EPCs are important because they underpin MEES compliance.



What's New | EPC Reform Is On The Way

The government has confirmed that EPCs will be updated, moving away from a single headline score, and in future involve a range of new metrics, which are likely to include:

- Energy costs.
- Fabric performance of the building.
- Heating systems.
- Smart readiness.

This shift is designed to give a more accurate picture of how a home performs in practice, rather than just where it sits on a linear scale.



MINIMUM ENERGY EFFICIENCY STANDARDS | THE CURRENT POSITION

Landlords have long become used to complying with energy efficiency rules, with MEES having been a requirement since 2018. The current rules state that most privately rented homes must not be let, if they fall below an EPC of E, unless a valid exemption applies.

These rules apply across all tenancies, including new and when a tenancy renews. Letting a sub-standard property can result in financial penalties, and could impact a landlord's ability to obtain vacant possession.



KEY RULES

- It is generally unlawful to rent out a property with an EPC of F or G.
- Any exemptions must be correctly registered and evidenced.
- Local authorities can issue fines of up to £5,000 per breach.

The Warm Homes Plan | What Landlords Should Prepare For Next

The government's Warm Homes Plan has provided clarity on future direction: homes in the private rented sector are expected to reach the equivalent of EPC Band C by 2030.

However, rather than relying solely on today's single EPC rules, the future standard will be assessed across a number of different metrics, linked to:



- Building fabric.
- Heating performance.

This is a major shift, and for landlords, it means they need to future-proof their properties over coming years.

Landlords who plan upgrades early will have more options, lower costs, and fewer letting restrictions later.

The Decent Homes Standard | Where Energy Efficiency Meets Housing Quality

Alongside Warm Homes policy, the government has confirmed that the Decent Homes Standard will apply to the PRS for the first time, with full implementation expected by 2035 at the latest.

The updated standards are set to place a stronger emphasis on:



- Thermal comfort.
- Damp and mould prevention.
- Expectations around repairing the home.
- Properties being safe, with healthy living conditions.

Energy efficiency is therefore becoming part of a wider definition of what a decent rented home looks like: one that is warm, safe, healthy and fit to live in, not simply compliant with minimum rules.

Damp, Mould And Thermal Comfort

Although these are separate regulations, there are clear connections between EPC reforms, future MEES requirements, and the changes to Decent Homes expectations, all of which have an increased focus on:

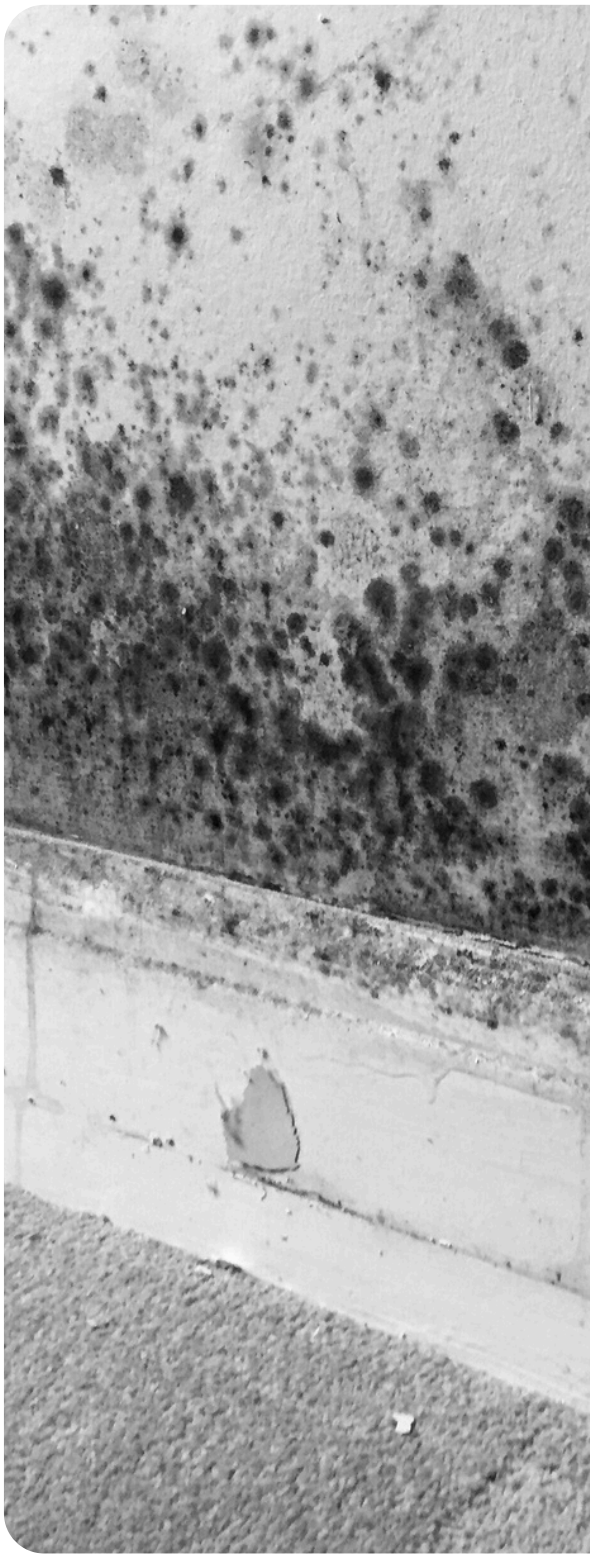
- Warmth.
- Ventilation.
- Moisture control.
- Tenant health.

