

STANDARDS FOR HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

Certain Converted Blocks of Flats*

(Category F Houses in Multiple Occupation)

DEFINITION

Houses or buildings that by conversion* comprise dwellings that are fully self-contained. All such units of accommodation (dwellings) will normally be behind a discrete access door off a common hall, landing or other area. Each dwelling will contain all the standard amenities and there would be no sharing of amenities with occupiers of other dwellings

***But does not include:**

1. Converted blocks of flats that were constructed or subsequently made to comply with the "appropriate building standard".
2. Converted blocks of flats where at least two-thirds of the self-contained units are owner occupied.

"Appropriate building standard" means that standard of construction applied by the Building Regulations 1991 - unless shown to have been exempt under those regulations at the time of conversion.

Where there is uncertainty, the burden of proof will rest with the owner to demonstrate that the block of flats currently meets the appropriate building standard.

Note on Application of Category F Standard

This standard will be applied to all existing Category F Houses in multiple occupation so as to ensure that they meet a minimum level of safety, comfort and convenience for tenants. As such it will form the basis of any enforcement action necessary to ensure compliance.

Additionally the standard may be applied as guidance when considering the suitability of new / proposed blocks of flats which do not constitute an HMO.

Prior Consent: *Establishment of such premises will in all cases require Planning Consent and Building Regulation approval. It is the responsibility of the owner or their agent to submit details of proposals and obtain the necessary consent before converting premises into self-contained flats. Any advice or guidance given regarding these standards is for information only and should not be taken to confer such consent or permission.*

SPACE STANDARDS

Minimum floor areas for the formation or conversion of existing buildings into self-contained flats.

1 Person flatlet with separate kitchen

Bed/Living room	14.0 m ²
Kitchen	5.5 m ²

Total habitable floor area 19.5 m².

1 Person flatlet with separate bedroom

Bedroom	7.0 m ²
Kitchen/Living room	14.5 m ²

Total habitable floor area 21.5 m².

1 Person, 1 bedroom flat

Bedroom	7.0 m ²
Living Room	11.5 m ²
Kitchen	5.5 m ²

Total habitable floor area 24.0 m².

2 Person, one bedroom flat

Bedroom	10.5 m ²
Living Room	13.0 m ²
Kitchen	5.5 m ²

Total habitable floor area 29.0 m².

3 Person, two bedroom flat

Main bedroom	10.0 m ²	(not more than two persons)
Secondary bedroom	7.0 m ²	(single person)
Living Room	16.0 m ²	
Kitchen	7.0 m ²	

Total habitable floor area 40.0 m².

4 Person, three bedroom flat

Main bedroom	10.0 m ²	(not more than two persons)
Second bedroom	7.0 m ²	(single person)
Third bedroom	7.0 m ²	(single person)
Living Room	18.0 m ²	
Kitchen	7.0 m ²	

Total habitable floor area 49.0 m².

Notes Regarding the Application of the Spacing Standards

- In no case shall more than two persons occupy any room.
- Irrespective of floor area, consideration will be given to the shape and usable living space within the room to determine whether it is suitable for occupation. No account will be taken of any part of a room where the ceiling height is less than 1.525 (5 ft).
- The area taken up by any en-suite facilities shall not be reckonable when determining bedroom sizes.
- The standard is to be applied irrespective of the age of the occupants except that no account will be taken of children under the age of one year.
- Flats having more than one bedroom should provide bedrooms of minimum sizes in accordance with the relevant provisions above. In all cases **habitable floor area** is the usable area of any room used as a bedroom, living room, or kitchen. It does not include the area of any bathroom, staircase, passageway, landing or access lobby.

General Requirements – Layout

- All rooms shall have reasonable and suitable access and egress.
- The layout of any scheme shall be such that occupants of all flats have reasonable access to all common parts of the building.
- All bedrooms, living rooms, and bathrooms are to be directly accessible from a common access lobby and not from another room.
- En suite bathrooms where there are no alternative facilities will only be accepted in one bed-roomed flats.
- The design of entrances to flats is to be such that furniture may be reasonably transported into and out of them.
- The design and finish of all common parts to buildings containing flats shall be such as to permit easy maintenance and cleansing.

AMENITY STANDARD

Facilities for the Storage, Preparation and Cooking of Food and for the Disposal of Waste Water

Each of the occupancies shall have its own kitchen area provided with the following:

Food Storage

A proper food store of adequate size ventilated to the external air. A refrigerator shall be considered to be a proper food store for the purpose of this requirement and where appropriate space should be provided.

Preparation

Fixed working surfaces of at least 1.5 m² shall be provided in the kitchen area. Working surfaces shall be a minimum of 450 mm in depth and be faced with heat resistant, laminated plastic (or similar) material.

Worktop location should enable safe and convenient preparation of food. As such it should normally adjoin any sink unit and adjoin both sides of any cooking appliance

A minimum of two double electric sockets situated over the worktops together with sufficient electrical outlets for connection of other normal kitchen / laundry appliances.

