

Guidance to HMO Amenity Standards



Kent local authorities working in partnership
with Kent Fire and Rescue Service

INTRODUCTION

HMO STANDARDS FOR SHARED HOUSES/FLATS, SELF CONTAINED FLATS, HOSTELS AND BEDSITS

This guidance is intended to assist in the provision of accommodation in Houses in Multiple Occupation which contributes to a safe and healthy environment for the occupants and any visitors.

On inspection, a risk assessment may determine that it is necessary to take other measures to ensure that the housing standards are satisfactory for each individual unit of living accommodation or that variation from these standards is appropriate.

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1. Personal washing and toilet facilities

1.1 Location, size and condition	All accomm	All facilities should be located in rooms of an adequate size and layout no more than 1 floor away from any bedroom. All facilities must be accessible from internal communal areas (unless provided as en-suite facilities for the exclusive use of that occupant). All baths or showers, toilets and wash hand basins (WHB) 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. Constant hot water at a suitable temperature to be provided to bath/showers and wash hand basins. Each WHB and bath/shower is to be provided with an appropriate splash back. Wall and floor surfaces should be reasonably smooth, impervious and capable of being readily cleansed.
1.2 Personal washing and toilet facilities in relation to number of persons Please note a bathroom refers to a room containing a bath or shower, wash hand basin and toilet	All accomm 1 - 4 persons	Where practicable, wash hand basins to be provided in each unit of accommodation and within each shared bathroom and compartment containing a WC. At least 1 bathroom

	5 persons	Where practicable, wash hand basins to be provided in each unit of accommodation and within each shared bathroom and compartment containing a WC. At least 1 bathroom AND 1 separate WC with WHB (but the WC can be contained within a second bathroom)
	6 - 10 persons	Where reasonably practicable, there must be 1 WHB with appropriate splash back in each sleeping room plus At least 2 bathrooms AND 1 separate WC with WHB (the WC can be contained within a third bathroom)
	11 – 15 persons	Where reasonably practicable, there must be 1 WHB required in each sleeping room plus At least 3 bathrooms AND 1 separate WC with WHB (the WC can be contained within a fourth bathroom)
1.3 Ventilation	All accomm	Bathrooms to have mechanical ventilation extracting 15 litres/second to the outside air in addition to any window(s). Each WC in a separate compartment is required to have an openable window equivalent to 1/20th (5%) of the floor area or mechanical ventilation extracting at 6 litres/second to the outside air. Ventilation should not be obstructed.
2. Kitchens		
2.1 Location, size and condition	All accomm	There must be a kitchen, suitably located in relation to the living accommodation, and of such layout and size and equipped with such facilities so as to adequately enable those

		sharing the facilities to store, prepare and cook food. All facilities must be available at all times and be internally accessed from all bedrooms and bedsitting rooms. Each sink is to be provided with an appropriate splash back. 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, contact the Local Housing Authority to determine.
2.2 Sinks	Shared Use	A sink with constant hot and cold water and a draining board per 5 occupants (a dishwasher will be acceptable as a second sink).
	Exclusive Use	A sink with constant hot and cold water and a draining board.
2.3 Cookers	Shared Use	A cooker with a 4-ring hob, an oven and a grill per 5 occupants (a 27-litre microwave with an oven and grill will be acceptable as a second cooker).
	Exclusive Use	A cooker with a 4-ring hob, an oven and a grill for a 2 person unit of accommodation or a 2-ring hob, an oven and a grill will be acceptable in units of accommodation occupied by 1 individual. Kitchen facilities provided in a bedsit should be sited away from the entrance door.
2.4 Electrical sockets	All accomm	A minimum of two double electrical sockets are required at worktop height plus one per major appliance (i.e. a cooker, microwave, refrigerator/freezer, washing machine etc.).
2.5 Worktops	All accomm	Fixed worktop (s) with a smooth impervious surface for food preparation, minimum size 600mm x 1000mm (1-3 persons) 600mm x 2000mm (4-6 persons) 600mm x 3000mm (7-10 persons) 600mm x 4000mm (11-15 persons)
2.6 Storage	Shared Use	A 0.3m ³ dry goods storage cupboard other than a sink base unit per occupant either in each occupant's room or in a shared kitchen.

