

AMENITY STANDARDS FOR HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

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This advice note is to assist owners and landlords understand the requirements placed upon them, and the basic standards that must be achieved within their properties when it is let as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

These standards will be applied in the following situations

1. As the basis of licence conditions for properties that are required to be licenced under Housing Act 2004 Part 2.
2. As relevant matters to be considered in the assessment of the HMO following Housing Health and Safety Rating System, including the hazard “crowding and space”.
3. In determining compliance with the following statutory provisions:
 - a. Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006
 - b. The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)

Limitations

This advice note does not apply to self-contained flats including HMOs defined by Housing Act 2004 Section 257.

This advice note is not intended to be exhaustive and is without prejudice to the results of a statutory inspection following Housing Act 2004.

Any space standard noted within this guidance is notwithstanding any limit imposed by a Direction under Section 354 of the Housing Act 1985 as to the number of individuals accommodated in the property.

General Requirements

A proper standard of management should be observed in the house, in particular to ensure the repair, maintenance, cleansing and good order of the common parts including any garden, and reasonable maintenance of let rooms. This includes but is not limited to:

- The name, address and telephone number must be provided to each occupant and displayed in a prominent place in the common part of the HMO
- The fixed electrical installation must be inspected and tested by a qualified person at least every five years.
- Entranceways, hallways, gardens and other common parts must be maintained in good and clean decorative repair.

- Staircases to all accessible floors must have a well secured handrail to the full length.
- Make satisfactory arrangements for the disposal of refuse and litter from the house and to ensure that all means of escape from fire are kept clear of obstructions.

In assessing fire safety in Houses in Multiple Occupation, owners and landlords are advised to follow guidance which has been set out in “Section 6, Fire Safety” on the councils HMO, webpage.

Bedrooms

Space standard

One occupant	A bedroom used for single occupancy will be a minimum of 6.51m ² . Where no other communal space is provided the bedroom will need to be larger, therefore please consult with the Private Sector Housing Team.
Two occupants	A bedroom used for two person occupancy will be a minimum of 10.22m ² . Where no other communal space is provided the bedroom will need to be larger, therefore please consult with the Private Sector Housing Team.

All habitable rooms, kitchens, bathrooms, and water closet compartments shall be a minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.14m, except in the case of existing attic rooms, which shall have a minimum height of 2.14m over an area of the floor equal to not less than three quarters of the area of the room, measured on a plane 1.5m above the floor.

In determining the size of a bedroom:

- Any floor area above which the ceiling height is less than 1.5m is disregarded.
- Any space assigned for an en-suite bathroom is disregarded.
- Any floor space taken up with a built in cupboard, where removal would provide reasonably accessible floor space is included.
- Consideration will be made on space which is not reasonably available for the use by an occupant. An example would be an excessively long and narrow entrance corridor. Such space may be disregarded.

Repair standard

Each unit of living accommodation within the HMO and any furniture supplied with it must be in a clean condition at the beginning of a person’s occupation of it.

During occupation:

- The internal structure is maintained in good repair;
- Any fixtures, fittings or appliances provided by the tenancy are maintained in good repair and in clean working order; and
- Every window and other means of ventilation are kept in good repair.

Natural and Artificial Lighting

All habitable rooms shall have an adequate level of natural lighting, provided via a clear glazed window and/or door(s), the glazed area to be equivalent to at least 1/10th of the floor area and to extend normally to a point 1.75m above floor level.

Basement rooms used for human habitation should, in addition to the requirement in the first paragraph, have sufficient natural lighting for their purpose.

Ventilation

All habitable rooms shall be ventilated directly to the external air by a window which has an openable area not less than 1/20th of the floor area.

Basement rooms used as habitable rooms should be provided with natural ventilation direct to the external air. In addition, there should normally be an unobstructed space immediately outside the window opening which extends the entire width of the window or more and has a depth of not less than 0.6m measured from the external wall or not less than 0.3m in the case of a bay window with side lights.

Heating

All habitable rooms shall be provided with a fixed heating appliance capable of heating the room to a temperature of 21°C when the outside temperature is -1°C. This provision should be:

- Reasonably affordable
- Controllable by the occupants
- Maintained in safe and good working order
- Sited and guarded as necessary to minimise the risks to health and safety.

Where occupants are responsible for utility payments for their bedroom, the property must be reasonably well insulated

Shared Kitchens

Where full kitchen facilities are not provided within bedroom spaces, each occupancy shall have constant access to a shared kitchen no more than one floor distant from the large majority of users and, in any event, no more than two floor distant from any user.

Space standard

Used by 1 - 3 persons	5m ²
Used by 4 persons	6m ²
Used by 5 persons	7m ²

The above are minimum space standards based on optimum shape and layout. In practice, it may be necessary to have a larger space standard to ensure that there is sufficient space to fit in all the facilities required and provide a circulation area which permits safe use of the kitchen for the number of users.

There may be instances where it is practicable to provide a single larger kitchen space to accommodate a greater number of occupants. It is recommended that contact is made with the Private Sector Housing Team to discuss the space and occupancy prior to occupation.

Facilities

Without prejudice to the space standard, one set of kitchen facilities are required for every five occupants.

