

MHCLG clarifies standard method's immediate use in decision-making

8 August 2018 by John Geoghegan

Councils should start using the government's new standard method for assessing housing need immediately when determining applications, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has confirmed.



Assessing need

for new housing. Pic: Alamy

Meanwhile, local authorities without up-to-date local plans should start using the standard method when considering their housing land supply positions, the ministry added.

The new methodology, [first revealed last September](#), is based on the government's official household formation projections, adjusted to reflect local housing affordability and then subject to a 40 per cent cap on any increase above current local plan annual requirements.

The aim of the method is to cut out time-consuming debates about housing need during local plan examinations. Its introduction was confirmed in the final version of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) [published at the end of last month](#).

An annex to the new NPPF says local plans undergoing examination can continue to use the 2012 version's policies for another six months, up until 24 January, but in other respects, including decision-making, the new policies should be applied immediately.

An MHCLG spokesman confirmed that the standard method, like all new NPPF policies, should "apply to decision-making, where applicable, from the date of publication".

He went on to say that local authorities without up-to-date local plans should use the standard method when calculating their five-year housing land supply. "This will act as an incentive for local authorities to ensure that their local plan is up to date," he added.

But the MHCLG cautioned against councils using the [indicative local housing need figures published by the ministry](#) for each English local authority last September.

The spokesman said: "The figures published were an example of how the formula worked at the time, and the calculations will need to be updated by local authorities as and when they need it."

Find all of *Planning's* new NPPF coverage [here](#).