

The Government adopts a Healthy Premises Programme

Indoor air quality problems under control within a decade

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The Healthy Premises Programme aims to make public buildings healthy and improve healthcare and rehabilitation for those suffering from poor indoor air quality. In the course of the 10-year programme period, the aim is to introduce procedures in real estate management whereby the condition, fitness for purpose and

user experiences will be examined and analysed on a regular basis. This type of action should improve indoor air quality in many early childhood education and care centres, schools and barracks, for example. The Government adopted the programme in its session on Thursday 3 May 2018.

The purpose of the programme is to establish new procedures in real estate management. It means that experts in fields of real estate management and healthcare together with users evaluate the condition of buildings and their fitness for purpose.

"It is time to change course now so that we can finally get the problems in buildings under control and bring prompt help for those suffering from poor indoor air quality. We must tap into all existing competencies and have the courage to take swift action as soon as problems are identified. The common thread in the programme is openness and solving problems together", stresses **Kimmo Tiilikainen**, Minister of the Environment, Energy and Housing.

Key actions in the programme involve providing more robust support by healthcare services for all those who suffer from poor indoor air quality.

"Right from the start of the programme, we will bring more support and advice to those with symptoms and ailments. We will also explore ways in which healthcare and social welfare services can support people better. In practice, this means that service paths will be described and guidelines will be given, and the rehabilitation of those with the worst symptoms will be stepped up and social protection that supports rehabilitation will be examined. These are things that will be promoted especially with the help of the National Indoor Programme launched by the National Institute for Health and Welfare", explains Minister of Family Affairs and Social Services **Annika Saarikko**.

Collaboration with local authorities, for instance, will be initiated in 2018 to further develop the Healthy Premises 2028 mode of operation. Damp control training for builders will be introduced and there will be open communication on good experiences and practices. The quality of indoor air and existing problems related to it in private and public buildings in Finland and in peer countries will be mapped out for the purposes of the whole work.

The implementation of the programme is based on work that is already being carried out in local government, regional government, ministries and numerous organisations and enterprises. The measure of success of the programme builds on improving the quality of the stock of buildings owned by local and central government and on reducing the number of people suffering from poor indoor air quality by the end of 2028.

"Every child, youth and adult in school has the right to a healthy and safe learning and work environment. When decisions are made on premises and service networks, the learning environment can easily be revamped and modernised in the same context to better support the new core curricula. We also need to improve competence in different fields of study concerning problems related to indoor air quality", says Minister of Education **Sanni Grahn-Laasonen**.

The proposal for the programme was drawn up in the ministries in autumn 2017 and it was completed in mid-December. An extensive consultation round was then initiated, during which feedback was collected both online and in discussion sessions held in Oulu, Joensuu, Turku and Helsinki. The collected feedback was taken into consideration when finalising the programme.

Annual reporting on the programme will be included in the Annual Report of the Finnish Government submitted to Parliament. In addition, the Government will draw up a report at the end of its government term on the progress made in implementing the Healthy Premises 2028 programme over the government term.

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