

# Houses in Multiple Occupation

## Amenity Standards Guidance for Landlords, Owners, Managing Agents & Tenants



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# Introduction

This document provides guidance on the standard amenities, which must be provided in all licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO). For the purposes of this guide, 'standard amenities' means facilities for the preparation, storage and cooking of food, washing and bathing, toilets and heating, insulation and ventilation.

The number and type of amenities depend on the type and size of the house.

This document contains the minimum standards required in all HMOs licensed by Lichfield District Council. They form part of the licence conditions and should also be used by landlords, managers and letting agents as a guide to the level of amenities to be provided in all HMOs, whether or not they are licensable.

[NB All HMOs may be subject to individual inspection and assessment using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). As a consequence, some HMOs may require certain works, in addition to those specified in this guide, to address specific hazards or deficiencies].

## Definitions

- House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) - as defined in the Housing Act 2004 section 254.
- Unit of accommodation - a living area occupied by one household e.g. a bedsit.
- Mandatory Licensed HMO - An HMO which requires a licence under the Housing Act 2004 part 2. A dwelling of any number of storeys if there are two or more households, consisting of five or more people sharing a basic facility.
- Mandatory Licensed HMO and Owner Occupiers - an owner occupier is allowed two lodgers before the dwelling becomes a HMO. For the purpose of this calculation the owner's family is classed as one person. Four lodgers sharing a facility is licensable under Part 2.
- Bed & breakfasts, hotels and guest houses - can become HMOs if homeless families are placed there by councils and this becomes the sole use or significant use of the accommodation. Long term guests and migrant worker accommodation also fall into this category. 25% of the total occupancy is a significant use. If this percentage are sharing or lacking basic facilities then it may become licensable if occupation is over five people.
- Basic facility - is a bath, shower, sink, hand basin, toilet, or cooking facility.



# Heating

A form of fixed space heating is required to all habitable rooms, which can be controlled by the tenants, incorporating a timer and suitably positioned thermostat(s).

The heating system should be capable of achieving and maintaining the following internal temperatures, when the outside temperature is  $-1^{\circ}\text{C}$  :

- Bedrooms only  $18^{\circ}\text{C}$
- Living room/dining room  $21^{\circ}\text{C}$
- Study bedroom  $21^{\circ}\text{C}$
- Bathroom with WC  $21^{\circ}\text{C}$
- Kitchens and separate WCs  $18^{\circ}\text{C}$
- Dining kitchens  $21^{\circ}\text{C}$
- Circulation areas  $16^{\circ}\text{C}$

NB the heating system should have sufficient capacity to achieve the required temperatures within one hour, when the heating is in regular use.

Heating must be available at all times. If the heating system is controlled from a central location, the system must incorporate controls to allow each occupant to regulate the temperature within their own unit of accommodation.

## Suitable methods of heating are:

- 1) Central heating system (wet system) comprising a modern, efficient boiler with adequate controls including a timer or programmer, thermostat or room stat and individual thermostatic radiator valves (TRV) as appropriate.
- 2) Electric storage heaters with a separate meter arrangement to enable them to be operated using off peak electricity. The storage heaters should incorporate charge controls and a manual boost facility, in accordance with current Building Regulation Standards (Approved Document L1A).
- 3) Fixed electric convector or radiant heaters connected to a dedicated fixed spur outlet.

NB This form of heating, using on peak electricity, will not be deemed suitable or adequate, if the building has poor thermal performance due to its age and construction type. Only modern or improved buildings that have been upgraded to achieve current building regulation standards (Approved Document L1B) will be approved.

Portable heating appliances should not be provided as the main form of heating (except for temporary heaters provided for short term use in the event of a boiler breakdown).

Portable heating appliances using either paraffin oil or LPG (bottled gas) should not be provided by the landlord.

The heating system should be safely and properly installed and maintained by a suitably qualified person.

Non room sealed gas appliances, such as gas fired room heaters are not permitted in sleeping rooms and should be disconnected and removed to prevent them from being used.

Open hearths and disused fire places should be adequately boarded over and made good to prevent cold and draughts. Disused flues must be provided with an air vent to ensure adequate ventilation and the chimney terminal fitted with a suitable rain cowl to prevent rainwater getting in.

# Energy efficiency

The property should have a valid energy performance certificate (EPC) and achieve a minimum rating of band E.