Poor insulation and inefficient heating can increase the likelihood of:

- Condensation.
- Damp.
- Mould complaints.
- Disrepair disputes.

Therefore, as landlords prepare for the range of new standards, retrofit improvements must be managed carefully.

Insulation without proper ventilation, or unclear tenant guidance, can create unintended problems; this is why tenant communication will becoming an essential part of energy compliance.



Preparing Your Landlords Now



Although some of the reforms are phased in, the best time for landlords to act is now; not when the enforcement deadlines arrive.

Here are the most useful steps you can encourage your landlords to take now.

Understand The Property's Current EPC



1

A, B AND C

These properties are broadly future-proofed, but keep an eye on the changes to EPCs which may impact some properties.

2

D AND E

Understand what improvements can be made to the property before the 2030 deadline.

3

F AND G

If any properties fall into these brackets, then they are not compliant, unless there is a valid exemption.

Landlords should consider phased upgrades such as:

- Loft and wall insulation.
- Draught-proofing.
- Heating controls and system upgrades.
- Glazing improvements.
- Ventilation measures.

Damp And Mould

Damp and mould aren't minor or cosmetic issues; they are increasingly central to tenant protections and enforcement expectations, particularly where poor insulation, inadequate ventilation or inefficient heating contributes to unhealthy living conditions.

Landlords should treat reports of damp or mould seriously and respond appropriately, as these concerns are becoming a key measure of whether a home is safe, warm and fit to live in.

Evidence And Documentation

Landlords should maintain clear documentation at every stage, including EPCs, exemption evidence, contractor works and tenant communications. Good record-keeping supports compliance, reduces disputes, and helps demonstrate that reasonable steps have been taken to meet the changing standards.

Communicate Clearly With Tenants



Energy improvements work best when tenants understand:

- How to heat the home efficiently.
- How to ventilate effectively.
- What issues should be reported promptly.

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Having strong and effective communication helps to reduce complaints, and supports a healthy relationship between tenants and landlords.

From Compliance To Confidence

Letting agents are increasingly at the centre of energy standards support. The most effective firms will help landlords by:



- Identifying risks and issues.
- Helping to plan property improvements gradually.
- Supporting tenant communication.
- Maintaining strong audit trails.

Landlords who start planning early will protect their investment, reduce compliance risk, and deliver better outcomes for tenants.

The Timeline

2026

- Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards already applies.
- EPC – direction of reforms confirmed.

Understand EPC position and start planning phased improvements.

2026-2029

- Transition phase.
- EPC methodology changes to be developed and introduced.

Encourage landlords to budget for upgrades and plan fabric and heat performance improvements

2030

- Warm Homes plans implemented.
- Private Rental properties to be minimum equivalent EPC.

Ensure properties are upgraded before the deadline.

BY 2035 LATEST

- New Decent Homes Standards apply.
- Warmth and thermal comfort become part of decent homes definition

Stronger expectations around damp, mould, safety, repair and living conditions.

BOX FROM THE LETTINGS HUB
the home for lettings

At The Lettings Hub, we're always here to support you through the ever-changing lettings landscape. With the Renters' Rights Act introducing new regulations, staying updated is crucial. That's why we offer a variety of resources to help you navigate these changes smoothly. From webinars and blogs to tailored guides, our platform is packed with expert insights. Be sure to follow us on LinkedIn and bookmark our Renters' Rights Hub for the latest updates, tips, and advice.

