



**STANDARDS FOR HOUSES IN  
MULTIPLE OCCUPATION  
(HMOs)**

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# STANDARDS FOR HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

**N.B. HMO owners and their agents are advised to ensure that any HMO does not contravene any Planning restrictions or requirements. The granting of an HMO licence does not confer any Planning permission or status.**

## **1. Heating**

- 1.1 Fixed space heating shall be provided in all rooms, including bathrooms and WC compartments, and shall be capable of maintaining a constant temperature of at least 22 °C in bathrooms, 21 °C in living and sleeping rooms, and 18 °C in all other rooms and circulation areas.
- 1.2 The heating shall be available, if required, to all tenants at all times. Control over the amount of heating in each unit of accommodation shall be under the control of the occupying tenant, and the method of heating shall be safe and should be efficient and affordable.
- 1.3 Where heating is provided by a central heating system, including to common parts, the fuel supply shall be via a quarterly credit meter on a landlord's supply, not a key or card meter (except where a system is exclusive to an individual unit of accommodation).

## **2. Personal Hygiene**

- 2.1 Wherever reasonably practicable, each unit of accommodation shall be provided with a wash-hand basin, except where there is exclusive use of a sink. Otherwise, there shall be provided a minimum of one wash-hand basin for every five occupiers, to be situated within a shared bathroom.
- 2.2 All units of accommodation shall have the use of a bath or shower, and a WC. Where these facilities are not exclusive, there shall be provided a minimum of one bath or shower and one WC for every five occupiers sharing the facilities.
- 2.3 Wherever reasonably practicable, all rooms containing a WC shall also contain a wash-hand basin. Otherwise, a wash-hand basin must be provided in a readily accessible position within the vicinity of the room containing the WC.
- 2.4 No unit of accommodation shall be more than one floor distant from a bathroom or WC compartment.
- 2.5 All facilities for personal hygiene shall be located within proper rooms or compartments. External water closets shall be ignored for the purposes of paragraphs 2.1.2 and 2.2.1.
- 2.6 All bath/shower rooms shall have a suitable layout and shall be of sufficient size to include adequate drying and changing space. The wall finishes and flooring shall be readily cleansable, the flooring well-fitted and non-absorbent, and a suitable lock provided to the door of each bathroom or shower room. There should be no glazing to the door.
- 2.7 The wall finishes and flooring of any separate WC compartment shall be readily cleansable, the flooring well-fitted and non-absorbent, and a suitable lock shall be provided to the door of each such compartment. There should be no glazing to the door.

- 2.8 All bath/shower rooms and WC compartments shall be provided with adequate mechanical or passive stack ventilation and artificial lighting, and shall be adequately heated (see paragraphs 1.1 to 1.3).
- 2.9 All facilities provided for personal hygiene must be of suitable size and design, and must be readily cleansable.
- 2.10 All baths, showers and wash-hand basins shall be provided with adequate and constantly available hot and cold water supplied via suitable fittings and shall be properly connected to the soil drainage system.
- 2.11 All baths and wash-hand basins shall be provided with glazed tiled splashbacks of minimum height 450 mm, where practicable. Showers shall be provided in purpose-made or properly constructed cubicles.
- 2.12 All WCs shall be provided with a suitable seat and must be securely fixed. They shall be properly connected to the soil drainage system and the cisterns provided with an adequate and constantly available supply of water.

### **3. Kitchen Facilities**

- 3.1 Each letting shall have access to facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food.
- 3.2 A set of kitchen facilities exclusive to a letting is to consist of the following as a minimum:-
- (a) adequate cupboard space for food storage, to consist of a 500 mm base unit or a 1000 mm wall unit as a minimum (a sink base unit will **not** be acceptable for this purpose);
  - (b) an adequately-sized refrigerator with a freezer compartment;
  - (c) a sink and drainer, set on a suitable base, with proper connection to the soil drainage system and adequate and constantly available hot and cold drinking water supplied via suitable taps.
  - (d) an impervious work surface of minimum length 1000 mm (**excluding** any area covered by a major appliance);
  - (e) adequate cupboard space for the storage of kitchen utensils (a sink base unit will suffice);
  - (f) mains gas or electric cooking facilities consisting of oven, grill and a minimum of two burners or hotplates. Portable hotplates are not acceptable, and any mini oven or Belling type cooker shall be securely fixed, with the hotplates at work surface level;
  - (g) glazed tiled splashbacks provided to the sink unit, cooking appliance and work surface to a minimum height of 300 mm, where practicable;
  - (h) one double power socket, located at least 150 mm above the work surface, in addition to any sockets used for the connection of major appliances; and
  - (i) suitable kitchen waste bins and re-cycling bins.
- 3.3 Where some or all of the units of accommodation do not have exclusive kitchen facilities, shared facilities shall be provided in a ratio of one set of facilities to a maximum of three lettings. **Each set** of shared facilities is to consist of the following as a minimum:-
- (a) adequate cupboard space for food storage for each letting, to consist of a 500 mm base unit or a 1000 mm wall unit as a minimum (a sink base unit will **not** be acceptable for this purpose). NB these can be provided within the units of accommodation if preferred;

- (b) an adequately-sized refrigerator with a freezer compartment for each letting. NB these can be provided within the units of accommodation if preferred;
- (c) a sink and drainer, set on a suitable base, with proper connection to the soil drainage system and adequate and constantly available hot and cold drinking water supplied via suitable taps.
- (d) an impervious work surface of minimum length 2000 mm (**excluding** any area covered by a major appliance) or two separate lengths of 1000mm each;
- (e) adequate cupboard space for the storage of kitchen utensils;
- (f) a suitable gas or electric cooking appliance with oven, grill and a minimum of four burners or hotplates;
- (g) glazed tiled splashbacks provided to the sink unit, cooking appliance and work surface(s) to a minimum height of 300 mm, where practicable;
- (h) one double power socket **per** 1000 mm of work surface, located at least 150mm above the work surface(s), in addition to any sockets used for the connection of major appliances; and
- (i) suitable kitchen waste bins and re-cycling bins.