	Exclusive Use	A 0.3m3 dry goods storage cupboard other than a sink base unit per occupancy either within the bedsit or in a shared kitchen.
2.7 Refrigerators	Shared Use	Two worktop height refrigerators with freezer compartments, or 1 worktop height fridge and 1 worktop height freezer or equivalent per 5 occupiers.
	Exclusive Use	A worktop height refrigerator with a freezer compartment.
2.8 Refuse	All accomm	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.
2.9 Ventilation	All accomm	In addition to any windows, mechanical ventilation extracting 60 litres/second to the outside air or 30 litres/second if sited within 300mm of the centre line of the hob.
3. Heating		
3.1 Fixed heating	All accomm	A fixed, controllable and affordable form of heating must be provided in all rooms, including common areas of the dwelling. Heating should be available at all times and be under the control of the occupiers. Heating appliances should be capable of maintaining a temperature of 21°C with an outside temperature of -1°C in each unit of living accommodation.
4. Gas and Electric		
4.1 Electrical Installation	All accomm	Electrical Installation to be tested at least every 5 years by a competent electrical engineer and to be in a satisfactory condition with no Code 1 or Code 2 hazards. <u>Guide for landlords: electrical safety standards in the private rented sector - GOV.UK</u> Gas and electricity meters and associated isolating switches, valves and consumer units should be located within communal parts of the HMO so as to be accessible to all occupiers at all times.

4.2 Electrical Equipment	All accomm	All portable electrical equipment to be subject to an EET Test (Electrical Equipment Testing - formerly PAT Testing). Battery-operated and cordless equipment does not need to be EET tested however the chargers for items which are plugged in would. Brand new equipment does not need a test but should be supplied in a safe, working order; a visual check is recommended to verify the item is not damaged.
4.3 Gas	All accomm	All gas appliances to be tested by a suitably qualified Gas Safe registered contractor on an annual basis and a copy of the certificate provided to the tenants. All gas appliances to be in satisfactory condition. Gas and electricity meters and associated isolating switches, valves and consumer units should be located within communal parts of the HMO so as to be accessible to all occupiers at all times. Any room converted to use as sleeping accommodation shall not contain the following types of gas appliances: 1. A gas fire, gas space heater or a gas water heater (including a gas boiler) over 14 kilowatts gross heat input unless it is room sealed. 2. A gas fire, gas space heater, or a gas water heater (including a gas boiler) of 14 kilowatts gross heat input or less or any instantaneous water heater unless it is room sealed or has an atmosphere-sensing device.
4.4 Carbon monoxide alarms	All accomm	Carbon monoxide alarms must be installed in any room containing a fixed combustion appliance (except gas cookers). This means a fixed apparatus where fuel of any type is burned to generate heat. Landlords should follow the individual manufacturer's instructions when installing the alarms. However, in general, carbon monoxide alarms should be positioned at head height, either on a wall or shelf, approximately 1-3 metres away from a potential source of carbon monoxide.
5. Fixtures and Furniture		

5.1 Fixtures	All accomm	Any room used for sleeping must have an adequately sized window opening directly to external air.
5.2 Furniture	All accomm	All furniture should comply with current regulations – ‘The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended)’
	Communal areas, including combined kitchen dining/ living rooms	Rooms to be internally accessible and suitable furniture to be provided in accordance with the room’s intended use.
6. Fire precautions		
Provide fire precaution facilities and equipment 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”.		
6.1 Fire Risk Assessment	Premises comprising of common Parts	Where parts of premises are shared in common 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 (the Order). This should be available for inspection by Kent Fire and Rescue Service Inspectors (KFRS) who enforce the provisions of the Order. The Order does not apply to areas of single private domestic use. Guidance is available online or in hard copy, the relevant guide is Fire safety risk assessment: sleeping accommodation. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-sleeping-accommodation
6.2 Fire detection	All accomm	Fire detection to comply with the current relevant British Standard in consultation with the Local Housing Authority. 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 and reflect the level of risk, layout and the number of storeys in the building.