Fixed storage cupboards either below the working surfaces or wall-mounted above providing a minimum of 1.0 cubic meter of storage space.

Cooking

A proper cooking appliance or position for such an appliance together with a suitable gas or electricity supply point. The normal minimum expected provision will be a cooker with three or four rings or hot plates together with a grill and oven.

Disposal of Waste Water

A fixed sink unit with adequate continuous supplies of hot and cold water shall be provided. The sink unit will normally be of stainless steel or other accepted material and will incorporate an integral drainer. The sink will be provided with a proper overflow trap and waste pipe discharging into the drainage system.

General

The layout of each kitchen or kitchen area shall be so designed as to minimise the risk of accidents. The work surfaces, the adjacent walls and the floors and ceilings should be generally non porous and capable of being cleaned.

In addition to the items specified below, kitchens will be required to have space for an automatic washing machine.

Sanitary Conveniences

A water closet compartment shall be provided. It will be acceptable for this to be incorporated into the bathroom.

A wash hand basin shall be provided in each separate water closet together with its own continuous supplies of hot and cold running water.

Personal Washing Facilities

A bathroom shall contain the full standard amenities, which shall be laid out in such an arrangement that users of the bathroom have reasonable and comfortable access to all the facilities.

In addition to this, a free floor area of one square meter is to be provided in the bathroom, the shorter dimension being not less than 0.5 meters.

Hot Water Systems

The hot water system must be efficient and capable of providing continuous hot running water to all facilities in the flat.

Storage

Each flat shall be provided with a cupboard suitable for storage of small domestic cleaning equipment and appliances.

Refuse Storage

Sufficient and dedicated space shall be provided for refuse and recycling containers in a suitable position within the curtilage of the property on hard standing, and be readily accessible for collection. Where ever possible this should be provided at the rear of the property.

Refuse containers shall be readily accessible to all residents of the flats. For this purpose "readily accessible" shall mean either:

1. All tenants having access, either through common parts or directly from their own accommodation to the refuse storage area yard at ground level, or
2. The availability for use of all tenants of an entry or passageway leading to the refuse storage area which is directly adjacent to the property and is reached by a front or side door, or
3. Access by a staircase at the rear of the property leading to the rear yard, the use of which is available to all upper floor tenants, with all ground floor tenants

having access as in 1. above. Planning permission is likely to be required for the erection of such staircases.

MEANS OF ESCAPE IN CASE OF FIRE

Newly built flats or those formed by way of conversion will normally comply fully with current Building Regulations at the time. As such they will be provided with adequate means of escape from fire and other fire precautions necessary to reduce the corresponding hazard to an acceptable level.

Where premises were converted into flats without the benefit of prior Building Regulation approval then adequate means of escape in case of fire will be achieved retrospectively through enforcement of relevant statutory provisions. As part of this an individual specification for means of escape in case of fire and other fire protection measures will be issued in respect of the premises. This will normally follow consultation with the building Control Departments &/or Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service.

In specifying what fire protection measures are required regard shall be had to:

- Any advice and guidance provided by the local Fire & Rescue Authority,
- Current Building Regulations.
- Applicable British Standards.
- Other guidance issued or endorsed by the relevant Govt. Department.

MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The person managing the premises is responsible for its proper management to ensure that it remains safe and suitable for occupation by tenants / leaseholders at all times.

Where applicable **The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007** specifically require managers of HMO's to:

- Ensure that means of escape, fire doors, fire alarms and fire fighting equipment are maintained in good order and repair and kept free from obstruction.
- Keep shared facilities and common parts clean and in good repair (i.e. Bathrooms & toilets, cookers & fridges, staircases, landings carpets etc.)
- Maintain the gas and electrical installations in safe working order. Provide gas safety & electrical certificates.
- Keep all units of accommodation in good repair and clean condition.
- Keep facilities for heating the house and provision of hot water in good order.

- Maintain gardens and outbuildings in good order and good repair.
- Make suitable provision for the storage of refuse and provide ready access for its collection. (Including recyclables)
- Display a notice in the property giving the name & address of the person responsible for managing the house.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The premises should at all times be in a good condition and be free from any defects or deficiencies that could pose a health and safety risk to occupiers.

Specifically the premises should be free from any unacceptable hazards as assessed under the Governments **Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS)**. Below is a list of the hazards that should be considered:

Damp & Mould Growth	Crowding & Space	Falling on stairs
Excess Cold	Entry by intruders	Falling between levels
Excess Heat	Lighting	Electrical hazards
Asbestos	Noise	Fire
Biocides	Hygiene, pests and Refuse	Flames & hot surfaces
Carbon Monoxide etc.	Food safety	Collision & entrapment
Lead	Sanitation & Drainage	Explosions
Radiation	Water supply	Position & use of amenities
Un-combusted fuel gas	Falls associated with baths	Structural collapse
Volatile organic compounds	Falling on level surfaces	

More information regarding the HHSRS and its application to Houses in Multiple Occupation is available on the Council's web pages: www.swindon.gov.uk or by contacting the Residential Services Team