Where practicable, properties with an EPC rating of band D or E should be upgraded with one or more of the following insulation measures, having regard to the minimum energy efficiency values set out in the Building Regulations Approved Document L1B:

- Additional loft insulation to a depth of 270mm
- Cavity wall insulation
- Insulated dry lining to sloping eaves ceilings and the interior surfaces of dormer windows.
- Insulation to floors, where they extend over cellars, basements or other unheated voids.
- Insulated drylining to external solid brick walls (i.e. non cavity construction).
- Replacement double glazing or secondary glazing.

Loft hatches should be insulated and draught proofed.

Hot water storage cylinders should be adequately insulated and pipes carrying hot water, where they pass through unheated areas, should be lagged.

Suspended timber floors over cellars, should be insulated to the underside, wherever practicable, using a minimum of 150mm of mineral fibre insulation (or equivalent rigid foam insulation) between the floor joists.





## Ventilation and damp

Habitable rooms should be provided with a suitable means of passive ventilation, such as trickle vents to windows.

Each habitable room should have a window, which is in good repair and capable of being opened and closed freely and fastened securely.

Kitchens, toilets and bathrooms must have mechanical extractor fans. The mechanical extraction rate in bathrooms and toilets must be a minimum of 15 litres per second and in kitchens a minimum rate of 30 l/s (where adjacent to cookers - 60l/s everywhere else in a kitchen).

# Bathroom facilities

Bathroom facilities must be available within two floors of each bedroom. Communal facilities must be accessible from communal areas. All facilities must be inside the building.

Minimum bathroom facilities:

People	Provision of washing facilities
1-4 people	At least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One fixed bath or shower and</li> <li>• A toilet with wash hand basin (the toilet may be located separately or be in the bathroom)</li> </ul>
5 people	At least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One fixed bath or shower and</li> <li>• One separate toilet with a wash hand basin (so there is a toilet available for the occupiers when the bathroom is in use)</li> </ul>
6-10 people	At least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two fixed baths or showers</li> <li>• Two toilets with wash hand basins (at least one toilet must be located separately so there is a toilet available for the occupiers when the bathrooms are in use)</li> </ul>
11-15 people	At least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three bathrooms and</li> <li>• Three toilets with wash hand basins (at least one toilet must be located separately so that there is a toilet available for the occupiers when the bathrooms are in use)</li> </ul>

Minimum standards for bathroom facilities:

- All baths, toilets and wash hand basins must have a smooth and impervious surface and be easy to clean.
- Each bathroom must either have a bath or a shower.
- All baths, showers and wash hand basins must provide an adequate supply of both hot and cold water. Hot water may be provided by any of the following methods:
  - i. piped from a boiler
  - ii. an immersion heater
  - iii. a fixed gas appliance (e.g. a multipoint)
  - iv. An instantaneous heater (only to basins and electric showers)
- Bathrooms should be adequately heated, insulated and draught free.
- Bathrooms and toilet compartments must have adequate ventilation. Mechanical extraction must be provided (in addition to a window to the outside air) at a minimum extraction rate of 15 litres per second.
- If the toilet is in a separate compartment there must be a wash hand basin in the compartment.
- The splash backs to baths, wash hand basins and sinks must extend to at least the width of the basin or bath. All joints must be sealed and watertight. All tiling must be fixed with waterproof adhesive and joints filled with waterproof grouting.
- In showers the tiling or splash back must extend above the head of the shower. Where a shower screen is used the tiling/splash back must extend to the edge of a fixed shower screen. Where a shower curtain is used, the tiling should extend beyond the curtain.
- Bathroom fitments and the water supply must be installed in compliance with Building Regulations: Approved Documents G and appropriate British Standards.
- Drainage to bathroom and toilet fitments must be installed in compliance with Building Regulations: Approved Document H and appropriate British Standards.

## Kitchens

Shared kitchens: The kitchen must be suitably located in relation to the living accommodation. If kitchens do not have a suitable dining area space dining must be provided within one floor distance (this may be a living room, bedsit or bedroom of suitable size). The kitchen layout and size must be adequate to enable each occupier to safely prepare food.

Minimum requirements for shared kitchens, depending on the number sharing:

Facility	Minimum standard	Up to and including five people	More than five people
Sink	A sink with constant hot and cold water, a draining board and tiled splash back	1 sink for up to 5 people	2 sinks for 6-8 people 3 sinks for 9-12 people (Note: a dishwasher will be acceptable as a second sink)
Hob	An electric or gas hob with four rings	1 hob for up to 5 people	2 hobs for 6-8 people 3 hobs for 9-12 people
Oven and grill	An oven and grill	1 oven and 1 grill for up to 5 people	2 ovens and 2 grills or 1 oven and 1 grill plus a microwave for 6-8 people 3 ovens and 3 grills or 2 ovens and 2 grills plus a microwave for 9-12 people
Electric sockets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 amp supply for an electric cooker</li> <li>• Dedicated sockets for the fridge and for a washing machine set at a convenient height and safe position</li> <li>• 3 double sockets at worktop height</li> </ul>	3 double sockets for up to 5 people	4 double sockets for 6-12 people
Work tops for food preparation	Worktops must be secure, fixed and of an impervious material	Minimum length for up to 5 people: 1m	Minimum length for 6-7 people: 1.5m Minimum length for 8 people: 2m Minimum worktop length for 9-12 people: 2.5m
Cupboards for the storage of food and cooking utensils (the space below the sink is not counted)	A floor based food storage cupboard 500mm wide and standard depth and height or a wall mounted food storage cupboard 1000mm wide and standard depth and height should be provided per person	1 cupboard per person	1 cupboard per person



Facility	Minimum standard	Up to and including five people	More than five people
Refrigerators and freezers	A standard fridge-freezer or separate standard size fridge and a separate freezer	1 fridge-freezer or 1 separate fridge and 1 separate freezer for up to 5 people	2 fridge-freezers or 2 separate fridges and 2 separate freezers for up to 6-10 people 3 fridge-freezers or 3 separate fridges and 3 separate freezers for up to 11+ people
Appropriate refuse disposal facilities	A sufficient number of bins must be provided for the storage of refuse awaiting collection both inside and outside	Minimum standard	Minimum standard
Appropriate extractor fans	Extraction must be provided in accordance with approved document F under Building Regulations	Minimum standard	Minimum standard
Appropriate fire blankets	To be supplied and sited in accordance with fire guidance*	To be supplied and sited in accordance with fire guidance*	To be supplied and sited in accordance with fire guidance*
Appropriate fire doors	To be provided in accordance with fire guidance*	To be provided in accordance with fire guidance*	To be provided in accordance with fire guidance*
Appropriate finishes	Kitchen floors must be able to be cleaned. Kitchen walls adjacent to cookers, sinks and food preparation areas must have impervious splash-backs. Kitchen ceilings must be in good repair.	Minimum standard	Minimum standard

\*See Lacor's Fire Guidance document.

Kitchens which are not shared are usually provided within a bedsit. If the kitchen is somewhere else it must be suitably located in relation to the living accommodation. If the kitchen does not have a suitable dining area dining space must be provided within one floor distance (this may be a living room, bedsit or bedroom of suitable size).

Any portable electrical appliance provided by the landlord must be PAT tested every 12 months. A certificate showing the results of the test must be made available to the council on request.

Minimum requirements for kitchens that are not shared:

Facility	Minimum standards
Cooker and hob	A hob with at least two rings and an oven A sink with constant hot and cold water, a draining board and tiled splash back
Sufficient electrical sockets	4 sockets (2 doubles), plus dedicated sockets for a cooker and refrigerator Points must be set at a convenient height and safe position
A worktop for the preparation of food	At least 500mm length The worktop must be secure, fixed and of impervious material
Cupboards for the storage of food and cooking utensils. The space below the sink is not counted.	A floor based storage cupboard of 500mm wide and standard depth and height or a wall mounted food storage cupboard of 1000mm wide and standard depth and height
A refrigerator	A standard refrigerator
Refuse disposal facilities	A sufficient number of bins must be provided for the storage of refuse awaiting collection both inside and outside
Extractor fans	Extraction must be provided in accordance with Building Regulations approved document F
Appropriate fire blankets	To be supplied and sited in accordance with LACOR's fire guidance
Appropriate fire doors	To be provided in accordance with LACOR's fire guidance
Appropriate finishes	Kitchen floors must be able to be cleaned. Kitchen walls adjacent to cookers, sinks and food preparation areas must have impervious splash-backs. Kitchen ceilings must be in good repair.

# Occupancy levels

Minimum bedroom sizes:

For bedrooms with cooking facilities	A minimum of 13m <sup>2</sup> for one person a minimum of 20m <sup>2</sup> for two persons sharing.
For bedrooms where kitchen and dining facilities are provided elsewhere in the house	A minimum of 6.51m <sup>2</sup> for one person a minimum of 11m <sup>2</sup> for two persons sharing.
For bedrooms where there the kitchen is provided elsewhere but there are no other dining facilities provided	A minimum of 11.22m <sup>2</sup> for one person a minimum of 15m <sup>2</sup> for two persons sharing.
Sleeping accommodation for one person aged under 10 years	Floor area not less than 4.64m <sup>2</sup> .
Rooms not to be used for sleeping accommodation	Any room with a floor area not less than 4.64m <sup>2</sup> .



