

Flintshire County Council

Minimum Standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation

Category B – Shared Houses – Applicable Standards

Please read these standards alongside the general notes provided.

“Shared houses” mean, for the purposes of this standard, HMOs where the whole property has been rented out by an identifiable group of sharers such as students, work colleagues or friends as joint tenants. Each occupant normally has their own bedroom but they share the kitchen, dining facilities, bathroom, WC, living room and all other parts of the house.

All the tenants will have exclusive legal possession and control of all parts of the house, including all the bedrooms. There is normally a significant degree of social interaction between the occupants and they will, in most cases, have rented out the house as one group. There is usually a single joint tenancy agreement. In summary, the group will possess many of the characteristics of a single family household, although the property is still legally defined as a HMO because the occupants are not all related.

In deciding upon whether a property is a shared or not, the following factors will be considered and a balanced view taken of the particular state of affairs, namely:

- 1) The extent, or otherwise, to which each occupier shares facilities such as dining rooms, kitchens, bathrooms and other parts of the property, and whether all parts of the property are accessible to all occupiers;
- 2) The degree of co-operation and social interaction amongst the occupiers;
- 3) The terms and conditions contained in the tenancy agreement(s) and the way in which the accommodation was marketed;
- 4) Payment arrangements for rent, utility bills, food and other such items;
- 5) The extent, or otherwise, of related occupiers;
- 6) Features present in the property, such as locks on individual units of accommodation and to what extent facilities are shared;

The Standards

1. Space Standards

Room	No of Occupants	Size
Bedroom where a separate living room is provided.	1	6.5 m ²
	2	11 m ²
Bedroom where no separate living room is provided	1	10 m ²
	2	15 m ²
Living rooms	1 – 5	11 m ²
	6 or more	As for 5 persons plus 1.5 m ² per person

2. Heating Standards

Space Heating requirements	
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heating must be safely and properly installed and maintained and must be appropriate to the design, layout and construction, such that the whole of the dwelling can be adequately heated by a fixed appliance. • 'Adequately' means that heating must be available, if required, to all tenants at all times. If space heating is centrally controlled, controls must be provided to allow the occupants to regulate the temperature in their unit of accommodation. • Heating must be capable of maintaining a room temperature of 21°C when the outside temperature is -1°C and must be provided in every habitable room and bathroom.
2.	<p>Where the cost of heating the HMO is the responsibility of the tenants this must be affordable. Acceptable forms of primary heating are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gas or oil central heating (preferred option) with programmable controls provided for time and temperature programming; • fan assisted electric storage heaters run on an off-peak tariff (Economy 7 or Economy 10) with automatic charge control and output control; • fixed gas-fired appliances for primary space heating connected to a suitable flue and terminal outlet. • Alternative forms of heating will also be considered (provided that they are not restricted as in 6 below)
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Bathrooms only</u>: Electric fan heaters, radiant wall heaters, or panel heaters (with local time and temperature controls) are acceptable provided they are designed to operate in moist atmospheres.

4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary heating within each room must be controllable by the occupants. • When the primary heating is not controlled by tenants, secondary fixed appliance heating must be installed in each room and must be in accordance with the requirements of the Domestic Building Services Appliance Guide.
5.	Where the cost of heating the HMO is the responsibility of the landlord other forms of fixed heating may be acceptable provided that the heating satisfies the requirements of Point 1 above, and that the landlord can provide a written declaration confirming the above arrangement and also that the heating is uninterrupted at all times. Furthermore, evidence of payment e.g. recent utility bill for relevant fuel must be provided when requested by the Council.
6.	<p>The following are <u>not acceptable</u> as forms of heating (except where indicated):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paraffin heaters and LPG heaters • Portable heaters of any kind • Solid fuel heating • Fan heaters and Radiant bar heaters (except as for Bathrooms in Point 3 above)

3. Washing Facilities Standards

Bathroom amenities in relation to the number of occupants sharing facilities	
Up to 4 occupants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 full bathroom: containing bath or shower, wash hand basin (WHB) and WC.
5 occupants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 bathroom: containing bath or shower with WHB (which may contain a WC). <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 separate WC with WHB OR a second bathroom which contains a WC and WHB).
6-10 occupants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 bathrooms each containing a bath or shower and WHB (one of which must contain a WC). <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 separate WC with WHB.
11-15 occupants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 bathrooms: each containing a bath or shower and WHB; <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 separate WCs with each with WHB (but two of the WCs can be located within two of the bathrooms).

