

Technical Guidance

Separating walls – cavity insulation

Question

Is a separating wall accidentally filled with blown or pumped cavity insulation acceptable?

Considerations

- NHBC Standards clause 6.3 – D9(b) says ‘Cavity separating walls should be constructed so that any external cavity wall insulation placed by blown or pumped methods, where permitted, cannot enter the separating wall cavity.’
- The wall construction should meet the sound insulation requirements set out in Approved Document E (England and Wales), Technical Handbook - Domestic Section 5 (Scotland) and Building Regulations Part G (Northern Ireland).
- Approved Document E (England and Wales) says ‘Do ensure that any external cavity wall is stopped with a flexible closer at the junction with the separating wall, unless the cavity is fully filled with mineral wool or expanded polystyrene beads.’
- Building Regulations Part G (Northern Ireland) says ‘If external walls are to be filled with an insulation material other than loose fibre the insulation material shall be prevented from entering the cavity in the separating wall.’
- The presence of loose fibre or beads in the separating wall cavity should not increase sound transmission.
- NHBC Standards clause 6.1-D11(b) does not permit full cavity fill in Scotland.

Answer

Care should be taken to ensure that blown or pumped cavity insulation does not enter the cavity of the separating wall. However, if loose fibre or beads do enter the cavity they should not adversely affect sound transmission.