**Common hazards in Bath and North East Somerset**

Acceptable housing conditions are assessed under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. The assessment looks at how likely it is a defect in the house will cause a negative effect on health and how serious the effect on health will be. The result of the assessment classifies a hazard as either “Category One” or “Category Two”. Category One hazards are the most serious hazards and the Council has a duty to take action to reduce the risk to health. For rented properties, this normally means asking the landlord to undertake repair works. There are 29 hazards in total. It is possible for a property to have more than one hazard.

The House Condition Survey 2012 identified the most Category One common hazards in Bath and North East Somerset.

**Excess Cold**

To reduce excess cold make sure the property has loft insulation (above 270mm), cavity wall insulation (where possible) and an efficient fixed heating system which covers all living rooms, bedrooms and bathrooms. If the property has solid walls think about solid wall insulation. Where windows need replacing choose double glazing or if this is not possible because the property is listed then use secondary glazing and draught proofing. For more information see [Damp and Cold Homes webpage](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/housing/home-improvements-and-repairs/problems-damp-and-cold-homes).

**Falls**

To reduce the risk of falls associated with stairs and steps, make sure handrails are fitted. Where one or both sides of the stairs are open, guarding must be fitted. Steps should be even and inside should be carpeted. There should be no openings either between steps or between the guarding that a 100mm sphere can pass through.

To reduce the risk of falls on the level make sure paths and yards are well maintained with effective drainage to reduce slipping. Good lighting is required to allow occupants identify any trip thresholds.

To reduce the risk of falls between levels make sure all balconies or landings have guarding. Low level windows (where the sill is below 1,100mm) should have guarding. Where glazing extends to within 800mm of the floor then guarding or safety glass must be fitted.

**Fire**

All properties should be fitted with smoke detection, ideally wired into the main electrical supply. More information on appropriate fire precautions can be found on the [Fire Safety webpage](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/housing/landlords-and-tenants/fire-safety).

**Damp and Mould**

This is the problem Housing Services receives most complaints about. To remedy problems with damp and mould, make sure the property is energy efficient and you know how to use the heating properly. For persistent problems you may want to consider using anti-mould paint to help control the problem. The damp and cold homes webpage contains more information.