

# Houses in Multiple Occupation Standards (HMO)

Housing Act 2004

Bedsit type HMO's

## Bedsit Type Houses & Flats in Multiple Occupation

These are houses & flats let as individual rooms / bedsits occupied by a number of unrelated persons living as more than one household where there is little interaction between the occupiers.

Within this category there are 2 two sub categories:-

- Houses / flats occupied as individual rooms where there is some exclusive occupation (usually bedroom/living room) and some sharing of amenities (bathrooms and / or toilets). Cooking and food preparation facilities are usually provided within the individual units of accommodation but some occupants may share a communal kitchen. There is usually no communal living room and each occupant lives otherwise independently of all others.
- HMOs where there is no cooking within the individual bedsit, but a communal shared kitchen is provided. A communal living room may also be provided in some cases. There are usually individual tenancies rather than a single joint tenancy. Bedroom doors will usually be lockable. Initially there may be little or no social interaction amongst the residents although this may change over a period of time, particularly where there is a communal living room.

These standards also apply to Houses in Multiple Occupation which are subject to Lambeth Council's HMO Licensing Scheme.

Houses in Multiple Occupation are also subject to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The HHSRS applies to all residential properties and assess whether premises have any defects that may give rise

to a hazard, which in turn could cause harm to the occupiers, or any visitors to the property.

Many of the items described below can also be required under the HHSRS (possibly to a higher level than described in this document).

## **A. SPACE STANDARDS**

All habitable rooms, bathrooms and WCs 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 1.53m shall be disregarded.

### **1. SINGLE ROOM LETTINGS WITH SHARED KITCHEN**

1 person	-	9 m <sup>2</sup> or more
2 persons	-	14 m <sup>2</sup> or more

### **2. SINGLE ROOM LETTINGS WITH COOKING FACILITIES**

1 person	-	13m <sup>2</sup> or more
2 persons	-	17m <sup>2</sup> or more

**NOTE:** No more than 2 persons permitted to sleep in one bedroom. Shared sleeping accommodation is only considered suitable for adults who are married, cohabiters, consenting friends or relatives. Children below the age of 10 years now count as a whole person

### **SEPARATE KITCHENS**

Kitchens must be of sufficient size for the number of occupants to use and circulate safely. Where kitchen facilities are provided within other rooms, as a guide a minimum additional floor area of 5.5m<sup>2</sup> should be required.

In exceptional circumstances, the room size standards detailed above may not apply. In these cases, assessments will be based on the HHSRS, and no category 1 hazards must exist.

## **B. NATURAL LIGHTING**

1. All habitable rooms shall be provided with an area of clear glazing situated in either a window and/or a door, opening to the external air, equivalent in total area to at least 1/10th of the floor area of the room.

Basement rooms used for human habitation should, in addition, have sufficient natural lighting.

2. All kitchens, bathrooms and WCs should comply with 1 above. Where this is not practicable, adequate artificial lighting shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of section C (below).

All glazing to windows in bathrooms and WCs shall be obscure.

3. All staircases, landings and hallways shall be provided with an area of clear glazing in a window.

Where this is not practicable, adequate artificial lighting shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of section C (below).

### **C. ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING**

1. All habitable rooms, kitchens, bathrooms, WCs, staircases, landings and passages shall be adequately lit.
2. There should be sufficient switches to operate the artificial lighting on each landing, hallway or passage and each switch should allow hallways, passages and stairways to be lit at the same time.
3. All lighting to common parts should be provided maintained and paid for by the landlord or their agent.
4. Time switches are only allowed to common landings, hallways and staircases and should stay on for an adequate time to allow a person to climb stairs etc and enter a room.

### **D. VENTILATION**

1. All habitable rooms shall be ventilated directly to the external air by a window, the openable area of which shall be equivalent to at least  $\frac{1}{20}$  of the floor area of the room. Where a basement room is used as a habitable room there should be an unobstructed space immediately outside the window opening which extends the entire width of the window or more and has a depth of not less than 0.6m measured from the external wall or not less than 0.3m in the case of a bay window with side lights.
2. All kitchens, bathrooms and WCs should comply with 1 above, but if this is not practicable, mechanical ventilation that is automatically controlled with a humidistat switch or a minimum 15 minute overrun facility; fans should be wired to the lighting switch and be capable of giving a minimum of 4 air changes per hour. The minimum extraction rate is 60 litres of air per second for kitchens and 15 litres per second for bathrooms.
3. Suitable and sufficient permanent ventilation shall be provided and maintained in all kitchens, dining/kitchens, bathrooms, WCs and other rooms containing cooking or washing facilities.