Bathroom Amenity summary table:

No. Occupants sharing facilities	Acceptable Arrangements						
	1 bathroom with 1 WC	1 bathroom (with or without a WC) & 1 separate WC	2 bathrooms (1 with a WC)	2 bathrooms each with a WC	2 bathrooms (one with a WC) and a separate WC	2 bathrooms and 2 separate WCs	3 bathrooms (2 containing a WC) & a separate WC

3 or 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6					✓	✓	✓
7					✓	✓	✓
8					✓	✓	✓
9					✓	✓	✓
10					✓	✓	✓
11 to 15							✓

Washing facilities standards

Requirements for sanitary conveniences and washing facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WC must have a surface which is smooth and non-absorbent and capable of being easily cleaned. • The design of the WC should ensure there is a water seal of adequate depth to prevent foul air escape from the system. • WCs must be securely fixed and capable of carrying the weight of users. • WCs must be fitted with an impermeable hinged ring seat and cover. Both must be flat on the underside. • The operating lever to the flushing apparatus should be of impervious and readily cleansable material. • Every room containing a WC must be provided with a wash hand basin with a constant supply of hot and cold water.
Bathrooms requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each bathroom must either have a bath of minimum dimension 1700mm x 760mm or a shower of minimum dimensions 800mm x 800mm. • Baths, wash hand basins and showers must be provided with a constant supply of hot and cold water. • Wash hands basins should meet the recommended minimum dimension of 560mm x 430mm. • Baths, showers and wash hand basins must be properly connected to the drainage system via a trapped waste outlet. • A double shower will not be counted as two separate showers.
Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All bathrooms and WC compartments must be suitably and adequately ventilated. This may be an openable window of suitable size or mechanical ventilation if there is no window. Ventilation must be provided in accordance with current Approved Document F of the Building Regulations.

General requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where a bathroom is provided in a house likely to be occupied by children under 5, then it is recommended that a bath is provided. • Baths and wash hand basins must have a two course tiled splash back • Showers must have an impervious surround – either a cubicle or tiled walls and a screen • Walls surfaces must be smooth and impervious and be easy to clean. • Floors must be slip resistant. • A door to the WC compartment or bathroom must be capable of being locked from the inside. • Bathroom and WC facilities must be provided not more than two floors distant from any intended user and must be accessible from a common area.
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4. Kitchen Standard

Kitchens – Numbers & Measurements					
No of Occupants sharing facilities	Minimum floor area (m ²)	No of sinks and/or dishwashers	No of cookers	No of microwaves	Worktop (linear m)
Up to 3	5 m ²	1 sink	1	1	2
4	6 m ²	1 sink	1	1	2
5	7 m ²	1 sink	1	1	2
6	9 m ²	1 sink	1	1	2
7 – 10	An additional kitchen is desirable. The exact requirements will depend on total number of occupiers				
7	9 m ²	2 sinks OR 1 sink + 1 dishwasher	2	1	2.5
8	10 m ²	2 sinks OR 1 sink + 1 dishwasher	2	1	3
9	11 m ²	2 sinks OR 1 sink + 1 dishwasher	2	1	3.5
10	12 m ²	2 sinks OR 1 sink + 1 dishwasher	2	1	4
11 -15	An additional kitchen must be provided. The requirements will				

	be the same as those for between 3 to 5 occupants, depending on the numbers of occupants.
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The above are minimum space standards based on optimum shape and layout. In practice, it may be necessary to have a larger space standard to ensure that there is sufficient space to fit in all the facilities required and provide a circulation area which permits safe use of the kitchen for the number of users.

Kitchen Facilities and Standards	Requirements
Cooker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A gas or electric cooker with four burners/hobs, oven and grill. • Cookers must be located so that the burners/hobs are at a height level with the adjacent worktop. • Cookers must be safely positioned within the room such that they do not compromise escape in the event of a fire associated with the cooker i.e. they must not be positioned adjacent to the exit doorway. • Cookers must not be positioned directly adjacent to openable windows.
Microwave Ovens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 17 litres capacity
Sinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With permanent supply of hot & cold water and draining board, and with adequate splash back (300mm)
Electrical sockets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum requirement of 3 double sockets specifically for the kitchen area suitably located in relation to worktop area. • Additional sockets must be provided for large appliances such as a cooker, fridge freezer, washing machine or dishwasher etc.
Worktop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 600 mm deep, of which 400mm linear width must be sited immediately adjacent to the cooker.
Food Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A floor based storage cupboard of 500mm wide and standard depth and height or a wall mounted food storage cupboard 1000mm wide and standard depth per occupant (approximately 200 litres). • It is acceptable to provide food storage within the occupants own room. • The space below the sink is not counted.
Fridge / Freezer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.04 cubic metres (40 litres) combination of refrigerated and frozen food storage per occupant (this would normally mean one shelf in a fridge and one shelf in the freezer, per occupant). • It is acceptable to provide food storage within the occupants own room.

Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All kitchens must be suitably and adequately ventilated with extractor fans installed and operating in accordance with current Approved Document F of the Building Regulations. • A cooker hood extractor fan must provide a minimum extraction rate of 30 litres/second. If the extractor is located elsewhere within the room, the minimum extraction rate must be 60 litres/second.
Floor covering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The kitchen area must be provided with a readily cleansable non-slip floor covering.
Refuse disposal and recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sufficient number of bins must be provided for the storage of refuse and recycling materials awaiting collection both inside and outside. • A suitable hard standing with suitable access for cleansing of the area and removal of containers must be provided and wherever practicable be located at the rear of the premises.

6. Fire Safety

Fire safety within HMOs is covered not only by the Housing Act 2004 but also the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 that gives powers to Fire and Rescue Authorities to enforce fire safety in the common areas in certain types of HMOs. In practice a protocol exists that generally means that the local authority takes on the responsibility for enforcement following consultation as necessary with the fire authority. Under this legislation the responsible person must carry out a fire safety risk assessment and implement and maintain a fire management plan. Further information on what you need to do when carrying out a risk assessment is available from the website <http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire/firesafety/firesafetylaw/>.

The National Guidance on fire safety in dwellings was published in July 2008 by LACORS (Local Authority Regulators of Regulatory Services) entitled "Guidance on Fire Safety Provisions for Certain Types of Existing Housing". This document contains guidance for landlords on how to ensure adequate fire safety in certain types of residential accommodation. It offers practical advice on fire risk assessment and contains case studies with suggested fire safety solutions.

Copies of this national guidance can be downloaded free of charge from the website www.lacors.gov.uk.

Requirements for fire safety are summarised in the tables that follow: Please note that these requirements are based on the property and current occupants presenting a '**normal risk**' as defined in LACORS guidance point 9.1. Where a higher risk exists e.g. due to vulnerability of occupants, additional fire precaution measures may be required.

Shared house HMO of no more than 2 storeys	
Fire detection and alarm systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Standard 5839 Part 6: Grade D, LD3 coverage - interlinked smoke alarms in all circulation spaces, living rooms and cellars, and heat alarms in all kitchens <p>[It is recommended that interlinked smoke alarms are also installed in all bedrooms]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The electrical supply to any fire detection and alarm system must be connected to the landlords' supply that must NOT operate via a card or coin operated meter or similar device.
Escape routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In normal risk shared HMOs there may be no requirement for additional fire resistance but walls and floors must be of sound, traditional construction and doors must be solid, well constructed and close fitting OR escape windows must be provided from each bedroom and communal room. The criteria used for "Normal Risk" is that contained in the LACORS Guidance on Fire Safety Provisions for Certain Types of Existing Housing, point 9.1. • An FD30 (without smoke seals) fire door will be required on the kitchen door. • Travel distances must not be excessive - 9 metres is considered the maximum acceptable distance from a room exit door to the nearest place of relative safety, which is the nearest available final exit. • The escape route from a room should not involve travel through an additional room. Where unavoidable, escape windows, and other fire safety controls shall be applied. • Locks on final exit doors must be capable of being opened from the inside without the use of keys. • It is strongly recommended that the exit door from each bedroom is also openable from the inside without the use of a removable key.
Escape Windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where escape windows are required they must have an unobstructed openable window area that is at least 0.33m² with at least the width and height dimension being a minimum of 450mm. • The bottom of the openable area (window sill level) must be not more than 1100mm, and not less than 800mm above floor level. Windows are suitable for means of escape where the drop from the window to ground level is one storey only (not exceeding 4.5m from first floor level to outside ground level). The ground below the windows must be flat and free from hazards. • Windows must not be located in a room behind a lockable door, and they must lead to a place of ultimate safety,

