

## Flintshire County Council

### Minimum Standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation

#### **Category F – Self Contained Flats – Applicable Standards**

Please read these standards alongside the general notes provided.

“Self Contained Flats” mean, for the purposes of this standard, houses or buildings which are constructed as or converted entirely into self-contained flats, even if certain facilities are located outside the main door of the flat.

Access to the house or building would normally, but not always, be via a communal entrance doorway and hallway but thereafter the entrance to each individual flat is via a single doorway. All amenities (i.e. WC, wash hand basin, bath or shower plus kitchen facilities) must be accessible from within each individual flat, or within reasonable proximity to the living accommodation, and must be for the exclusive use of the individual household.

Houses which have been converted in to self contained flats to a proper standard in accordance with the 1991 Building Regulations or equivalent are exempted from the HMO definition.

Larger individual flats which are occupied by groups of 3 or more unrelated persons are regarded as houses in multiple occupation in their own right and those standards relevant to Category A or Category B HMOs would be applicable within such flats.

#### **The Standards**

##### 1. Space Standards

<b>No. of Related Occupants per flat</b>	<b>No. of Rooms excluding bathroom and/or WC</b>	<b>Rooms</b>	<b>Size</b>
1	3	Bedroom	6.5 m <sup>2</sup>
		Living Room	11 m <sup>2</sup>
		Kitchen	5 m <sup>2</sup>
	2	Bed/living room	10 m <sup>2</sup>
		Kitchen	5 m <sup>2</sup>
	2	Bedroom	6.5 m <sup>2</sup>
		Kitchen/living room	11 m <sup>2</sup>
1	1	Bedroom/ living room/kitchen	13 m <sup>2</sup>

2	3	Bedroom	11 m <sup>2</sup>
		Living Room	11 m <sup>2</sup>
		Kitchen	5 m <sup>2</sup>
	2	Bed/living room	14 m <sup>2</sup>
		Kitchen	5 m <sup>2</sup>
	2	Bedroom	11 m <sup>2</sup>
		Kitchen/living room	15 m <sup>2</sup>
1	Bedroom/ living room/kitchen	20 m <sup>2</sup>	

For flats of 3 to 6 related occupants the following criteria will apply:

Rooms	Size
Each single bedroom	6.5 m <sup>2</sup>
Each double bedroom	11 m <sup>2</sup>
Living room (for up to 5 occupants)	11 m <sup>2</sup>
Living room (6 - 10 occupants)	As for 5 persons plus 1.5 m <sup>2</sup> per person
Kitchen (4 occupants)	6 m <sup>2</sup>
Kitchen (5 occupants)	7 m <sup>2</sup>
Kitchen (6 occupants)	9 m <sup>2</sup>

## 2. Heating Standards

Space Heating requirements	
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• '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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
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"> <li>• gas or oil central heating (preferred option) with programmable controls provided for time and temperature programming;</li> <li>• fan assisted electric storage heaters run on an off-peak tariff (Economy 7 or Economy 10) with automatic charge control and output control;</li> <li>• fixed gas-fired appliances for primary space heating connected to a suitable flue and terminal outlet.</li> <li>• Alternative forms of heating will also be considered (provided that they are not restricted as in 6 below)</li> </ul>
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <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.</li> </ul>
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The primary heating within each room must be controllable by the occupants.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>

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.	The following are <u>not acceptable</u> as forms of heating (except where indicated): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paraffin heaters and LPG heaters</li><li>• Portable heaters of any kind</li><li>• Solid fuel heating</li><li>• Fan heaters and Radiant bar heaters (except as for Bathrooms in Point 3 above)</li></ul>

### 3. Washing Facilities Standards

<b>Bathroom amenities in relation to the number of related occupants</b>	
Up to 4 occupants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 full bathroom: containing bath or shower, wash hand basin (WHB) and WC.</li> </ul>
5 – 6 occupants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 bathroom: containing bath or shower with WHB (which may contain a toilet).</li> <li>• 1 additional separate WC with WHB <b>OR</b> an additional second bathroom which contains a WC and WHB is desirable.</li> </ul>