4. Suitable and sufficient permanent ventilation shall be provided and maintained in any room in which there is a gas appliance.

**E. SPACE HEATING**

All habitable rooms and bathrooms shall be provided with a suitable appliance properly maintained and capable of giving a temperature of 21°C in the occupancy/ letting room and 18°C elsewhere (when the outside temperature is -1°C). Appliance means:

1. A fixed gas fire with an adequate flue; or
2. A fixed electric heater; i.e. the wiring to be spurred into the main electrical supply; or
3. An efficient, effective and economical space heating system.
4. All bathrooms must contain suitable space heating.
5. All forms of heating must be controllable by the occupant.

***Portable oil or gas heaters shall be not used in any part of the property.***

**F. WATER SUPPLY**

1. Each dwelling shall be provided with a supply of cold running water suitable for drinking purposes directly off the rising main, and located over a sink or wash hand basin.
2. Any down service pipe from any water storage tank in an upper storey or roof space should be provided with an accessible stopcock.
3. All water supplies shall be protected from frost damage.

**G. PERSONAL WASHING FACILITIES**

1. A readily accessible bathroom/ shower room, being not more than one floor distant from any user, shall be provided in the following ratios
2.

1 - 5 persons -	1 bathroom/ shower room
6 - 10 persons -	2 bathrooms/ shower rooms
11 - 15 persons -	3 bathrooms/ shower rooms
3. Every bath or shower shall be properly plumbed with hot and cold water supplies and waste drainage.

## H. DRAINAGE AND SANITARY CONVENIENCES

1. WCs\* shall be provided in the following ratios:

1 - 5 persons	-	1 WC
6 - 10 persons	-	2 WCs (1 must be separate to the bathroom)
11 - 15 persons	-	3 WCs (2 must be separate to the bathrooms)
2. Such WCs shall be not more than one floor distance from the letting.
3. The property shall be provided with an effective system, both above and below ground, for the drainage of foul, waste and surface water.

\*All WC rooms must include a wash hand basin with constant and adequate supplies of hot and cold running water.

***Bathrooms and wc's should ideally be within one floor of lettings***

## I. FACILITIES FOR STORAGE, PREPARATION AND COOKING OF FOOD AND FOR THE DISPOSAL OF WASTE WATER

Each individual occupancy shall have its own kitchen facilities as below.

If it is a shared kitchen then each kitchen shall be shared by not more than 5 persons and shall not be more than one floor distance from any room(s) occupied by the person(s) for whom they are provided.

There are to be no more than 2 sets of kitchen facilities in one room. Each kitchen shall be provided with a minimum of four 13amp electric power sockets at a convenient height and in a safe position.

All finishes are to be non-absorbent and readily cleansable including the floor covering which must be provided under all appliances and at least 1m in front of the appliances. No furniture, bedding, curtains etc. shall be within 600mm of the cooker.

### (a) Storage of Food

Each separate occupancy shall be provided with a proper food store of 0.3m<sup>3</sup> (3.5c<sup>3</sup>) within the letting (1000mm x 500mm x 600mm).

A refrigerator with a suitable power point shall be considered a proper food store in addition to the above (minimum size 0.11m<sup>3</sup>).

A cupboard under the sink will not be considered an adequate

food store.

(b) Preparation of Food

A suitable and impervious work top shall be provided, a minimum size of 0.5m<sup>2</sup>, 1000mm x 500mm (an extra 500mm to be provided if the microwave is to be sited on the worktop) with a tiled splash back or equivalent.

(c) Cooking of Food

Separate cooking facilities must be provided in the form of a gas or electric cooker with four burners, oven and grill. (Only one is necessary in a shared kitchen for up to 5 persons). A minimum of 2 ring baby belling or equivalent oven or combined microwave and grill will be suitable for use by just 1 person. The kitchen facilities should be sited remote from the entrance door.

