

# Amenity Standards

A guide to amenity and space standards  
for landlords of Houses in Multiple



## Using this guide

Not all of the standards contained within this document are legal requirements, however the standards contained within this guide have been adopted by the majority of Local Authorities in the East Midlands. This includes Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, and Nottinghamshire.

The standards are usually regarded as a **MINIMUM** but are a guide only and do not apply to bedsits.

It is recommended that landlords discuss their plans with both Planning and Building Control to understand their requirements. This leaflets solely relates to minimum licensing requirements.

It is recognised that landlords can achieve the same standards by providing different amenities and/or facilities within bedrooms or larger living space, therefore other factors or compensatory features will be considered when inspecting a property, allowing for a degree of flexibility in certain circumstances.

## How to contact the Licensing Unit:



[licensingunit.enc@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:licensingunit.enc@northnorthants.gov.uk)



01832 742102



[www.northantslicensing.gov.uk](http://www.northantslicensing.gov.uk)



North Northamptonshire Council  
Central Licencing Administration Unit,  
Thrapston Offices,  
Cedar Drive,  
Thrapston,  
Northamptonshire,  
NN14 4LZ

# Heating

Each unit of living accommodation in an HMO must be equipped with adequate means of space heating.

- Fixed heating shall be provided in every bedroom, lounge and hallway. Where reasonably practical fixed heating shall be provided in kitchens and bathrooms. The means of heating shall be capable of maintaining the following internal temperatures when the outside temperature is -1 degree Celsius.
  - Living room 21 degrees Celsius
  - Bedrooms 18 degrees Celsius
  - Kitchen 18 degrees Celsius
  - Bathroom 22 degrees Celsius
  - Hall/Passage 18 degrees Celsius

The provision of insulation can assist in meeting this standard.

- Heating may be provided by means of:
  - A. Gas Central Heating**
    - a) Central heating controls should be located in a communal area and be easily accessible to all tenants.
    - b) Radiators should ideally be provided with Thermostatic Radiator Valves (TRVs) but as a minimum the property should have a room thermostat and each radiator should have a control valve.
  - B. Fixed Electric Heating**
    - a) An electric wall socket should be provided for the exclusive use of each heater.
    - b) The installation must be capable of using 'off peak' electricity e.g. 'Economy 7' as the primary energy input.
    - c) If storage heaters are used, they must have a built in 'boost' convector heater function in order to ensure that additional heat can be provided where necessary.
- Wherever practicable, heaters (including radiators) should be fixed to an existing chimney breast or be positioned so as to direct heat towards the centre of the room, such as under a window.

- The heating appliances must be capable of being safely used at any time and be suitably guarded. All such appliances shall be installed and maintained by a competent person. Gas appliances shall be inspected annually and certificated in accordance with the Gas Safety (Installation & Use) Regulations 1998.
- The use of portable paraffin, electric fan, or liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) (bottled gas) heaters is **unacceptable under any circumstances**, whether provided by the landlord or the tenant. If an additional source of heating is required by a tenant this can be provided by an oil filled radiator where necessary.
- **A Carbon Monoxide detector** should be installed in any bedroom or living room where there is a combustion appliance e.g., a boiler and **MUST** be installed in any room, hall or landing in the house which is used wholly or partly as living accommodation and contains a solid fuel burning combustion appliance (for the purposes of this condition bathrooms or lavatories are to be treated as rooms used as living accommodation). Any such alarm must be maintained in proper working order and the licence holder must supply the authority, on demand, a declaration by him/her as to the condition and positioning of any such alarm.

## **Washing Facilities, Sanitary Conveniences (Shared)**

- Any person with access to an en-suite facility shall be excluded from the calculations.
- Bathrooms and WCs must be of an adequate size and layout and be adequately heated and ventilated and should include humidistat-controlled extraction.
- All rooms in which a WC is located shall have a wash hand basin in the same room.
- All baths, showers and wash hand basins shall be fit for purpose and have taps supplying an adequate supply of hot and cold water.
- Bathrooms and WCs must be suitably located, not more than one floor away from any living accommodation.
- The walls and floor of any toilet, bathroom or shower room must be reasonably smooth and non-absorbent and capable of being readily cleansed.
- All bathroom furniture must be of non-absorbent material and capable of being easily cleaned.
- All bathroom furniture must be located at an appropriate height and with sufficient free user space to facilitate use.