<b>Washing facilities standards</b>	
Requirements for sanitary conveniences and washing facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A WC must have a surface which is smooth and non-absorbent and capable of being easily cleaned.</li> <li>• The design of the WC should ensure there is a water seal of adequate depth to prevent foul air escape from the system.</li> <li>• WCs must be securely fixed and capable of carrying the weight of users.</li> <li>• WCs must be fitted with an impermeable hinged ring seat and cover. Both must be flat on the underside.</li> <li>• The operating lever to the flushing apparatus should be of impervious and readily cleansable material.</li> <li>• Every room containing a WC must be provided with a wash hand basin with a constant supply of hot and cold water.</li> </ul>
Bathrooms requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each bathroom must either have a bath of minimum dimension 1700mm x 760mm or a shower of minimum dimensions 800mm x 800mm.</li> <li>• Baths, wash hand basins and showers must be provided with a constant supply of hot and cold water.</li> <li>• Wash hands basins should meet the recommended minimum dimension of 560mm x 430mm.</li> <li>• Baths, showers and wash hand basins must be properly connected to the drainage system via a trapped waste outlet.</li> </ul>
Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
General requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where a bathroom is provided in a flat likely to be occupied by children under 5, then it is recommended that a bath is provided.</li> <li>• Baths and wash hand basins must have a two course tiled splash back or equivalent</li> <li>• Showers must have an impervious surround – either a cubicle or tiled walls and a screen</li> <li>• Walls surfaces must be smooth and impervious and be easy to clean.</li> <li>• Floors must be slip resistant.</li> <li>• A door to the WC compartment or bathroom must be capable of being locked from the inside.</li> </ul>

#### 4. Kitchens

Note : **THE PROVISION OF A COOKER AND/OR FRIDGE/FREEZER IS ONLY A REQUIREMENT IF THE LANDLORD IS CONTRACTUALLY BOUND TO PROVIDE SUCH APPLIANCES.** HOWEVER PROVISION OF A DEDICATED COOKER POINT LOCATED IN A SUITABLE POSITION (HAVING REGARD TO THE GENERAL REQUIREMENT ABOVE) PLUS A SUITABLE POWER SOCKET OUTLET FOR A FRIDGE/FREEZER LOCATED IN A SUITABLE POSITION IS A REQUIREMENT.

<b>Kitchen Facilities and Standards</b>	<b>Number of Occupants</b>	<b>Requirements</b>
<b>Cooker</b>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A gas or electric cooker with two burners/hobs, oven and grill.</li> <li>• A worktop appliance may be substituted provided it is located so that the burners/hobs are at a height level with the adjacent worktop.</li> </ul>
	2 - 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A gas or electric cooker with four burners/hobs, oven and grill.</li> </ul>
	General Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixed cookers must be installed by appropriately qualified persons (e.g. Gas Safe Registered Engineers etc)</li> <li>• Cookers must be located so that the burners/hobs are at a height level with the adjacent worktop.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Cookers must not be positioned directly adjacent to openable windows.</li> </ul>
<b>Fridge / Freezer</b>	1 - 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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).</li> </ul>
<b>Sinks</b>	1 - 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 per flat. With permanent supply of hot &amp; cold water and draining board, and with adequate splashback (300mm)</li> </ul>
<b>Electrical sockets</b>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 double sockets specifically for the kitchen area. Additional sockets needed for cooker and refrigerator.</li> </ul>
	2 - 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 double sockets specifically for the kitchen area. Additional sockets needed for cooker and refrigerator.</li> </ul>
<b>Worktop</b>	1 - 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1000mm wide, 600 mm deep, of which 400mm linear width must be sited immediately adjacent to the cooker.</li> </ul>
<b>Food Storage</b>	1 - 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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). The space below the sink is not counted.</li> </ul>

<b>Kitchen Facilities and Standards</b>	<b>Number of Occupants</b>	<b>Requirements</b>
	3 - 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A floor based storage cupboard of 1,000mm wide and standard depth and height or two wall mounted food storage cupboard 1000mm wide and standard depth per occupant (approximately 200 litres). The space below the sink is not counted.</li> </ul>
<b>Ventilation</b>	1 - 6	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.
<b>Floor covering</b>	1 - 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The kitchen area must be provided with a readily cleansable non-slip floor covering.</li> </ul>
<b>Refuse disposal and recycling</b>	1 - 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sufficient number of bins must be provided for the storage of refuse and recycling materials awaiting collection both inside and outside.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<b>Fire Safety</b>	1 - 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As per Fire Safety Guidance</li> </ul>

## 5. 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/](http://www.lacors.gov.uk/).

Requirements for fire safety are summarised in the tables that follow:

<b>Houses Converted to Self-Contained Flats of up to 2 storeys</b>	
Fire detection and alarm systems	<p>A mixed system is required comprising of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. British Standard 5839 Part 6: Grade D, LD2 coverage - interlinked smoke detectors in all circulation spaces (plus cellars) and heat detectors in the lobby, hall or entrance room to each flat opening onto the escape route;</li> </ol> <p><b>AND</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. British Standard 5839 Part 6: Grade D, LD3 coverage within each <b>self-contained flat</b> –non-interlinked single point smoke detectors in the individual lobby, hall or entrance room to each <b>self-contained flat</b> opening onto the escape route.</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Escape routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 minute protected route with FD30S Fire Doors to rooms opening onto the escape route.</li> <li>• Doors within the flats must be sound, well constructed and close fitting.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Locks on final exit doors must be capable of being opened from the inside without the use of keys.</li> <li>• It is strongly recommended that the exit door from each unit of accommodation (self-contained flat) is also openable from the inside without the use of a removable key.</li> </ul>
Escape Windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where escape windows are required they must have an unobstructed openable window area that is at least 0.33m<sup>2</sup> with at least the width and height dimension being a minimum of 450mm.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>

