

Houses in multiple occupation – guidance on standards

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Introduction

This guidance is intended to assist landlords and managing agents with the provision of accommodation in houses in multiple occupation (HMO), and to contribute to a safe and healthy environment for the occupants and any visitors. It covers shared houses/flats, self contained flats, hostels and bedsits.

It is intended to provide a general guide on what is required in an HMO. Every property is different and it is important that you contact the Private Sector Housing team as soon as possible for specific and tailored advice on how the standards apply to individual properties.

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Personal washing and toilet facilities

Standard	Requirement
Location, size & condition	<p>All accommodation:</p> <p>All facilities should be located in rooms which are of an adequate size and layout, no more than one floor distant from any bedroom and accessible from communal areas, unless provided as en suite facilities for the exclusive use of that occupant.</p> <p>All baths or showers, toilets and wash hand basins should be of an adequate size, and be provided with an adequate water supply, necessary fittings, drainage, and be in a satisfactory condition to enable thorough cleaning.</p> <p>Constant hot water at a suitable temperature must be provided to bath/showers and wash hand basins.</p> <p>Each wash hand basin and bath/shower is to be provided with an appropriate splash back.</p> <p>Walls and floors should be reasonably smooth and non absorbent and capable of being readily cleansed.</p>
Personal washing & toilet facilities in relation to the number of occupants	<p>All accommodation (1 – 4 persons)</p> <p>A wash hand basin must be provided in each shared bathroom and each WC compartment.</p> <p>One bathroom containing a bath and/or shower and one WC (the WC may be separate).</p> <p>All accommodation (5 persons)</p> <p>A wash hand basin must be provided in each shared bathroom and each WC compartment.</p> <p>One bathroom (containing a bath and/or shower) and two WCs with wash hand basins (one of the WCs can be contained within the bathroom).</p> <p>All accommodation (6 – 10 persons)</p> <p>Two bathrooms (containing a bath and/or shower) and two WCs with wash hand basins (one of the WCs can be contained within one of the bathrooms).</p> <p>Where practicable one wash hand basin is required in each bedroom.</p>

Standard	Requirement
	<p>All accommodation (11 – 15 persons) Three bathrooms (containing a bath and/or shower) and three WCs with wash hand basins (two of the WCs can be contained within two of the bathrooms).</p> <p>Where practicable one wash hand basin required in each bedroom.</p>
Ventilation	<p>Bathrooms to have mechanical ventilation extracting 15 litres per second to the outside air in addition to any window(s).</p> <p>Each toilet in a separate compartment is required to have a window equivalent to 1/20th (five per cent) of the floor area or mechanical ventilation extracting at six litres per second to the outside air.</p> <p>Ventilation should not be obstructed externally.</p>

Kitchens

Standard	Requirement
Location, size and condition	<p>All accommodation There must be a kitchen, suitably located in relation to the living accommodation, and of a layout and size and equipped with facilities so as to adequately enable those sharing the facilities to store, prepare and cook food.</p> <p>If hostels have a commercial kitchen where access is not available at all times, and breakfast and a further main meal is provided every day, a reduced standard may be agreed, please contact us to determine the requirements.</p> <p>All facilities must be fit for purpose.</p>
Sinks	<p>Shared use A sink with constant hot and cold water and a draining board per five occupants (a dishwasher will be acceptable as a second sink).</p> <p>Exclusive use (bedsits) A sink with constant hot and cold water and a draining board.</p> <p>Each sink is to be provided with an appropriate splash back.</p>
Cookers	Shared use

Standard	Requirement
	<p>A cooker with a four ring hob, an oven and a grill per five occupants (a 27 litre microwave with an oven and grill will be acceptable as a second cooker).</p> <p>Exclusive use (bedsits) For a one person unit of accommodation - a two ring hob, an oven and a grill are acceptable.</p> <p>For a two person unit of accommodation - a cooker with a four ring hob, an oven and a grill.</p>
Electrical sockets	<p>All accommodation A minimum of two double electrical sockets are required at worktop height plus one per major appliance (for example a cooker, microwave, refrigerator/freezer, washing machine).</p>
Worktops	<p>All accommodation Fixed worktop(s) with a smooth impervious surface for food preparation, the minimum size required is:</p> <p>600mm x 1000mm (1 - 3 persons) 600mm x 2000mm (4 - 6 persons) 600mm x 3000mm (7-10 persons)</p>
Storage	<p>Shared use A 300 x 850 mm dry goods storage cupboard other than a sink base unit per occupant either in each occupant's room, or in a shared kitchen.</p> <p>Exclusive use A 300 x 850 mm dry goods storage cupboard other than a sink base unit per occupancy within the bedsit.</p>
Refrigerators and freezers	<p>Shared use There are three options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two worktop height refrigerators with freezer compartments per five occupiers or; • one worktop height fridge and one worktop height freezer per five occupiers or; • one worktop height refrigerator with a freezer compartment within each individual unit of accommodation. <p>Exclusive use A worktop height refrigerator with a freezer compartment.</p>
Refuse	<p>All accommodation Suitable and sufficient provision for household waste and recycling disposal both within the unit of accommodation and outside in accordance with the Council's waste disposal arrangements.</p>