Bathrooms				
Occupiers	Up to 4	5-6	7-10	11-15
Shared WC with wash hand basin with splashback	1	2	2	3
Shared Bath or Shower	1	1	2	3
		1 x WC must be in separate room	1 x WC must be in separate room	2 x WC must be in a separate room

## Kitchens

- All kitchens shall be of such a layout and size to adequately enable those sharing to safely store, prepare and cook food. (7sqm if used by 1-5 persons and for over 5 persons an additional 3sqm per person sharing the kitchen at the same time)
- Shared kitchens must be suitably located, normally not more than one floor away from any living accommodation except where dining room is provided next to kitchen.
- All equipment and facilities in kitchens shall be fit for purpose.

Kitchens				
Occupiers	Up to 4	5-6	7-10	11-15
Cooker	Oven, grill & 4 ring cooker	Oven, grill & 4 ring cooker plus additional microwave	2 ovens, 2 grills & 8 ring cooker.	3 ovens, 3 grills & 8 ring cooker.
Microwave	Optional – may allow extra sharing of cooking facilities at the council's discretion			
Kitchen Sink	Sink and drainer with	Sink and drainer with	2 sinks and drainers with hot & cold	3 sinks and drainers with hot & cold

	hot & cold water	hot & cold water	water or 1 set with a dishwasher	water or 2 sets with a dishwasher
Worktop	Depth – minimum 500mm, length 2 metres	Depth – minimum 500mm, length 2 metres	Depth – minimum 500mm, length 2 metres per 6 people plus 0.5m per person thereafter	Depth – minimum 500mm, length 2 metres per 6 people plus 0.5m per person thereafter
Electrical Sockets over Worktop	4 sockets (excluding those in use for fridge, washing machine etc)	5 sockets (excluding those in use for fridge, washing machine etc)	6 sockets (excluding those in use for fridge, washing machine etc)	8 sockets (excluding those in use for fridge, washing machine etc)
Dry Food Storage	Single wall unit per occupant	Single wall unit per occupant	Single wall unit per occupant	Single wall unit per occupant
Fridge (with freezer compartment or separate freezer)	Suitably sized fridge(s) so each occupant has one shelf and a separate freezer compartment	Suitably sized fridge(s) so each occupant has one shelf and a separate freezer compartment	Suitably sized fridge(s) so each occupant has one shelf and a separate freezer compartment	Suitably sized fridge(s) so each occupant has one shelf and a separate freezer compartment
Refuse Disposal	Please follow your Local Authorities waste disposal scheme			
Ventilation	A mechanical extraction fan in accordance with Building Regulation requirements			

## Fire Precautionary Facilities

All HMOs shall be provided with an adequate protected means of escape from fire, together with other fire precautions including so far as necessary, a fire detection and warning system with emergency lighting to the satisfaction of the inspecting officer.

- Ensure that there are self-closing fire doors that provide 30 minutes fire and smoke protection (FD30S) on all bedrooms, kitchens and living rooms.
- All fire doors should have combined cold smoke seals and intumescent strips.
- All bedroom fire doors and final exit doors (front and back door) must have locks that are capable of being opened from the inside without the use of a key (e.g., Yale type or thumb turn locks). All locks are to comply with BS 3621 or BS 1303 for cylinder locks.
- Provide a fire blanket to BS 1869:1997 (or equivalent) in the kitchen. The blanket must be mounted on the wall 1.5m high adjacent to an exit door away from the cooking facility.
- All glazing panels that are above doors that open on to the fire escape route or are in walls in the escape route should be upgraded to provide at least 30 minutes fire resistance. This can either be done by replacing existing glazing with fire resistant glazing or over boarding with suitable fire-resistant material such as a double layer of plasterboard.
- The use of fire extinguishers is not recommended in HMOs.

## Fire Alarm & Detection Systems

All HMOs must have automatic fire alarm systems installed. The requirements are different for two storey HMOs and for three (or more) storey HMOs.