<b>Houses Converted to Self-Contained Flats of up to 2 storeys</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• All windows must be installed in accordance with current Building Regulation requirements.</li> </ul>
Fire separation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 minute separation to walls/ceilings between units of accommodation.</li> <li>• 30 minute separation to cellar/basement (including door).</li> </ul>
Lighting of escape routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency escape lighting is required only if the route is long or complex or where there is no effective borrowed light.</li> <li>• Where emergency lighting is necessary, it must be provided in accordance with the current BS 5266 Part 1 to cover the protected escape route. An annual test certificate is required.</li> <li>• The location of light fittings must be determined by the design / installing engineer.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Fire-fighting equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A multi-purpose AFFF 6 litre foam or 1.5kg dry powder extinguisher may be required on each floor on the escape route (subject to risk assessment under the Fire Safety Order).</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Fire safety signs and notices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No requirement.</li> </ul>
Surface finishes and floor coverings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The escape route must be kept clear of obstructions and combustible materials.</li> <li>• The walls, ceilings and floor of all parts of the protected route must be free of highly flammable materials e.g. polystyrene tiles or heavy flock wallpaper.</li> </ul>



Houses Converted to Self-Contained Flats of 3 or 4 storeys	
Fire detection and alarm systems	<p>A mixed system is required comprising of:</p> <p>1. British Standard 5839 Part 6: Grade A, LD2 coverage - interlinked smoke detectors in all circulation spaces (plus cellars) and heat detectors in the lobby, hall or entrance room to each flat opening onto the escape route which are linked to a control panel to give information on the location of the fire or any fault, which may develop.</p> <p>The control panel must conform to current British Standard 5839 Part 4 and be sited close to the normal entrance to the dwelling.</p> <p>The system must incorporate manual call points, which should be located on each floor level and at final points of exit.</p> <p>The alarm signal must achieve sound levels of:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not less than 65dB (A) in all accessible parts of the building</li> <li>• Not less than 75dB (A) at all bed heads when all doors are shut.</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <p>2. British Standard 5839 Part 6: Grade D, LD3 coverage within each flat – non-interlinked single point smoke detectors in the individual lobby, hall or entrance room to each flat opening onto the escape route.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Escape routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 minute protected route with FD30S Fire Doors to rooms opening onto the escape route.</li> <li>• Doors within the flats must be sound, well constructed and close fitting.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• The escape route from a room should not involve travel through an additional room.</li> <li>• Locks on final exit doors must be capable of being opened from the inside without the use of keys.</li> <li>• It is strongly recommended that the exit door from each unit of accommodation (bedsit or flat) is also openable from the inside without the use of a removable key.</li> </ul>
Escape Windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where escape windows are required they must have an unobstructed openable window area that is at least 0.33m<sup>2</sup> with at least the width and height dimension being a minimum of 450mm.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• All windows must be installed in accordance with current Building Regulation requirements.</li> </ul>
Fire separation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 minute separation to walls/ceilings between units of accommodation.</li> <li>• 30 minute separation to cellar/basement (including door).</li> </ul>

Houses Converted to Self-Contained Flats of 3 or 4 storeys	
Lighting of escape routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conventional artificial lighting is required.</li> <li>• Emergency escape lighting is required only if the route is long or complex or where there is no effective borrowed light.</li> <li>• Where emergency lighting is necessary, it must be provided in accordance with the current BS 5266 Part 1 to cover the protected escape route. An annual test certificate is required.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Fire-fighting equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A multi-purpose AFFF 6 litre foam or 1.5kg dry powder extinguisher must be provided <u>on</u> each floor on the escape route.</li> <li>• A fire blanket to BS 6575 must be should 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.</li> </ul>
Fire safety signs and notices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final exit sign and signage along escape route if the escape route is complex.</li> </ul>
<b>Surface finishes and floor coverings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The escape route must be kept clear of obstructions and combustible materials.</li> <li>• The walls, ceilings and floor of all parts of the protected route must be free of highly flammable materials e.g. polystyrene tiles or heavy flock wallpaper.</li> </ul>

Additional Fire Safety Notes	
Large buildings and/or those with mixed commercial and residential use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Sprinkler systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Furnishings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Information and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each occupier must be given specific advice on fire prevention and fire safety in the home.</li> <li>• Training must be given on the use of fire fighting equipment.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Gas and/or electric meters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> </ul>

<b>Additional Fire Safety Notes</b>	
	considered best practice to enclose such equipment in fire-resisting construction.

The above standards apply to self-contained flats with between 1 and 6 occupants that belong to a single household. If there are 7 or more occupants in any household or three or more unrelated occupiers in any flat, please contact the Private Rented Sector Team for advice.

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.