

STANDARDS FOR HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

Shared Houses and Houses converted into Bedsits

(Previously **Category A & B** Houses in Multiple Occupation.)

DEFINITION

Houses occupied as shared houses comprising individual rooms, bedsits or flatlets

In such houses sleeping rooms will normally be for the exclusive occupation of individual tenants but in most cases there will be some sharing of amenities. This is most commonly, a bathroom, toilet, kitchen, dining facilities and sometimes a communal lounge.

Prior Consent: Establishment of such premises may require Planning Consent and in some cases Building Regulation approval. It is the responsibility of the owner or their agent to establish whether this is necessary. If applicable they should obtain the necessary consents before operating a Category A&B House in Multiple Occupation. Any advice or guidance given regarding these standards is for information only and should not be taken to confer such consent or permission.

MINIMUM SPACE STANDARDS FOR LETTING ROOMS

One room Single person accommodation

Where a shared living room of adequate size* is provided in the property: **7.5 m²**

Where there is no shared living room: **10 m²**

Where cooking facilities are provided in the room: **13 m²**

One room Two person accommodation

Where a shared living room of adequate size is provided in the property: **10 m²**

Where there is no shared living room: **14 m²**

Where cooking facilities are provided in the room: **16 m²**

Two or more room accommodation (which is not fully self contained)

Single Person

EITHER

A combined living/kitchen not less than
having a separate bedroom not less than

11 m²
6.5 m²

OR

Separate kitchen not less than	4.5 m ²
Having a separate living room not less than	9 m ²
AND a separate bedroom not less than	6.5 m ²

Two Person

Each kitchen not less than	7 m ²
Each living/kitchen not less than	15 m ²
Each living room not less than	12 m ²
Each living/bedroom not less than	14 m ²
Each bedroom not less than	10 m ²

*Common Living Rooms

Used by 1-5 persons	10 m ²
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For every additional user an additional **2m²** floor area is required.

Notes Regarding the Application of the Spacing Standards in ALL cases:

- Where a room of sufficient size is occupied by two persons who are not living as a couple then it is for the landlord to provide evidence that those persons were previously known to each other and have voluntarily chosen to share the room.
- In no case shall more than two persons occupy any sleeping room.
- As well as applying minimum floor areas, consideration will be given to the shape and useable 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 m (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.

AMENITY STANDARD

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

Kitchen Facilities

Where separate occupancies do not have their own discrete food preparation facilities (Self-Catering occupancies), **shared or communal kitchens** must be provided.

The presence or proximity of any **commercial kitchens** (e.g. in HMO accommodation provided for restaurant staff.) shall not be taken into account except that where main meals are provided by the landlord / employer for resident staff it will be acceptable for a reduced standard of alternative **shared kitchen** facilities to be provided. This should enable residents to prepare hot drinks and snacks at all times.

Where shared kitchens are provided these should be on the same floor as the occupants rooms in the interest of convenience AND to avoid the need to carry food and equipment between levels.

NOTE: This requirement can be waived where there are adequate shared dining areas within or adjacent to the kitchen.

Minimum sizes for Shared or Communal Kitchens:

Used by 1 – 5 persons:	7.5 m²
For each additional person:	1.5 m²

Food Storage

Each 'self-catering' occupancy shall be provided with a proper food store of adequate size ventilated to the external air. A refrigerator with freezer compartment will be considered to be a proper food store for the purpose of this requirement.

In **shared or communal kitchens** the minimum standard required is:

1 - 5 persons - one refrigerator with one separate freezer OR single large fridge / freezer.

6 – 10 persons - two refrigerators with one separate freezer OR two large fridge / freezers.

For premises accommodating more than 10 persons the appropriate standard of provision is to be agreed with the council.

Food Preparation

Each 'self-catering' occupancy shall be provided with a suitable worktop of at least 0.5 m².

In **shared or communal kitchens** a worktop of sufficient size shall be provided of at least 0.5 m² per letting room in the house.

Sufficient electrical socket outlets must be provided to enable safe concurrent use of all appliances provided by the landlord as well as those reasonably foreseen as being provided by tenants.

In **shared or communal kitchens** there should be a minimum of two double 13A outlet sockets available for such use. (i.e. In addition to those intended for appliances such as refrigerators, dish washers, washing machines etc.)

Cooking

Each 'self-catering' occupancy shall be provided with a proper cooking appliance. The minimum acceptable will be:

- (a) two rings or hot plates together with either a grill or oven for a one person unit of accommodation, or
- (b) a cooker with three or four rings or hot plates together with a grill and or oven for units of accommodation for two persons.

In **shared or communal kitchens** sufficient cooking appliances sited so as to minimise the risk of accidents and for the convenience of occupants shall be provided.

For typical houses occupied by **5 persons** the minimum standard is a cooker with four rings / hot plates, grill and oven together with a separate microwave oven.

- *For houses occupied by less than 5 persons a lesser standard may be acceptable.*
- *For houses occupied by more than 5 persons an appropriate higher standard will be required.*

In both cases this will need to be agreed in writing by the Council

Disposal of Waste Water

Each 'self-catering' occupancy shall be provided with a suitable sink connected to the drainage system and with adequate continuous supplies of hot and cold water.

In **shared or communal kitchens**, such sinks shall be provided in the ratio of one per three single person units of accommodation, except that in houses occupied by five or less people one sink will be acceptable. The hot and cold water supplies shall be included in the rental or charge for the accommodation.

Sanitary Conveniences

A readily accessible water closet compartment, being not more than one floor distant from any user shall be provided in the following ratios:

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------------|--|
| 1-5 persons | - 1 water closet | (must be separate from the bathroom <u>except</u> where there are 4 or less persons living in the house) |
| 6-10 persons | - 2 water closets | (at least one must be separate from the bathroom) |
| 11-15 persons | - 3 water closets | (at least two must be separate from 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. The hot and cold water supplies shall be included in the rental or charge for accommodation, unless the water closet is for the exclusive use of one occupant.

Personal Washing Facilities

Each separate occupancy should be provided with its own suitable wash hand basin together with its own supplies of hot and cold running water, situated within the unit of accommodation.

This requirement may be dispensed with either wholly or in part when:

1. The ratio of existing shared wash basins available in the house to occupiers equals or exceeds 1 : 3
2. There are agreed genuine practical reasons preventing the installation of wash-hand basins in any of the rooms. Evidence must be provided in every case to substantiate the reasons before such dispensation can be agreed

Each separate letting room may be provided with its own bath or shower as an en-suite facility.

Where en-suite facilities are not provided in letting rooms **shared facilities** may be provided in a readily accessible bathroom or a shower room. Such facilities must not more than one floor distant from any user.

AND shall be provided in the following ratios:

- 1-5 persons - 1 bathroom or shower room
- 6-10 persons - 2 bathrooms or shower rooms
- 11-15 persons - 3 bathrooms or shower rooms.

Baths and shower trays should be of sufficient size to enable safe and convenient use by occupiers.

The hot and cold water supplies shall be available at all times.

MEANS OF ESCAPE IN CASE OF FIRE

Premises shall be provided with adequate means of escape from fire and other fire precautions necessary to reduce the corresponding hazard to an acceptable level.

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.

An individual specification for means of escape in case of fire and other fire protection measures will be issued in respect of each house in multiple occupation. This will normally follow consultation with Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service.

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 at all times.

The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 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 Government's **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.