### Two Storey HMO

- Provide a Fire Alarm System to include smoke detectors in every bedroom, throughout the escape route and in communal living rooms. Storage cupboards on the means of escape may also need detection installed.
- A heat detector must be installed in the kitchen. The detectors must be hard wired to the mains and interlinked with integral battery back-up. The system must comply with the current British Standard 5839 part 6: Grade D1, LD2 (or equivalent). On completion you should submit a certificate from the installer to confirm that the system has

been designed and installed in accordance with the relevant British Standard.

### **Three Storey HMO**

- Provide a Fire Alarm System to include smoke detectors in every bedroom, throughout the escape route and in communal living rooms. Storage cupboards on the means of escape may also need detection installed.
- A heat detector must be installed in the kitchen. The detectors must be hard wired to the mains and interlinked with a control panel containing battery back-up. The system must comply with the current British Standard 5839 part 6: Grade A LD2 (or equivalent).
- On completion you should submit a certificate from the installer to confirm that the system has been designed and installed in accordance with the relevant British Standard.

### **Emergency Lighting**

- Arrange for the installation of suitable and sufficient emergency lighting to provide adequate coverage to the protected fire escape route.
- The number and position of any luminaries should be determined by your fire risk assessment.
- On completion you should submit a certificate to confirm that the arrangements comply with BS 5266.

### **Natural and Artificial Lighting**

- All habitable rooms shall have an adequate level of natural lighting, provided via a clear glazed window, or combined windows and/or door(s). The glazed area is to be equivalent to at least 1/10th (10%) of the floor area and to extend normally to a point 1.75m above floor level.
- The window shall be positioned so that the light from the window is able to illuminate most of the room.
- Windows to bathrooms and toilets are to be glazed with obscured glass.
- Adequate electric lighting points are to be provided to all habitable rooms, staircases, landings, passages, kitchens, bathrooms and toilets. The manager is responsible for ensuring lighting is functioning



in all communal areas of the HMO and this should be checked as part of the monthly inspection.

- Glazing in critical locations (i.e., where there is a danger of falling through or of lacerations) should meet both fire resistance and safety standards i.e., the use of fire resisting safety glazing complying with current British Standard 6206: 1981 and Part N of the Building Regulations (or equivalent)
- Windows from the First Floor and above should have window restrictors installed. These must be capable of being disabled when necessary if the windows are designated as escape windows.

## **Ventilation**

- All habitable rooms shall be ventilated directly to the external air by a window that has an openable area not less than 1/20th (5%) of the floor area of that room.
- All bathrooms and toilet compartments shall have mechanical ventilation compliant with Part F of the Building Regulations. Such an installation shall be fitted with an adequate overrun device. In the case of bathrooms, this can be connected to the lighting circuit of the room; however, we recommend humidistat style fans in order to reduce the chances of tenants turning extractor fans off due to noise disturbance.
- A kitchen shall have extract ventilation compliant with Part F of the Building Regulations.

## **Drainage**

- All new drainage shall comply with current Building Regulations.
- The whole house shall be provided with an effective system, both above and below ground for the drainage of foul, waste and surface water.
- We recommend that gutters are checked each spring and accumulated debris cleared as poorly maintained gutters can lead to damp within the property.

## **Refuse Storage and Disposal**

- Refuse and recycling bins or containers shall be provided in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of the house and an acceptable means of

disposal provided to comply with the council's storage and waste disposal scheme.

- All refuse containers should be located away from habitable rooms and wherever practicable at the rear of the premises. All bins to be positioned so that they do not cause obstruction of footways and access ways and do not obscure natural lighting from windows below bin height.
- Tenants should be provided with information on how to use their bins correctly.