3.4 Where more than one set of shared kitchen facilities are required, these may be provided within one room, **but** they must be arranged in distinct areas for the convenience of the occupiers.

3.5 No unit of accommodation shall be more than one floor distant from a kitchen, whether for exclusive or shared use. However, this condition may be waived where a suitable, adequately-sized dining room or dining area is provided for the occupiers of such lettings either on the same floor as, or no more than one floor distant, from a kitchen. The maximum sharing ratio of three lettings per set of kitchen facilities still applies.

3.6 Where kitchen facilities are provided within a bedsit room, they should be situated in a distinct 'kitchen area' and this area should, where practicable, be located as far from the room door as possible. Where it is not practicable for the cooking appliance to be located remote from the door, a fire-resisting screen of suitable height should be constructed to shield the door from flames in the event of a fire occurring in the kitchen area.

3.7 Separate kitchens, whether for exclusive or shared use, shall be of sufficient size to enable a safe and practical layout.

3.8 In no circumstances shall kitchen facilities be installed within a staircase enclosure.

3.9 In no circumstances shall access to a room used for sleeping be via a room containing kitchen facilities, unless an alternative escape route is available in the event of a fire.

3.10 All kitchens and rooms containing kitchen areas shall be provided with adequate mechanical or passive stack ventilation and artificial lighting.

3.11 All kitchens and kitchen areas shall be provided with suitable impervious, well-fitted floor covering.

3.12 All kitchens and kitchen areas shall have a safe and practical layout. In particular:-

- (a) cooking appliances should, wherever practicable, have an adjacent work surface;
- (b) no soft furnishings are to be within 600 mm of the cooker rings or hotplates, and
- (c) the minimum clearance between the cooker rings or hotplates and any cupboard or extractor above must comply with manufacturer's instructions.

#### **4. Fire Precautions**

- 4.1 Shared kitchens shall be provided with fire doors having a minimum fire resistance of 30 minutes. Fire doors are to be close-fitting and shall be provided with intumescent strips, cold smoke seals and suitable self-closers.
- 4.2 All kitchens and kitchen areas shall be provided with a properly-mounted fire blanket.
- 4.3 A multi-purpose fire extinguisher shall be provided at each level within the staircase enclosure.
- 4.4 An automatic fire detection and alarm system shall be provided to ensure early warning in the event of a fire. The actual works required in any particular case will depend on the layout of the property and are decided upon by the Council following consultation with the Fire Authority and having regard to the LACORS "Housing – Fire Safety" guidance.
- 4.5 An emergency lighting system shall be provided in most cases, with luminaries provided in such numbers and locations so as to adequately illuminate the staircase enclosure in the event of a failure of the main lighting.
- 4.6 Electricity supplies to automatic fire detection and alarm systems and to emergency lighting systems shall be from a landlord's supply.

#### **5. Space Standards**

- 5.1 All rooms shall be of a convenient and usable shape for their intended purpose.
- 5.2 No staircase, landing, passage, kitchen or bath/shower room shall be used for sleeping accommodation.
- 5.3 The minimum space standards below relate to **available space**, this being the floor area remaining after deductions are made for corridors, bath/shower rooms, WC compartments, chimney breasts and those areas covered by sloping ceilings where the floor-to-ceiling height is less than 1.5 m.
- 5.4 For the purposes of these standards:
  - no more than two persons shall be obliged to sleep in any one room (no account shall be taken of a child under the age of twelve months), and
  - persons of the opposite sex who are aged 10 years and over and who are not co-habiting shall not be obliged to sleep in the same room.
- 5.5 The minimum requirements are:-

**One person lettings -**            **13 m<sup>2</sup>** for a bedsit room that includes kitchen facilities  
   **10 m<sup>2</sup>** where there is a separate kitchen, shared or otherwise

**Two person lettings -**        **20 m<sup>2</sup>** for a bedsit room that includes kitchen facilities  
   **15 m<sup>2</sup>** where there is a separate kitchen, shared or otherwise

**Three or more person households** shall be provided with self-contained units of accommodation, including separate living room and kitchen or combined living room/kitchen. In such units of accommodation, single and double bedrooms shall provide a minimum of 6.5 m<sup>2</sup> and 10 m<sup>2</sup> respectively.

- 5.6 Where gallery accommodation is provided in any room, the gallery is to extend over no more than half of the room floor area and adequate circulation space shall be provided around any furniture or fitting situated on the gallery.

Any cooking facilities within the room shall either be enclosed within fire resisting construction or sited remote from both the room exit and the stairs to the raised gallery.

When calculating the floor area of a room with gallery accommodation, any area of floor beneath or above the gallery area with a ceiling height of less than 2.1 m shall be ignored.

In raised gallery areas with sloping ceilings, at least half of the floor area shall have a floor-to-ceiling height of at least 2.1 m and any floor area where the floor-to-ceiling height is less than 1.5 m shall be ignored

The above standards may be varied where it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that there are exceptional circumstances or where commensurate facilities etc are available elsewhere within the building.

Any enquiries regarding these standards should be directed to:-

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