6.3 Emergency lighting	All accomm	In consultation with the Local Housing Authority, an emergency lighting system complying with BS 5266 to be provided in large buildings with long escape routes, in buildings with a complex layout, in buildings with no natural or borrowed lighting along the escape route, or in buildings with vulnerable occupiers.
6.4 Fire blankets	All accomm	A fire blanket conforming to BS EN 1869 in each kitchen area to be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
6.5 Fire doors	All accomm	All fire doors specified by the Local Housing Authority to meet the following requirements, conform to BS 476 Part 22 (FD30 type) or to BS EN 1634-1. The specification, installation and maintenance of fire doors should comply with BS 8214. 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. <i>(Alternatively, the intumescent strip and cold smoke seal may be inserted into the identical position of the door frame/lining).</i> Each fire door must be provided with an approved self-closing device to ensure that the door closes positively within the frame. 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 4mm. All fire doors required for escape purposes must be fitted with furniture, including hinges having 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 escape without the use of a key.

6.6 Escape Windows	All accomm	Where windows are provided for emergency escape purposes, they should have an unobstructed openable area that is at least 0.33m² and have a minimum 450mm height and 450mm width. The bottom of the openable area should not be more than 1,100mm above the floor. Escape windows should meet the following criteria: serve rooms whose floor level is no more than 4.5m from the ground; every room served by the escape window has access to it without entering another habitable room; if it is necessary to pass through the common escape route to reach the escape window, consideration should be had to the travel distance involved. (Where the common escape route is not a protected route, unusually long travel distances may be unacceptable and other fire precautions may be necessary); occupiers are able-bodied individuals with no specific high-risk characteristics and who can reasonably be expected to exit via the window unaided; there is no basement well or other encumbrance beneath the window such as railings or a conservatory; the escape window is openable from the inside without the use of a removable key; the ground below is level and free of obstructions; and the window or door should lead to a place of ultimate safety, clear of the building. However, if there is no practical way of avoiding escape into a courtyard or back garden from where there is no exit, it should be at least as deep as the building is high.
6.7 Fire Separation	All areas	All separating structures (walls, floors, ceilings, staircases etc.) between separate units, lettings, common parts and kitchens etc. should be constructed to meet an appropriate fire-resisting standard to the approval of the Local Housing Authority in consultation with KFRS. This will be a minimum of 30-minute fire resistance and in some circumstances may be required to provide 60-minute fire resistance. Loft hatches are to achieve at least 30-minute fire resistance. Storage cupboards should not be located in protected routes unless they are fire-resisting. Spandrels and doors to understairs cupboards located in escape routes should be fire-resisting. Generally, the fire separation between

		the basement and the ground floor (including the staircase soffit and spandrel) should be 30-minutes fire-resisting, and a 30-minute fire-resisting door should be fitted at the head of the basement stairs. All visible holes and voids compromising the fire separation are to be filled with appropriate fire resisting material.
6.8 Extinguishers	All accomm	Subject to your Local Housing Authority requirements and your own fire risk assessment, the following may be required:- a) a simple multi-purpose fire extinguisher in each shared kitchen; b) a simple multi-purpose extinguisher on each floor in the common parts. NB. Dry powder extinguishers are generally not recommended for indoor use, particularly in small rooms or confined spaces. If you choose to provide an extinguisher, training must be provided to all occupants and at the start of each new tenancy. All extinguishers provided should comply with BS EN 3 and be serviced on an annual basis by a qualified person.
6.9 Automatic Water Suppression Systems	All accomm	The installation of a certified British Standard sprinkler system may allow for some relaxation of requirements in respect of physical protection e.g. doors and intumescent seals, together with a lesser standard of alarm devices. All consultations with the Local Housing Authority will be carried out in conjunction with Kent Fire & Rescue Service.
6.10 Maintenance of Fire Warning/Detection Systems Emergency lighting and Fire extinguishers	All accomm	The manager/responsible person must ensure that any firefighting equipment, emergency lighting and fire alarms are maintained in good working order. A maintenance contract should be arranged (with a competent contractor) at the time of initial installation for regular servicing in accordance with the relevant British Standard. 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 logbook supplied by the installer during the handover procedure.
6.11 Managing, maintenance and minimising false alarms	All accomm	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 current management regulations. For complex buildings requiring a multi-zone fire alarm system it is recommended that a legible zone plan is displayed adjacent to the alarm panel.
6.12 Emergency Signage	All accomm	In larger premises or those with complicated layouts or with alternative exits it will be necessary to provide relevant signs and signage to identify and facilitate means of escape. Signs should conform to the requirements of BS 5499. Fire action notices (what to do in case of fire) should be displayed to inform guests and residents. Fire safety instructions are to be provided to the occupants and must include: The evacuation strategy for the buildings (e.g., stay put or simultaneous evacuation), instructions on how to report a fire (e.g., call 999 or 112, the correct address to give the fire and rescue service), any other instruction that tells residents what they must do when a fire has occurred.

