

Houses in Multiple Occupation Standards

Housing Act 2004

Bedsit Type HMO's

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Bedsit type houses in multiple occupation

Houses occupied as individual rooms, bedsits and flat lets which are considered to have a number of rooms for exclusive occupation (not necessarily behind one door) with some sharing of amenities usually bathroom and/or toilet and maybe a kitchen.

In such a house each occupancy (room, bedsit etc) would be separately rented.

As well as being subject to these standards, houses let as HMOs are also subject to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The HHSRS evaluates the risk to the health and safety of tenants and visitors presented by a wide range of potential housing hazards. Many of the items described in the following standards can also be required by HHSRS (possibly to a higher level than described in this document).

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A. SPACE STANDARDS

- All space standards apply irrespective of the age of the occupants.
- Habitable rooms must be laid out in a functional and appropriate way. Bedrooms which have been partitioned with the sole intention of gaining 10m² of floor space will not be accepted if their shape or layout is not practical.
- All habitable rooms, bathrooms and WCs shall have a minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.3m, except in the case of existing attic rooms, which shall have a minimum height of 2.14m over not less than 75% of the room area. Any floor area where the ceiling height is less than 1.53m shall be disregarded.

1. SINGLE ROOM LETTINGS WITH SHARED KITCHEN

1 person	-	10m ² or more
2 persons	-	15m ² or more

2. SINGLE ROOM LETTINGS WITH COOKING FACILITIES ONLY

1 person	-	13.5m ² or more
2 persons	-	18.5m ² or more

3. SINGLE ROOM LETTINGS WITH EN-SUITE FACILITIES ONLY

1 person	-	12.5m ² or more
2 persons	-	17.5m ² or more

NOTE: No more than 2 persons permitted to sleep in one bedroom.

Further space standards for bedsit type HMOs and shared accommodation can be found at Appendix 1 on Page 7.

B. NATURAL LIGHTING

- All habitable rooms shall be provided with an area of clear glazing situated in either a window and/or a door, opening to the external air, equivalent in total area to at least 1/10th of the floor area of the room. Basement rooms used for human habitation should, in addition, have sufficient natural lighting.

- All kitchens, bathrooms and WCs should comply with the requirement above. Where this is not practicable, adequate artificial lighting shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of section C (below).
- All glazing to windows in bathrooms and WCs shall be obscure.
- All staircases, landings and hallways shall be provided with an area of clear glazing in a window. Where this is not practicable, adequate artificial lighting shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of section C (below) and the provision of emergency lighting where necessary.

C. ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING

- All habitable rooms, kitchens, bathrooms, WCs, staircases, landings and passages shall be adequately lit.
- There should be sufficient switches to operate the artificial lighting on each landing, hallway or passage and each switch should allow hallways, passages and stairways to be lit at the same time. All lighting to common parts to be provided, maintained and paid for by the landlord or their agent.
- Time switches are only allowed to common landings, hallways and staircases and should stay on for an adequate time to allow a person to climb stairs etc. and enter a room.

D. VENTILATION

- All habitable rooms shall be ventilated directly to the external air by a window, the openable area of which shall be equivalent to at least $\frac{1}{20}$ of the floor area of the room. In addition, where a basement room is used as a habitable room there should 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.
- All kitchens, bathrooms and WCs should comply with 1 above, but if this is not practicable, mechanical ventilation providing a minimum of 3 air changes per hour, shall be provided. This shall be fitted with an overrun device for a minimum of 20 minutes and be connected to the lighting circuit of the room.
- Suitable and sufficient permanent ventilation shall be provided and maintained in all kitchens, dining/kitchens, bathrooms, WCs and other rooms containing cooking or washing facilities.
- Suitable and sufficient permanent ventilation shall be provided and maintained in any room in which there is a gas appliance.

E. SPACE HEATING

- All bedrooms, living rooms, bathrooms and communal areas of the house shall be provided with a suitable appliance properly maintained and capable of giving a temperature of 19°C in when the outside temperature is -1°C. Appliance means:
 1. A fixed gas fire with an adequate flue; or
 2. A fixed electric heater; i.e. the wiring to be spurred into the main electrical supply; or
 3. An efficient central heating system.

All forms of heating must be controllable by the occupant and portable oil or gas heaters shall be not used in any part of the property. The appliance must be serviced and maintained by a competent person on a regular basis.

F. WATER SUPPLY

- Each dwelling shall be provided with a supply of cold running water suitable for drinking purposes directly off the rising main, and located over a sink or wash hand basin.
- Any down service pipe from any water storage tank in an upper storey or roof space should be provided with an accessible stopcock.
- All water supplies shall be protected from frost damage.

G. PERSONAL WASHING FACILITIES

- In houses shared by 6 persons and over, each separate occupancy shall be provided with a wash-hand basin together with adequate supplies of hot and cold water and waste drainage, situated within the unit of accommodation. Where practicable a 2 course tiled splashback should be provided. (If a sink is provided to comply with these requirements a separate wash-hand basin will not be required.)
- A readily accessible bathroom/ shower room, being not more than one floor distant from any user, shall be provided in the following ratios:
 - 5 persons: 1 bathroom/ shower room
 - 6 - 10 persons : 2 bathrooms/ shower rooms
 - 11 - 15 persons: 3 bathrooms/ shower rooms
- Every bath or shower shall be properly plumbed with hot and cold water supplies and waste drainage.

