



**Rugby Borough Council
Houses in Multiple Occupation**

Standards of Amenities

Revised February 2017

WHAT IS A HOUSE IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION?

A house in Multiple Occupation or HMO is:

A house or flat which has more than two people who form two or more households living in it. A household is people of the same family either by blood, marriage, adoption or some other recognised criteria (e.g. fostering) so for example three unrelated occupants are three households.

And

Where the households are sharing basic amenities such as:

- Toilets
- Bathroom or washing facilities
- Cooking facilities

Even if the individual flat within a property is not an HMO a building in its entirety can be a House in Multiple Occupation or HMO if:

The building has been converted into self-contained flats where the conversion does not conform to the 1991 Building Regulations or of which less than two thirds of the flats are owner occupied. Owner Occupiers are:

- Freeholders, and their family
- Lease holders of more than 21 years and their family

Note that a Purpose Built Blocks of Flats is not an HMO but an individual flat within a converted block of flats may be an HMO depending upon the occupants.

The following standards will apply to all HMOs. These standards will normally form part of the licence conditions for an HMO licensed by the Council under Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004 or they will be applied under Part 1 (HHSRS) or Part 4 (overcrowding) to those HMOs which are not required to be licensed.

CONTENTS

- 1.0 **Facility Standards: bedrooms**
- 2.0 **Facility Standards: kitchens**
 - 2.1 Kitchens/living rooms
- 3.0 **Sanitary facilities**
 - 3.1 Wash hand basins in toilets
 - 3.2 Water supply
 - 3.3 Drainage
 - 3.4 Location
- 4.0 **Space heating**
 - 4.1 Provision
 - 4.2 Liquid petroleum gas (LPG) + Paraffin Heaters
 - 4.3 Solid Fuel and Biofuel
 - 4.4 Oil Fired
 - 4.5 Gas Fired
- 5.0 **Lighting and ventilation**
 - 5.1 Natural Lighting
 - 5.2 Artificial Lighting
 - 5.3 Ventilation.
- 6.0 **Electrical Safety**
- 7.0 **Fire Safety**
- 8.0 **General Standards**
 - 8.1 Handrails
 - 8.2 Other Recommended Additional Facilities

Housing In Multiple Occupation Standards

1. Facility Standards: Bedrooms

- A single bedroom with kitchen and living facilities provided elsewhere in the property should have a minimum room size of 6.5 square metres.
- A double bedroom (only suitable for couples living together as a cohabiting couple) with kitchen and living facilities provided elsewhere in the property should have a minimum room size of 10 square metres.
- Where a single bedroom is provided containing kitchen facilities it should be 13 square metres minimum.
- Where a double bedroom is provided containing kitchen facilities it should be 15 square metres minimum.
- Where a single bedroom is provided where there is no separate communal living area the minimum room size is 10 square metres.
- Where a double bedroom (only suitable for couples living together as a cohabiting couple), is provided where there is no separate communal living area the minimum room size is 14 square metres.
- No persons over the age of ten (10) years and of opposite sexes shall be allowed to share the same bedroom unless they are living as a cohabiting couple, i.e. husband, wife, partner.
- Any floor area with headroom less than 1.52m (5ft) will be disregarded for the purpose of calculating the floor area of a room.
- The floor area taken up by any ensuite amenities will be discounted when measuring the floor area of a bedroom.

2. Facility Standards: Kitchens

- Kitchens must have a safe and efficient layout and be a suitable size. It should not be less than 7 square metres for up to 5 persons and 10 square metres for 6-10 persons.
- The kitchen must be suitably located in relation to the living accommodation, and of such layout, size and equipped with such facilities, to facilitate those sharing to store, prepare and cook food.
- A sink base unit supplied with an integral drainer; adequate and constant supply of hot and cold water, trapped drainage and tiled splash back; shall be provided for every 5 persons sharing the kitchen. A wash hand basin shall not be used in place of a sink.