## **Electrical Supply**

### **The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006, Regulation 4(4) 6(3) & 6(4)**

**'The manager must take all such measures as are reasonably required to protect the occupiers of the HMO from injury, having regard to the design of the HMO'**

**'The manager must- a) ensure that every fixed electrical installation is inspected and tested at intervals not exceeding five years by a person qualified to undertake such inspection and testing; b) obtain a certificate from the person conducting that test, specifying the results of the test'**

**'The manager must not unreasonably cause the gas or electric supply that is used by any occupied within the HMO to be interrupted.'**

- Where there is no communal living room in a property, it may be necessary to install additional sockets as tenants are likely to have more electrical devices in their bedroom.
- In the kitchen area of a bedsit, at least 4 socket outlets shall be located above the work surface for the use of portable appliances.
- All socket outlets shall be located in positions which permit safe, convenient, and proper use at all times, having regard to the room layout. They shall not be positioned where the appliance cables are likely to pose a safety hazard.
- All new electrical installations shall comply with current Building Regulations and be suitably certified.
- Installations must be checked at a minimum of 5 yearly intervals by a qualified electrician and an electrical safety certificate, known as an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR), obtained. Where the

certificate shows Code 1 or 2 faults these must be addressed immediately. If the certificate advises a re-inspection is needed in less than 5 years this advice should be followed. Visual checks should be carried out during routine visits

- Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) must be carried out annually. A PAT certificate should be obtained. For portable electrical appliances less than one year old, receipts should be kept. Ensure vacuum cleaners are remembered when carrying out testing.

## **Gas Safety**

### **The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006, Regulation 6(4)**

**‘The manager must not unreasonably cause the gas or electric supply that is used by any occupied within the HMO to be interrupted.’**

### **The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 Regulation 2 & 3**

**‘Every landlord shall ensure that there is maintained in a safe condition— (a)any relevant gas fitting; and (b)any flue which serves any relevant gas fitting, so as to prevent the risk of injury to any person in lawful occupation or relevant premises.**

**‘A landlord shall ensure that each appliance and flue to which that duty extends is checked for safety within 12 months of being installed and at intervals of not more than 12 months since it was last checked for safety (whether such check was made pursuant to these Regulations or not)’**

- Landlords are required to ensure that gas appliances, fittings and flues provided for tenants' use are safe.
- An annual safety check must be carried out and records kept for 2 years.
- A copy of the Gas Safety Certificate must be provided to each tenant at the start of the tenancy.

## **Furniture Safety**

- The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended) set down levels of fire resistance for items of domestic upholstered furniture, furnishings and other products containing upholstery. They require that certain furniture included in rented

accommodation complies with the fire safety requirements detailed in the regulations.

- Any relevant furniture supplied as part of the letting will need to comply.
- For licensable HMOs, the furniture safety requirements form part of the licence conditions.

## **Personal Safety and Security**

- Sufficient measures must be in place to provide a secure environment for the occupiers, including appropriate locks to external doors and bedrooms to prevent unauthorised access but permit safe egress in case of fire
- Vulnerable windows must also be capable of being effectively secured against entry without compromising the means of escape in case of fire.
- Windows from the First Floor and above should have window restrictors installed. These must be capable of being disabled when necessary if the windows are designated as escape windows
- Appropriate arrangements must be in place to control the issue and return of house keys on changes of tenancy, or the changing of locks.
- Simple locks must be provided to communal bathrooms and toilets to provide privacy.
- Where necessary, the installation of external security lights is recommended. This can be by means of a sensor or by using a 'dawn till dusk' light.

## **Thermal Efficiency**

- Where possible, every property should have cavity wall insulation and loft insulation installed to current standards. At the time of review the minimum depth of loft insulation is 270mm.
- Heating should be professionally installed. The controls should be in the communal area and easily accessible by each occupant.
- There should be means of providing low level background ventilation without excessive heat loss or draughts. This can be by the installation of trickle vents or lockable ventilation latches on the window.
- Properties with an EPC of F or below must not be let unless measures have been taken to improve the energy performance to E or above or the property has a registered exemption.

# Asbestos

- Landlords have a duty to identify and manage any asbestos containing materials in their property.
- Management of asbestos containing material involves identifying its location and condition, ensuring it is effectively sealed or making it inaccessible to prevent damage, labelling it and keeping a record of its location in the building.
- If the material is in good condition and not liable to damage or disruption (for example during work or alteration) then it is normally appropriate to leave it alone. Where the asbestos is already damaged or is likely to be damaged or disturbed, an assessment needs to be made and action taken to repair, seal, enclose or remove it with professional advice.
- If you are aware of any asbestos containing materials, you should keep a record of the location and type of material and confirm that it is in a sound condition. You should then check every 6 months to see there has been no damage and date and sign the record to show that you have done this.
- Any contractors must be advised of the location of possible asbestos containing materials before commencing work.
- There are specific requirements for working with asbestos material and you should seek further advice from a qualified asbestos surveyor if you suspect asbestos is present in your property.