(d) Disposal of Waste Water

Each separate occupancy shall be provided with a sink properly plumbed with hot and cold water supplies and waste drainage.

A 2 course tiled splash back or equivalent should be provided. A suitable draining board to be provided and the sink to be connected to the drainage system by a suitable trap. (Only one necessary in a shared kitchen)

**J. REFUSE STORAGE AND DISPOSAL**

Refuse storage container(s) shall be provided, sufficient for the needs of the house and placed in such a manner as to prevent nuisances (smells, obstruction etc).

**K. MEANS OF ESCAPE IN CASE OF FIRE**

Appropriate fire precaution facilities and equipment must be provided and maintained in the property in accordance with current British Standards, the requirements of the Housing Act 2004 (The Housing Health and Safety Rating System) and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 & LACORs Fire Safety Guidance.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/9425/150940.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/9425/150940.pdf) (HHSRS link)

[http://www.cieh.org/library/Knowledge/Housing/National\\_fire\\_safety\\_guidance\\_08.pdf](http://www.cieh.org/library/Knowledge/Housing/National_fire_safety_guidance_08.pdf) (LACORS link)

The following fire safety measures will reduce the risk of death or injury from fire:

- The provision of a 30 or 60 minute fire protected route of escape
- Fire separation between units of accommodation, including walls and ceilings
- Fire doors
- Cold smoke seals, intumescent strips and self-closing devices fitted to doors, and quick release locks
- Automatic fire detection systems
- Emergency lighting
- Whole stair lighting – one switch turns all lights on
- Escape windows
- Sprinkler and mist systems
- Fire extinguishers and fire blankets

Different minimum standards will apply to different types of HMOs. Detailed advice is available by contacting the Property Standards & Enforcement Service.

## **L. MANAGEMENT**

1. A proper standard of management should be observed in the house, in particular to ensure the repair, maintenance, cleansing and good order of the following:-
  - (a) all means of water supply and drainage in the property;
  - (b) all parts of the house in common use, including kitchens, bathrooms, WCs etc;
  - (c) all installations in common use;
  - (d) all means of ventilation;
  - (e) all means of escape from fire and all apparatus, systems and other things provided by way of fire precautions;
  - (f) outbuildings, yards and gardens in common use.
2. The manager shall ensure that such precautions are taken as are reasonably required to protect the residents from injury.
3. The manager shall display a notice in a suitable position in the house containing the name and address and the telephone number of any person who is the manager of the house.

**Please note** in planning terms there are now two different types of HMO. Small HMOs housing 3 to 6 unrelated people who share amenities will not require planning permission. However, larger HMOs defined as having more than 6 unrelated people sharing amenities, are regarded as having a “Sui Generis” (of its own kind) use and planning permission is required.

HMO licensing does not grant exemption from the need to obtain planning permission if your property is occupied by more than 6 unrelated people.

The Council’s Planning Authority should be consulted concerning any proposed works or change of use.

For advice and information on planning related matters please contact:

London Borough of Lambeth  
Planning & Development  
Phoenix House,  
10 Wandsworth Road,  
London SW8 2LL

Telephone: 020 7926 1139  
Fax: 020 7926 1171

Website: [www.lambeth.gov.uk/planning](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/planning)

For further information on the enclosed or to apply for an HMO Licence application form please contact:-

The London Borough of Lambeth  
Property Standards & Enforcement Service  
Environmental Health Team.  
Lambeth Housing  
PO Box 67088  
London  
SW2 9JZ  
Telephone 020 7926 4444 / 4018  
Fax 020 7926 4351

Email: [pse@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:pse@lambeth.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/HousingPlanning/PrivateHousing](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/HousingPlanning/PrivateHousing)

**Other Contacts and Useful Information:**

Government Department for Communities and Local Government  
Website: [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

The following publications can be obtained from HM Stationery Office Ltd or on-line at: Website: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si>



The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses  
(Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006  
Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 373

The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006  
Statutory Instrument 2006 No 372

London Landlord Accreditation Scheme  
London Borough of Camden  
C/o Environmental Health Team  
Town Hall Extension  
Argyle Street  
London WC1H 8EQ  
Website [www.londonlandlords.org.uk/accreditation](http://www.londonlandlords.org.uk/accreditation)