H. DRAINAGE AND SANITARY CONVENIENCES

- Each separate occupancy shall be provided with its own WC, but when not practicable, satisfactory and readily accessible WCs shall be provided in the following ratios:
 - 1 - 5 persons - 1 WC
 - 6 - 10 persons - 2 WCs (1 must be separate to the bathroom)
 - 11 - 15 persons - 3 WCs (2 must be separate to the bathrooms)
- Any WC provided outside of a bathroom in its own compartment, must also be provided with a wash hand basin.
- Such WCs shall be not more than one floor distance from the letting.
- The property shall be provided with an effective system, both above and below ground, for the drainage of foul, waste and surface water.

I. FACILITIES FOR STORAGE, PREPARATION AND COOKING OF FOOD AND FOR THE DISPOSAL OF WASTE WATER

- Each individual occupancy shall have its own kitchen facilities as follows.
- Kitchens must be of sufficient size for the number of occupants to use and circulate safely. Where kitchen facilities are provided within bedrooms, as a guide a minimum of additional floor area of 3.5m² should be required.
- If it is a shared kitchen then each kitchen shall be shared by not more than 5 persons and shall not be more than one floor distance from any room(s) occupied by the person(s) for whom they are provided. There are to be no more than 2 sets of kitchen facilities in one room.
- Each kitchen shall be provided with a minimum of four 13amp electric power sockets at a convenient height and in a safe position.

(a) Storage of Food

Each separate occupancy shall be provided with a proper food store of adequate size within the letting. A refrigerator with a suitable power point shall be considered a proper food store. A cupboard under the sink will not be considered an adequate food store

(b) Preparation of Food

A suitable and impervious work top shall be provided, minimum size of 600mm x 500mm per person or household sharing.

(c) Cooking of Food

Separate cooking facilities must be provided in the form of a gas or electric cooker with four burners, oven and grill. (Only one is necessary in a shared kitchen for up to 5 persons). A minimum of 2 burners will be suitable for use by just 1 person.

(d) Disposal of Waste Water

Each separate occupancy shall be provided with a sink properly plumbed with hot and cold water supplies and waste drainage. Where practicable a 2 course tiled splash back should be provided. A suitable draining board shall be provided. The sink shall be connected to the drainage system by a suitable trap. (Only one sink with draining board is necessary in a kitchen shared by up to 5 people.)

J. REFUSE STORAGE AND DISPOSAL

- Refuse storage containers shall be provided, sufficient for the needs of the house and placed in such a manner as to prevent nuisances (smells, obstruction etc.).

K. MEANS OF ESCAPE IN CASE OF FIRE

- Appropriate fire precaution facilities and equipment must be provided and maintained in the property in accordance with current British Standards, the requirements of the Housing Act 2004 (The Health and Safety Hazard Rating System) and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

The following fire safety measures will reduce the risk of death or injury from fire:

- The provision of a 30 or 60 minute fire protected route of escape
- Fire separation between units of accommodation, including walls and ceilings
- Fire doors fitted with cold smoke seals, intumescent strips and self-closing devices and quick release locks
- Automatic and manual fire detection systems
- Emergency lighting
- Whole stair lighting – one switch turns all lights on
- Escape windows
- Sprinkler and mist systems
- Fire extinguishers and fire blankets

- Different minimum standards will apply to different types of HMOs. Detailed advice is available in the document - Standards of Fire Resistance - HMOs.

L. MANAGEMENT

- A proper standard of management should be observed in the house, in particular to ensure the repair, maintenance, cleansing and good order of –
 - (a) all means of water supply and drainage in the property;
 - (b) all parts of the house in common use, including kitchens, bathrooms, WCs etc.;
 - (c) all installations in common use;
 - (d) all means of ventilation;
 - (e) all means of escape from fire and all apparatus, systems and other things provided by way of fire precautions;
 - (f) outbuildings, yards and gardens in common use.
- The manager shall ensure that such precautions are taken as are reasonably required to protect the residents from injury.
- The manager shall display a notice in a suitable position in the house containing the name and address and the telephone number of any person who is the manager of the house.

Appendix 1

Further examples of accepted space standards

Category A space standards – Bedsit HMOs

1. Two room lettings comprising combined living/bedroom and a separate kitchen:

1 person	-	10m ² or more (living/ bedroom)
2 persons	-	15m ² or more (living/ bedroom)

2. Two room lettings comprising combined kitchen/living room and a separate bedroom:

1 person	-	6.5m ² or more (bedroom)
	-	11m ² or more (kitchen/ living room)
2 persons	-	10m ² or more (bedroom)
	-	15m ² or more (kitchen/ living room)

3. Greater than two room lettings:

Each Bedroom	-	6.5m ² or more (1 person)
	-	10m ² or more (2 persons)
Each Living Room	-	9m ² or more (1 person)
	-	12m ² or more (2 or more persons)
Each Living Room/ Kitchen	-	11m ² or more (1 person)
	-	15m ² or more (2 or more persons)