Shared house HMO of no more than 2 storeys	
	<p>clear of the building.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All windows must be installed in accordance with current Building Regulation requirements.
Fire separation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No requirement for additional fire resistance but walls and floors must be of sound, traditional construction. • If a cellar is present 30 minute separation between the cellar and the ground floor escape route is the ideal.
Lighting of escape routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conventional artificial lighting is required.
Fire-fighting equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A multi-purpose AFFF 6 litre foam or 1.5kg dry powder extinguisher is recommended in the hallway. • A fire blanket to BS 6575 must be provided in each kitchen. The blanket must be mounted on the wall 1.5m high adjacent to an exit door away from the cooking facility.
Fire safety signs and notices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No requirement
Surface finishes and floor coverings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No requirement

Shared house HMO of 3 or 4 storeys	
Fire detection and alarm systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Standard 5839 Part 6: Grade D, LD3 coverage - interlinked smoke alarms in all circulation spaces, living rooms and cellars, and heat alarms in all kitchens <p>[It is recommended that interlinked smoke alarms are also installed in all bedrooms]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The electrical supply to any fire detection and alarm system must be connected to the landlords' supply that must NOT operate via a card or coin operated meter or similar device.
Escape routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 minute protected route with FD30 Fire Doors (without smoke seals) on all doors opening onto escape route. (An FD30 fire door must be provided to the kitchen opening (subject to location)) • Travel distances must not be excessive - 9 metres is considered the maximum acceptable distance from a room exit door to the nearest place of relative safety, which is the nearest available final exit. • The escape route from a room should not involve travel through an additional room. • Locks on final exit doors from the building must be capable of being opened from the inside without the use of keys. • It is strongly recommended that the exit door from each

Shared house HMO of 3 or 4 storeys	
	bedroom is also openable from the inside without the use of a removable key.
Escape Windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where escape windows are required they must have an unobstructed openable window area that is at least 0.33m² with at least the width and height dimension being a minimum of 450mm. • The bottom of the openable area (window sill level) must be not more than 1100mm, and not less than 800mm above floor level. Windows are suitable for means of escape where the drop from the window to ground level is one storey only (not exceeding 4.5m from first floor level to outside ground level). The ground below the windows must be flat and free from hazards. • Windows must not be located in a room behind a lockable door, and they must lead to a place of ultimate safety, clear of the building. • All windows must be installed in accordance with current Building Regulation requirements.
Fire separation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No requirement for additional fire resistance but walls and floors must be of sound, traditional construction. • If a cellar is present 30 minute separation between the cellar and the ground floor escape route is required.
Lighting of escape routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency escape lighting is required only if the route is long or complex or where there is no effective borrowed light. • Where emergency lighting is necessary, it must be provided in accordance with the current BS 5266 Part 1 to cover the protected escape route. Emergency escape lighting is required. An annual test certificate is required. • The location of light fittings must be determined by the design / installing engineer. • The electrical supply to any emergency lighting system must be connected to the landlords' supply that must NOT operate via a card or coin operated meter or similar device.
Fire-fighting equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A multi-purpose AFFF 6 litre foam or 1.5kg dry powder extinguisher is recommended on each landing on the escape route. • A fire blanket to BS 6575 must be provided in each kitchen. The blanket must be mounted on the wall 1.5m high adjacent to an exit door away from the cooking facility.
Fire safety signs and notices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage along escape route if the escape route is complex
Surface finishes and floor coverings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No requirement

Additional Fire Safety Notes	
Large buildings and/or those with mixed commercial and residential use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In larger buildings or where the building contains different uses (for example, residential accommodation alongside or above a separate commercial use) then additional measures may be required.
Sprinkler systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relaxations from certain requirements for fire precautions may be considered where a sprinkler system is in place, designed and installed to the relevant British Standard.
Furnishings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All soft furnishings supplied by the landlord to tenants must comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended). All furniture must be labelled to show that it complies with these tests.
Information and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each occupier must be given specific advice on fire prevention and fire safety in the home. • Training must be given on the use of fire fighting equipment. • A fire escape plan must be devised for the occupants, so that in the event of fire, they are aware of how to evacuate the property quickly and safely. This must be provided at the start of each new tenancy and reviewed periodically.
Gas and/or electric meters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gas or electric meters and/or distribution boards should not be sited in escape routes. However, it may be possible to relax this requirement providing any gas meter is installed in accordance with the gas safety regulations and any electric meter is installed and sited in accordance with current IEE regulations. It is considered best practice to enclose such equipment in fire-resisting construction.

Flintshire County Council acknowledges that all not all properties are the same and that alternative solutions may be acceptable or required in certain circumstances.

The above document contains references to certain legislation and standards. Other legislation and standards apart from those quoted above will also be applicable. Independent legal advice and/or consultation with approved external organisations should be obtained where appropriate.