- A cooking appliance with four rings or burners, oven and grill (or equivalent) shall be provided in a ratio of one for every 5 persons using the facilities. If there are more 6 occupants, 2 cookers must be provided for use up to 10 occupants. Combination microwaves may be acceptable as an additional cooking provision. For more than 10 consult the Public Health & Licensing Team.
- Four single sockets or two double electric sockets, in addition to any serving major appliances to provide a minimum of six socket outlets set at a convenient height and safe position shall be provided for every 5 persons sharing the kitchen.
- A fixed worktop of impervious material, with minimum dimensions of available worktop space of 0.5m x 2m shall be provided for every 5 persons sharing the kitchen;
- A food storage cupboard (minimum capacity 0.16 cubic metres) per person and a refrigerator (minimum capacity 0.15 cubic metres) with an adequate freezer compartment or, where the freezer compartment is not adequate separate freezers for every 5 persons using the facilities. There should be adequate cupboard and/or drawer space.
- In addition a shared kitchen must contain.
 - i. A suitably located extractor fan or an openable window (opening to outside).
 - ii. Appropriate refuse disposal facilities.
 - iii. A fire door fitted with intumescent strips, cold smoke seals and self closing device.
 - iv. A fire blanket, compliant with BS 6575 or equivalent, situated closer to the room exit than the cooking facility, securely fixed to the wall approximately 1.5 metres high and readily accessible for use.
- Where individual lettings are provided with facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food, the following standard must be achieved.
 - i. A cooking appliance with four rings or burners, oven and grill (or equivalent);
 - ii. A sink on base unit supplied with constant hot and cold water, trapped drainage and tile splashback; (a wash hand basin shall not be used in place of a sink).

- iii. A fixed worktop of impervious material, minimum dimensions of available worktop space 0.5m x 1m.
- iv. Two 13 amp electric sockets, in addition to any sockets serving major appliances set at a convenient height and safe position.
- v. A food storage cupboard (minimum capacity 0.16 cubic metres) and a refrigerator (minimum capacity 0.15 cubic metres);
- vi. A fire blanket situated close to the cooking appliance, securely fixed to the wall and readily accessible for use.

2.1 Kitchens/living rooms

- Where a living room and kitchen is provided in the same area the minimum required size is 11.5 square metres for 5 occupants, 19.5 square metres for 6-10 occupants.
- Where a separate living room is provided the minimum required size is 12 square metres for up to 5 occupants and 16.5 square metres for 6-10 occupants.

3. Sanitary Facilities

- For 1-5 persons at least one bathroom, with a fixed bath or shower and one WC (the bathroom and WC may be combined).
- Where there are 6 or more occupants sharing one separate WC with a separate wash hand basin must be provided (the WC can be contained within a second bathroom).
- A wash hand basin must be provided with every WC.
- For 6-10 persons there must be two bathrooms and 2 separate WC's with wash hand basins (one of the WCs can be contained within one of the bathrooms)
- Where there are 11-15 persons there should be three bathrooms plus three separate WCs with wash hand basins (but two of the WCs can be contained within bathrooms)
- A bath must be minimum dimensions 1700mm x 760 mm or a shower of minimum dimensions 800mm x 800mm.
- A two course tiled splash back is to be provided to the bath. Any shower cubicles provided should have fully tiled walls or be self-standing cubicles. The hot and cold water should be adequate and available at all times.

- Baths, showers and WCs shall not be provided in rooms containing facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food.
- These facilities shall not be more than two floors distant from any user and should provide enough space to change and dry.
- All bathrooms, toilets and wash hand basins must be fit for purpose.
- The walls and floor of any bathroom or shower room should be reasonably smooth and non-absorbent and capable of being readily cleaned.
- All bathrooms must be suitably and adequately heated.
- A suitably located extractor fan or an openable window (opening to outside) must be present.
- All light fittings are to be vapour resistant to comply with current building regulations and all relevant British and European Standards.
- This requirement provides an alternative to increasing the level of shared amenity where they are inadequate for the number of occupants. The alternative requirement can be met by installing a separate bathroom with toilet for some occupants, so that they do not need to use the shared facilities.
- The following provide a guide for the facilities required.
 - Toilets, baths and showers can be provided for exclusive use of one letting but these facilities shall be not more than two floors distant from the user.
 - Bath or shower rooms should provide enough space for the facilities and to change and dry.
 - It is not considered suitable to have an unscreened bath or shower in the corner of a bedroom.
 - A suitably located extractor fan or openable window (opening to outside) must be present.
 - Outside toilets are disregarded for the purposes of this standard.
- All persons living in the premises are to be included e.g. owner or manager where no separate exclusive facilities are provided.

