

# Amenity Standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation

The Government has prescribed certain standards that must be met in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) that are licensable under the Housing Act 2004. These prescribed standards are for deciding the suitability for occupation of an HMO by a particular maximum number of households or persons. The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006 and The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and other Houses (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007 apply and some parts are reproduced below in the Prescribed Standards section.

Guidance is also provided (in the boxed sections of text) on how Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council considers these standards can be met.

In addition, other standards that the Council considers to be necessary in licensable HMOs have been included in the 'Locally Adopted Standards' section. The Council has adopted these as the recommended minimum and will require works to achieve them where necessary, unless particular circumstances make them impracticable and they score low when risk assessed using the Housing Health and Safety Risk Assessment.

All the standards in this guidance will also be used as a guideline for standards required in non-licensable HMOs. Guidance on particular circumstances should be sought from the Private Sector Housing Team at the Council.

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# **PRESCRIBED STANDARDS**

## **1. HEATING**

### **1.1 Each unit of living accommodation in an HMO must be equipped with adequate means of space heating.**

The whole accommodation should be appropriately heated to be able to achieve adequate thermal comfort under normal conditions. (21°C in reception rooms and kitchens large enough to also accommodate dining space, 18°C in bedrooms, 22°C in bathrooms and 19°C in hallways, all when the external temperature is -1°C.) The following are examples of heating appliances which can be used to achieve this:

- Solid fuel in an approved appliance, where the room has adequate ventilation. Fuel storage facilities should be provided in a readily accessible position for each unit of living accommodation; OR
- An existing, suitable fixed gas fire fitted with an adequate guard, certified with a current Gas Safe Test Certificate; OR
- A suitable fixed electric heater, such as a night storage heater, fitted with an adequate guard and properly connected to an adequate power supply. The electricity point for this heater should be provided exclusively for the purpose, and the heater shall be fitted with a timer and thermostatic control.
- Where a central heating system is installed it should operate so that heat is available at any time when it may reasonably be required by the occupant.

**NOTE:** Portable paraffin oil heaters and appliances using liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) are considered a fire hazard and their use is prohibited.

## **2. WASHING FACILITIES**

### **2.1 Where all or some of the units of living accommodation in an HMO do not contain bathing and toilet facilities for the exclusive use of each individual household—**

(a) *there must be an adequate number of bathrooms, toilets and wash-hand basins (suitable for personal washing) for the number of persons sharing those facilities; and*

(b) *where reasonably practicable there must be a wash- hand basin with appropriate splash-back in each unit other than a unit in which a sink has been provided as mentioned in paragraph 4.1,*

*having regard to the age and character of the HMO, the size and layout of each flat and its existing provision for wash-hand basins, toilets and bathrooms.*

**2.2** *All baths, showers and wash- hand basins in an HMO must be equipped with taps providing an adequate supply of cold and constant hot water.*

**2.3** *All bathrooms in an HMO must be suitably and adequately heated and ventilated.*

**2.4** *All bathrooms and toilets in an HMO must be of an adequate size and layout.*

**2.5** *All baths, toilets and wash hand basins in an HMO must be fit for the purpose.*

**2.6** *All bathrooms and toilets in an HMO must be suitably located in or in relation to the living accommodation in the HMO.*

In 'Shared House' type HMOs, where reasonably practicable, all individual units of accommodation should be provided with a wash-hand basin in accordance with the standards below. In determining what is reasonable, consideration will be given to the following:

- a) the age and character of the building
- b) the size and layout of each unit
- c) the existing provision for washing facilities within the property
- d) the practical implications of installing the wash-hand basins
- e) existing legal definition, RPT decisions and any current case law
- f) the standard of management of the property, including whether the landlord is accredited
- g) the wishes of the tenant
- h) any other matter identified by the inspecting officer