Standard	Requirement
Ventilation	<p>All accommodation</p> <p>In addition to any windows, mechanical ventilation extracting 60 litres per second to the outside air, or 30 litres per second if sited within 300mm of the centre line of the hob.</p>

Heating

Standard	Requirement
Fixed heating	<p>All accommodation</p> <p>A risk assessment approach will be taken but in general an adequate, controllable and affordable form of central heating or storage heaters should be installed in compliance with the Government's Decent Homes Standard.</p> <p>Heating appliances should be capable of maintaining a temperature of 21oC when there is an outside temperature of minus 1oC in each unit of living accommodation.</p> <p>Heating should be available at all times and be under the control of the occupier.</p>

Electrical installation and appliances, and gas

Standard	Requirement
Electrical installation	<p>All accommodation</p> <p>The electrical installation must be tested every five years by a competent electrical engineer and to be in a satisfactory condition with no C1 or C2 hazards identified.</p> <p>A C1 hazard is a fault where danger is present, there is a risk of injury and immediate remedial action is required.</p> <p>A C2 hazard is a fault that requires attention, there is potential danger, due to an unsatisfactory condition.</p>
Electrical appliances	<p>All accommodation</p> <p>All items of portable electrical equipment to be subject to a PAT test, in accordance with the relevant code of practice issued by the Institution of Electrical Engineers.</p>

Standard	Requirement
Gas	<p>All accommodation All gas appliances to be tested by a suitably qualified Gas Safe registered contractor on an annual basis, and a copy provided to the tenants.</p> <p>All gas appliances to be in a satisfactory condition.</p>

Furniture

Standard	Requirement
Furniture	<p>All accommodation All furniture should comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended in 1989, 1993 & 2010).</p>

Fire precautions

Fire precautions including equipment must be provided to reduce fire risk and to ensure the safety of people in the premises as far as is practicable, in accordance with the LACORs (Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services) publication “Housing – Fire Safety, Guidance on fire safety provisions for certain types of existing housing”.

Standard	Requirement
Fire risk assessment	<p>Premises comprising of common parts Where parts of a premises are shared by residents, or they are available to paying guests, the premises will require a fire risk assessment to meet the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. This should be available for inspection by Kent Fire and Rescue Service.</p> <p>Guidance is available on-line or in hard copy, please refer to the “Fire safety risk assessment: sleeping accommodation”. fire-safety-risk-assessment-sleeping-accommodation</p>
Fire detection	<p>All accommodation Fire detection must comply with the current relevant British Standard in consultation with us.</p> <p>An automatic fire detection and alarm system will be required, and the type of system installed should be in accordance with the recommendations of BS 5839: Part 6.</p>
Emergency lighting	All accommodation

Standard	Requirement
	An emergency lighting system is required, to comply with BS5266, in consultation with Private Sector Housing team.
Fire blankets	<p>All accommodation</p> <p>A fire blanket conforming to BS EN 1869:1997 is required in each shared kitchen.</p>
Fire doors	<p>All accommodation</p> <p>All fire doors that we specify must meet the following requirements, and conform to BS 476 Part 22 (FD30 type) or to BS EN 1634-1.</p> <p>The specification, installation and maintenance of fire doors should comply with BS 8214:2008.</p> <p>Each fire door to be hung on three 100mm mild steel butt hinges, and provided with an approved intumescent strip incorporating a cold smoke seal to the top edge, lock and hinge sides of the door. Alternatively the intumescent strip and cold smoke seal may be inserted into the identical position of the door frame/lining.</p> <p>Each fire door must be provided with an approved self closing device to ensure that the door closes firmly onto the latch.</p> <p>All doors are to be well fitted within the frame. Any gap between the top edge, lock and hinge sides of the door and the frame must not exceed four mm.</p> <p>All fire doors required for escape purposes must be fitted with furniture, including hinges with a melting point of not less than 800°C. Those fitted with key operable locks must be capable of being operated from the inside in the direction of the escape, without the use of a key.</p>
Fire separation	<p>All areas</p> <p>All separating structures (for example walls, floors, ceilings) between separate lettings, common parts, and kitchens and so on, should be constructed to meet an appropriate fire resisting standard to our approval in consultation with the Kent Fire and Rescue Service.</p> <p>This will be a minimum of 30 minute fire resistance and in some circumstances 60 minute fire resistance may be required.</p>
Extinguishers	<p>All accommodation</p> <p>Subject to our requirements and your own fire risk assessment, you may have to provide a two litre AFFF (aqueous film forming foam) fire extinguisher.</p>
Sprinkler systems	<p>All accommodation</p>