The facilities shall comprise:-

<p>Cooking</p>	<p>A gas or electric cooker with a minimum of four burners/hobs, an oven and a grill. Alternatively, a microwave oven may be substituted for one or two of the burners/hobs respectively.</p> <p>For up to and including 7 persons a combination microwave oven of minimum 20 litres capacity, suitably located on a fixed worktop may be provided in place of an additional conventional cooker.</p>
<p>Storage</p>	<p>Each separate occupancy shall be provided with dry goods storage space and refrigerator space either within the kitchen, or in an adjacent and readily accessible position. A minimum of one 500mm wide wall unit for dry goods storage space per occupancy is sufficient, although occupancies comprising of more than one individual will require some additional space.</p> <p>The space in a sink unit below the sink will not be accepted for the above purposes.</p> <p>Adequate refrigerated food storage must be provided either within the shared kitchen or within a room directly adjacent to the kitchen if space is a particular problem.</p> <p>A tall upright fridge freezer will be acceptable for every 5 persons. These usually have a fridge capacity of around 140 to 180 litres and a freezer capacity of around 70 to 90 litres.</p> <p>For more than 5 persons a combination of separate larger refrigerators and freezers will also be acceptable provided they give an approximate equivalent standard.</p>
<p>Preparation</p>	<p>A worktop or table of smooth and impervious material of minimum size 500 x 1000mm plus a further 500 x 500mm per person.</p> <p>Two twin outlet power sockets in addition to any serving major appliances set at a convenient height and safe position.</p>
<p>Sink</p>	<p>A metal or ceramic sink and drainer in good condition and of minimum dimensions 500 x 1000mm set on a stable base with a constant supply of hot and (potable) cold water. Where practicable a two-course tiles splash-back shall be provided. The sink(s) shall be connected to the drainage system via a suitable trap.</p> <p>A wash-hand basin shall not be used in place of a sink.</p> <p>Adequate provision for the storage of kitchen utensils shall be provided in the kitchen, in addition to the space provided for food storage.</p> <p>For up to and including 7 persons a double bowl sink and double drainer will be regarded as adequate in place of providing an additional sink. Alternatively, a standard sink plus an electric dishwasher will be acceptable for up to and including 7 persons.</p>

Heating

Each kitchen shall be provided with a fixed heating appliance capable of heating the room to a temperature of 18°C when the outside temperature is -1°C. The cost of heating to the common parts of any HMO should be met directly from the landlord and should be constantly maintained for the benefit of occupants.

Kitchen Floor

All kitchen floors should be impervious to water. Kept in a good state or repair, been free of chips, tears and bulges. The floor material should be easily cleaned by the occupunats.

Ventilation

All kitchens shall be ventilated directly to the external air, either by a window, the openable area of which shall be equivalent to at least 1/20th of the floor area of the room, or by sufficient and suitably sited mechanical ventilation.

Repair standard

Kitchens, along with all common parts of the HMO:

- Shall be maintained in good and clean decorative repair
- Shall be in a safe and working condition
- Shall be kept reasonably clear from obstruction.
- Provided with adequate light fittings that are available for use at all times
- Appliances provided by the landlord shall be maintained in good and safe repair and in clean working order.

Living/common rooms

Where an adequately sized shared living space(s) is provided then smaller bedroom sizes are acceptable. However, to be classed as a shared living space it must be clearly available and provisioned as such. Whilst the provision is not defined it is expected to provide:

- Adequate recreational seating and/or dining facilities for the number of people sharing.
- Sufficient natural lighting for normal usage
- All living rooms shall be ventilated directly to the external air by a window which has an openable area not less than 1/20th of the floor area.
- Adequately positioned electrical sockets

Each living room must be provided with a fixed heating appliance capable of heating the room to a temperature of 21°C when the outside temperature is -1°C. The cost of heating to the common parts of any HMO should be met directly from the landlord and should be constantly maintained for the benefit of occupants.

Space standard

Living/common rooms	Used by up to 5 persons	11m ²
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There may be instances to accommodate a greater number of occupants. It is recommended that contact is made with the Private Sector Housing Team to discuss the space and occupancy prior to occupation.

It is possible for a living room/dining room to be combined with a kitchen where the overall space available is greater than the sum of the required space for each room, and where layout of the new space clearly provides for the requirements of both rooms.

For example a open plan kitchen/lounge must be as a minimum the total room size of both the kitchen and communal space combined, so for a 5 person property the total room size should be 18m² made up of 7m² kitchen and 11m² lounge.

Conservatories

Conservatories will only be considered as communal space, when adequately designed for the intended use, based upon construction, heating and thermal comfort.

Cellars

Cellars will be considered only when appropriate to do so, with adequate ventilation, natural lighting and means of escape in the event of a fire. Cellars can be converted into useable space as ancillary use such as games room/storage space where certain provisions for example natural lighting may be relaxed.

Bathrooms and Water Closets

All occupiers must have access to a bathroom and W.C. within close proximity to their bedroom.

Each bathroom, whether en-suite or shared must include:

- A bath or a shower.
- A wall fixed wash hand basin.
- A properly fixed W.C.
- Adequate hot and cold water supply to each wash hand basin, bath or shower.
- The walls and floor of any bathroom or shower room should be reasonably smooth and non-absorbent and capable of being readily cleansed.
- Ventilation directly to the external air, either by a window, the openable area of which shall be equivalent to at least 1/20th of the floor area of the room, or by suitably sited mechanical ventilation providing a minimum of three air changes per hour operated from the lighting circuit of the room and fitted with a 20 minute overrun.
- a fixed heating appliance capable of heating the room to a temperature of 18°C when the outside temperature is -1°C

Where bathroom or W.C. facilities are shared between occupants, there should be one W.C. and bathroom for every 5 persons.

It is advisable that W.C.s are located in a separate room from the bathroom to maximise availability to occupants at peak times.

Every water closet shall be in a separate room within the building and, where shared by two or more households, be entered from a common passageway or hallway. Each WC compartment shall also be provided with a suitable wash-hand basin supplied with both constant hot and cold water.

The property, where applicable should have a minimum of 270 mm loft insulation

External WCs shall be ignored for purposes of calculating the required sanitary provision for the household.

The house shall be provided with an effective system, both above and below ground, for the drainage of foul waste and surface water.