<b>No. of persons</b>	<b>Amenity Standard Requirement for Shared House Type HMOs</b>
	<p>In determining whether an HMO is occupied as a shared house, consideration will be given to the mode of occupation of the HMO. That is whether the tenants form a group who interact socially, live communally and may be on a single joint tenancy. The accommodation must also include a suitably sized shared lounge and/or dining area and shared kitchen.</p>
1 – 4	<p>No requirement for wash-hand basins (WHB) in sleeping rooms. At least 1 bathroom (a room containing a fixed bath or shower) and 1 WC (the bathroom and WC may be combined)</p>
5	<p>1 WHB where reasonably practicable is required in each sleeping room, plus 1 bathroom (a room containing a fixed bath or shower) AND 1 separate WC with WHB (the WC can be contained within a second bathroom)</p>
6 - 10	<p>1 WHB where reasonably practicable is required in each sleeping room, plus 2 bathrooms (a room containing a fixed bath or shower) AND 2 separate WCs with WHBs (1 of the WCs can be contained within 1 of the bathrooms)</p>
11 - 15	<p>1 WHB where reasonably practicable is required in each sleeping room, plus 3 bathrooms (a room containing a fixed bath or shower) AND 3 separate WCs with WHBs (2 of the WCs can be contained within 2 of the bathrooms)</p>
15 Plus	<p>For every 5 additional persons or part of 1 Additional Bath and 1 WC with WHB 50% of the total WC's must be in a separate compartment</p>

<b>No. of persons</b>	<b>Amenity Standard Requirement for Bedsit/Kit Type HMOs</b>
1 – 4	At least 1 bathroom (a room containing a fixed bath or shower) and 1 WC (the bathroom and WC may be combined)
5	1 bathroom AND 1 separate WC with WHB
6 - 10	2 bathrooms AND 2 separate WCs with WHBs (1 of the WCs can be contained within 1 of the bathrooms)
11 - 15	3 bathrooms AND 3 separate WCs with WHBs (2 of the WCs can be contained within 2 of the bathrooms)
15 Plus	For every 5 additional persons or part of 1 Additional Bath and 1 WC with WHB 50% of the total WC's must be in a separate compartment

- A readily accessible bathroom or shower-room should be within one floor distance from the occupiers it serves. The hot and cold water supply should be available at all times and where the bathroom or shower-room is shared, the hot water supply should be constantly available.
- Baths, showers and WCs should not be provided in kitchens.
- A bathroom next to a kitchen is acceptable as long as the bathroom is adequately ventilated.

### **3. SHARED KITCHEN FACILITIES**

#### **3.1 Where all or some of the units of accommodation within the HMO do not contain any facilities for the cooking of food—**

- (a) *there must be a kitchen, suitably located in relation to the living accommodation, and of such layout and size and equipped with such facilities so as to adequately enable those sharing the facilities to store, prepare and cook food;*
- (b) *the kitchen must be equipped with the following equipment, which must be fit for the purpose and supplied in a sufficient quantity for the number of those sharing the facilities—*
  - (i) *sinks with draining boards;*
  - (ii) *an adequate supply of cold and constant hot water to each sink supplied;*
  - (iii) *installations or equipment for the cooking of food.*
  - (iv) *electrical sockets;*
  - (v) *worktops for the preparation of food;*
  - (vi) *cupboards for the storage of food or kitchen and cooking utensils;*
  - (vii) *refrigerators with an adequate freezer compartment (or, where the freezer compartment is not adequate, adequate separate freezers);*
  - (viii) *appropriate refuse disposal facilities; and*
  - (ix) *appropriate extractor fans, fire blankets and fire doors.*

In Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, we deem a shared kitchen to be suitably located and equipped if:

- It is located no more than one floor distant from the occupancies sharing. This is relaxed if there is a communal lounge/dining area in the property which is not more than one floor distant from the kitchen.
- There is an adequate refrigerator space, (a minimum capacity of 0.03 m<sup>3</sup>/ 1ft<sup>3</sup> per individual), together with storage space for frozen foods.
- There is a work-top for the preparation of food that has not less than 2000mm x 600mm available space per 5 persons within the kitchen, with adequate power sockets.
- One cooker to be provided for every three occupants. The main cooker should have three or four rings or hot plates together with a grill and oven. Combination Microwaves are acceptable as the secondary appliances.
- A sink should be provided for every five occupants. The sinks should be complete with drainer and provided with supplies of constantly available hot and cold running water. Dishwashers are acceptable as the secondary appliances.
- When food is cooked, and prepared for residents as part of the board, all catering facilities shall comply with the requirements of the current Food Hygiene

#### **4. INDIVIDUAL KITCHEN FACILITIES**

##### **4.1 Where a unit of living accommodation contains kitchen facilities for the exclusive use of the individual household, and there are no other kitchen facilities available for that household, that unit must be provided with—**

- (a) *adequate appliances and equipment for the cooking of food;*
- (b) *a sink with an adequate supply of cold and constant hot water;*
- (c) *a worktop for the preparation of food;*
- (d) *sufficient electrical sockets;*
- (e) *a cupboard for the storage of kitchen utensils and crockery; and*
- (f) *a refrigerator.*

Kitchen facilities within individual units of living accommodation are deemed to be adequate if:

- Each separate unit of living accommodation is provided with a refrigerator for the storage of perishable food. (Equivalent to 0.03m<sup>3</sup>/1ft<sup>3</sup> per person)
- Each separate unit of living accommodation is provided with a suitable worktop for the preparation of food of at least 800mm x 600mm, with an adequate number of adjacent power sockets.
- Each separate unit of living accommodation is provided with a suitable cooking appliance. The acceptable standard is: -
  - One ring or hot plate together with a grill and oven for a one-person unit of living accommodation.
  - A cooker with three or four rings or hot plates together with a grill and an oven for units of accommodation for more than one person.
  - Combination microwaves are acceptable only as secondary cooking appliances
- Each separate unit of living accommodation should be provided with its own sink complete with drainer and provided with supplies of constantly available hot and cold running water.

## **5. FIRE PRECAUTIONARY FACILITIES**

5.1 *Appropriate fire precaution facilities and equipment must be provided of such type, number and location as considered necessary.*

- Appropriate fire precaution facilities and equipment must be provided of such type, number and location as is considered necessary by the Council, in consultation with the Fire Authority. A fire risk assessment must be carried out in accordance with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- All equipment must be maintained in good order.

# **LOCALLY ADOPTED STANDARDS**

The following standards are adopted by the Council for the purpose of ensuring the HMO and occupancies are suitable to be used as living accommodation.

## **6. NATURAL LIGHTING**

- 6.1 In every habitable room there should be provided and maintained a clear glazed window, and/or a door with clear glazing, opening directly to the external air. The area of glazing is recommended to be at least one-tenth of the floor area.
- 6.2 All glazing to windows in bathrooms and water closet compartments shall be obscured where considered necessary by the Council.

## **7. ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING**

- 7.1 All habitable rooms, kitchens, bathrooms, water closet compartments, staircases, landings and passageways should be adequately lit by electricity.
- 7.2 All wiring and fittings should be maintained in a safe condition.
- 7.3 Artificial lighting for staircases is to be operable from the entrance hall and each landing.

## **8. VENTILATION**

- 8.1 All habitable rooms should be ventilated direct to the external air by a window, the openable area of which should be equivalent to at least one-twentieth of the floor area.
- 8.2 All kitchens, bathrooms, water-closet compartments should comply with 8.1 above, but, where this is not practicable, mechanical ventilation providing a minimum of three air changes per hour should be provided. Such an installation should be fitted with an over-run device and connected to the lighting circuit of the room.