HMO MINIMUM ROOM SIZES

Accommodation With Facilities Shared By Occupiers

These standards apply where there is sharing of some or all facilities i.e. HMOs where:

- occupiers live independently of others e.g. single room lettings or bedsit accommodation (kitchen facilities within own room);
- occupiers forming a group e.g. students, professional persons and others who interact socially.

Note: Irrespective of the floor area, we will consider the height and shape of the room and the useable space within the room when determining whether or not it is suitable for use as sleeping accommodation.

Rooms should be able to accommodate the required amount of appropriate furniture while still allowing sufficient space for movement within the room.

Entrance lobbies/corridors within bedrooms:

Where the room door opens into a lobby/corridor that is less than 1.2 metres wide, the entire lobby/corridor should be discounted.

Where the lobby/corridor is between 1.2 and 1.8 metres, some of the area may be counted (this reflects the fact that wider corridors can contribute to the storage capacity and spaciousness of bedrooms). The allowable area is calculated by deducting 1.2 metres from the width and multiplying this by the length of the corridor. (For example, if a corridor into a room is 1.5 metres wide by 2.5 metres deep, the usable area of the corridor would be $(1.5 - 1.2) \times 2.5$ metres. No deduction should be made where doors open into corridors/lobbies of more than 1.8 metres in width.)

Measurements will include floor to ceiling fitted wardrobes/walk in cupboards, but not chimney breasts, unusable or unused bulkheads, kitchenette/food preparation areas (unless there is no shared kitchen) and en-suite facilities, or other significant obstructions that can reduce the useable floor area.

All rooms 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 1.5 metres shall be disregarded and not counted as useable space.

Room Description where the room is in the unit of accommodation	Minimums	
	1 Person* Unit	2 Person* Unit
Combined bedroom, living room and kitchen (no ensuite)	13m ²	20.5m ²
Combined bedroom and living room	10m ²	14m ²
Combined living room and kitchen, or combined bedroom and kitchen	12m ²	15m ²
Kitchen	4.5m ²	4.5m ²
Living Room	9m ²	12m ²
Bedroom (provided that an adequately sized communal lounge is available)	6.51m ²	10.22m ²

*persons aged over 10. For persons under 10 years, please contact the Private Sector Housing Team. The minimum bedroom size for 1 person aged under the age of 10 is 4.64m².

Number of Persons					
Where the room is shared by occupiers	3	4	5	6	7-10
Kitchen area (minimum)	5m ²	6 m ²	7 m ²	9 m ²	11m ²
Communal living room (not required if the individual combined bedroom and living room meet the standard above)	12m ²	12m ²	12m ²	12m ²	17m ²

Hostels – To include Guest House and Bed & Breakfast accommodation where board is provided as part of the occupancy.					
Room Description	Number of Occupants				
	1	2	3	4+	
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	
For shared use of occupants	Number of persons				
	1-3	4	5	6	7-10
Kitchen (all 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 (not required if individual bedroom & living room meet the standard above)	8.5m ²	11m ²	11m ²	11m ²	16.5m ²

** Three meals a day (to be provided each day of the week)

Revision information

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Version 4 – 03/12/2018

Version 3 – 26/03/2014

Version 2.2 - 28/07/2006 – working release

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