## Space Standards

### General requirements

Rooms used for sleeping are not suitable for occupation by more than two people. No persons should share a room unless:

- They are married or living together as if married.
- They are a parent or close relative and child (as long as the child is the same sex as the parent, or the child is under 10 years of age if opposite sex).
- They are related children of the same family and are both of the same sex, e.g., two brothers (if under 10 years of age, opposite sexes can share a room).
- The room meets the minimum size as given below
- The number of people sharing includes babies and children. Everyone must have their own allocation of space.

- Close relative means: parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, or cousin.
- All rooms, including kitchens, bathrooms and toilet compartments shall have a minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.13m. In the case of rooms with sloping ceilings, there shall be a minimum height of 2.13m over half of the floor area of the room. Measurements shall be taken on a plane, 1.5m above the floor. Any floor area where the ceiling height is less than 1.5m high shall be disregarded.
- The room sizes outlined in the tables below are minimum sizes. Only usable space may count towards the room size. If a room is of an unusual shape, it has a sloped ceiling or a ceiling height of less than 1.5m some of the floor area may not be counted. The space directly behind the door may not be counted. A staircase, landing, or any room which is used as a kitchen or bathroom, shall not be used as sleeping accommodation.

Bedroom Requirements				
Room Capacity	1 Person Room	2 Person Room	3 Person Room	4 Person Room
Bedroom with lounge or dining space elsewhere and cooking facilities not provided in bedroom	6.51 square metres	10.22 square metres	15 square metres	20 square metres
Bedroom with <u>no</u> adequate lounge or dining space & cooking facilities not provided in bedroom	8 square metres*	12 square metres*	17 square metres	22 square metres
Bedrooms (bedsits) with lounge and cooking facilities provided in the room	12 square metres	16 square metres	21 square metres	26 square metres

**\* The minimum legal requirement for a 1-person room is 6.5 sq. metres.**

**This measurement does not include en-suites or built-in cupboard in the floor size**

Living Areas	
<b>Kitchens</b>	7sqm if used by 1-5 persons
	For over 5 persons an additional 3sqm per person sharing the kitchen
<b>Dining Areas</b>	Any dining space (shared or for exclusive use) shall be suitable, and conveniently located (normally not more than one floor from the living unit)

## Management

- The manager of an HMO must comply with the provisions of the Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006.
- The Manager is the owner, or lessee of the property, who receives rent from the residents, either directly or through an agent or trustee. The manager is legally responsible for maintaining the standards within an HMO. There may be more than one person who falls under the definition of manager.
- If you are unsure as to who has responsibility under the management regulations, please contact the Private Sector Housing Team to discuss the property in question.
- In order to fulfil their duties, managers must undertake regular inspections of the property either personally or via a representative; to ensure standards are maintained and where necessary, improved. Tenants must be given at least 24 hours' notice of a visit and should be advised of the reason for the visit. In the event of an emergency, 24 hours' notice may not be possible, e.g., in the event of a fire, gas leak or flood.
- Management checks should be carried out monthly. Written records of the checks carried out and any action taken must be kept and should be available on request.

All landlords and managers should maintain a good standard of management. In particular, managers have a duty to:

- Provide information to occupiers.
- Take safety measures.
- Maintain water supply and drainage.
- Supply and maintain gas and electricity.
- Maintain common parts, fixtures, fittings and appliances.
- Maintain living accommodation.
- Provide waste disposal facilities.

## General

HMOs with 5 or more occupants require a licence, please contact the Licensing Unit.

HMOs with 6 or more occupants and those requiring any kind of building works may require building control approval.

HMOs of 7 or more occupants will require planning consent. Please contact your local Planning and Building Control Departments for more information.

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- Kettering BC - 01536 410333
- Corby BC - 01536 464158 (Planning and Building Control)
- East Northants - 01832 742000
- Wellingborough – 01933 231902 (Planning) 01933 231908 (Building Control)