## **9. WATER SUPPLY**

- 9.1 Each occupant should have ready access to a piped supply of cold running water suitable for drinking purposes. This is to be supplied from the mains.
- 9.2 Storage tanks should not be used for supplying drinking water.
- 9.3 Any storage tank supplying water other than for drinking shall be suitably covered.

## **10. REFUSE STORAGE**

- 10.1 There should be provided and maintained an area suitable for the storage of refuse bins and recycling bins. Bins to be stored outside the building (unless otherwise prescribed) and sited so as to be readily accessible to the occupiers and to the Council's refuse collectors.
- 10.2 There is a requirement to comply with the local area refuse collection scheme and ensure the provision of the correct bins at all times.

## **11. FLOOR AREAS FOR LETTINGS**

In calculating the total floor area in any room, any area of floor where the ceiling height is less than 1.5m from the floor shall be excluded from the calculation. Of the remaining floor area, at least half has to be at least 2.1m to the ceiling, directly overhead.

## BEDSIT TYPE HMOs

### 11.1 One-person units of living accommodation

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| a) | Bed/living room/kitchen                 | 13 m <sup>2</sup>                       |
| b) | Bed/living room<br>Separate kitchen     | 9 m <sup>2</sup><br>4 m <sup>2</sup>    |
| c) | Living room/kitchen<br>Separate bedroom | 9 m <sup>2</sup><br>6.51 m <sup>2</sup> |

### 11.2 Two-person units of living accommodation

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| a) | Bed/living room/kitchen                 | 19 m <sup>2</sup>                         |
| b) | Bed/living room<br>Separate kitchen     | 14 m <sup>2</sup><br>6 m <sup>2</sup>     |
| c) | Living room/kitchen<br>Separate bedroom | 11 m <sup>2</sup><br>10.22 m <sup>2</sup> |

## SHARED HOUSE TYPE HMOs

11.3 Where a house in multiple occupation is let as a shared house type HMO, the following space standards apply;

- a) **Bedrooms**  
All bedrooms to be as follows:

1 person	6.51 m <sup>2</sup>
2 persons	10.22 m <sup>2</sup>

No more than two persons should share a bedroom.  
Unrelated persons should not be required to share a bedroom.

- b) **Lounge/Dining Areas**

A provision of 2 m<sup>2</sup> per person will be deemed to be adequate for the floor areas of lounge or dining rooms for the first 6 occupants. For every additional occupant 1m<sup>2</sup> should be provided. This floor area can be provided as one or more rooms.

- c) If the lounge or dining area in a shared house type HMO does not meet the above minimum sizes, then the minimum bedroom sizes in that property should be as follows:

1 person	9 m <sup>2</sup>
2 persons	14 m <sup>2</sup>

**Note:** Where the size of a room is below the minimum standards for that type of room, an assessment will be carried out by the Council to determine whether it is appropriate for the room to continue to be used for that purpose. The criteria to be taken into account will include:

- Mandatory Licensing Regulations 2018
- An assessment under the HHSRS
- The shape and physical layout of the room
- The nature and position of the furniture and fittings required in the room
- The intended use of the room and nature of occupancy
- The wishes of the tenant

## **12. GENERAL MANAGEMENT**

12.1 The person having control of the house should ensure that: -

- a) all services, furnishings, fixtures and fittings are maintained in a sound, clean condition and good order
- b) the structure is kept in good order
- c) where disrepair is brought to the attention of the landlord, repairs should be arranged promptly
- d) all yards, paving, boundary walls, fences, gardens and outbuildings are maintained in a safe and tidy condition
- e) at the commencement of all tenancies, the lettings are clean, in a satisfactory state of repair and decoration, and comply in all respects with these Standards.
- f) all communal areas are regularly cleaned and redecorated as necessary

## **13. PLANNING PERMISSION AND BUILDING REGULATION APPROVAL**

13.1 These Standards have been adopted without prejudice to legislation. Alterations or extensions carried out to a building in order to comply with these Standards will continue to require any necessary Planning Permission / Building Regulation approval.