Standard	Requirement
	<p>The installation of a certified British Standard sprinkler system may allow for some relaxation of requirements in respect of physical protection for example doors and intumescent seals, together with a lesser standard of alarm devices. We will consult Kent Fire & Rescue Service when necessary.</p>
<p>Maintenance of fire warning and detection systems, emergency lighting and fire extinguishers</p>	<p>All accommodation The manager/responsible person must ensure that any fire fighting equipment, emergency lighting and fire alarms are maintained in good working order.</p> <p>A maintenance contract must be arranged (with a competent contractor) at the time of initial installation for regular servicing in accordance with the relevant British Standard.</p> <p>The system must also be tested on a weekly basis by the person in control of the premises (manager/responsible person or their agent). All tests should be properly recorded within the system log book supplied by the installer during the handover procedure.</p>
<p>Managing, maintenance and minimising false alarms</p>	<p>All accommodation The contact details of the person responsible for the maintenance of the fire warning/detection systems should be displayed in a prominent position in accordance with the Management of HMOs (England) Regulations.</p> <p>For complex buildings requiring a multi-zone fire alarm system, it is recommended that a clear zone plan is displayed adjacent to the alarm panel.</p>
<p>Emergency signage</p>	<p>All accommodation In larger premises with common parts it will be necessary to provide relevant signs and signage to identify and facilitate means of escape.</p> <p>Fire action notices (what to do in case of fire) should be displayed to inform guests and residents. Signs should conform to the requirements of BS5499 Part 1.</p>

Minimum room sizes

These standards apply where there is sharing of some or all facilities in HMOs.

Table 1 sets out the minimum floor areas for rooms contained within one or two person units of accommodation.

HMOs

Table 1

Room/s	One person unit (minimum)	Two person unit (minimum)
Combined bedroom, living room and kitchen	13m ²	20.5m ²
Combined bedroom and living room	10m ²	14m ²
Combined living room and kitchen	12m ²	15m ²
Kitchen	4.5m ²	4.5m ²
Living Room	9m ²	12m ²
Bedroom	6.51m ²	10.22m ²

Where communal rooms are shared, the floor areas in table 2 are required per number of occupants.

Table 2

Room	3 persons	4 persons	5 persons	6 persons	7-10 persons
Kitchen area (minimum)	5m ²	6 m ²	7 m ²	9 m ²	11m ²
Communal living room	12m ²	12m ²	12m ²	12m ²	17m ²

Communal living rooms are not required if the combined bedroom and living room meet the standard in the table 1.

All measurements refer to the floor area.

Hostels

Table 3 sets out the standards for hostels including guest houses and bed and breakfast accommodation where board is provided as part of the occupancy.

Table 3

Room/s	1 person	2 persons	3 persons	4+ persons
Bedroom only	6.51m ²	10.22m ²	15 m ²	Add 4.5 m ² per each person over 3 occupants
Combined bedroom & living room	10m ²	14m ²	18.5 m ²	Add 4.5 m ² per each person

				over 3 occupants
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Table 4 sets out the floor areas that are required per number of occupants where communal rooms are shared.

Table 4

Room	1-3 persons	4 persons	5 persons	6 persons	7-10 persons
Kitchen (main meals not provided)	5m ²	6m ²	7m ²	9m ²	11 m ²
Kitchen (all main meals provided)*	5m ²	5m ²	5m ²	5m ²	7m ²
Communal living room	8.5m ²	11m ²	11m ²	11m ²	16.5m ²

*three meals a day to be provided every day of the week.

Communal living rooms are not required if the individual bedroom and living room meet the standard in the table above.