3.1 Wash hand basins in toilets

- Every toilet must have a washbasin within the toilet itself, or within an adjacent space providing the sole means of access to the toilet. The water closet and washbasin must be separated by a door from any room or space used wholly/ or partly for the preparation or consumption of food.

3.2 Water supply

- A constant hot and cold water supply must be provided to each fitting. This water supply must be controllable, suitable and sufficient for purpose.

3.3 Drainage

- A building must be provided with a safe and hygienic drainage system in compliance with the current Building Regulations.

3.4 Location

- Every bedroom must be located so that it is not necessary to pass through another bedroom in order to reach a bathroom, toilet, or circulation space and not more than two floors away from each occupant.

4. **Space Heating**

4.1 Provision

- Each bedroom and living room must have a fixed space heating appliance or be served by a central heating system, which may include any system of warm air or under-floor heating, capable of maintaining a temperature of 18°C when outside temperature is minus 1 °C.

4.2 Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) and Paraffin Heaters

- LPG type room heaters and paraffin heaters are prohibited.

4.3 Solid fuel and Bio Fuel

- A solid fuel or bio fuel appliance used in space heating should be approved by Rugby Borough Council.
- Annual inspection/cleaning of chimney/flues should be carried out and a certificate provided stating that the system is functioning properly.
- A solid fuel or bio fuel appliance should comply with current Building Regulations.

4.4 Oil fired

- An oil-fired appliance, other than a room-sealed appliance, must comply with current Building Regulations and relevant British and European standards.

4.5 Gas Safety - The Law

- A gas-fired appliance must comply with current Building Regulations and relevant British and European Standards.
- The Gas Safety (Installation and use) Regulations 1998 place duties on gas consumers, installers, suppliers and landlords.
- By law anyone carrying out work on gas appliances or fitting as part of their business must be competent and registered with the Gas Safe Register.
- Always check your installer is registered by asking to see a current Gas Safe Register registration certificate or by contacting the Gas Safe Register.
- “Do it yourself work” on gas appliances or fittings could be dangerous and is likely to be illegal.
- By law you must not use any gas appliance or fittings you know or suspect to be unsafe.
- Through the Gas Safe Register, HSE has asked all registered installers to disconnect any gas appliance or fittings which are so dangerous as to be a threat to life if they are used.
- If your installer asks your permission to disconnect such an appliance or fitting it will be in the interests of your own safety, and that of others, to agree and before you use this appliance or fitting again, have it repaired by a Gas Safe Registered engineer.
- By law, landlords are responsible in certain circumstances for making sure that gas fittings and flues are maintained in good order, and gas appliances and flues are checked for safety once in a period of 12 months.
- Landlords must also keep a record of the safety checks for at least two years and issue it to existing tenants and any new tenants before they move in.
- If you own the appliance, you are responsible for its maintenance and safety checks.
- By law, with the exception of the room-sealed type, there are restrictions on the installation of gas appliances in sleeping accommodation, these restrictions apply to appliances fitted after 1st January 1996.

- Non room-sealed appliances of less than 14 kilowatts may be fitted as long as they have a device which automatically turns the gas supply off before a dangerous level of fumes builds up. However, non room-sealed appliances above this threshold are prohibited in such accommodation.
- By law, since 31 October 1998, it has been illegal to install instantaneous water heaters which are not room-sealed or fitted with a safety device which automatically turns the gas supply off before a dangerous level of poisonous fumes builds up.

5. Lighting and Ventilation

5.1 Natural Lighting

- Every bedroom and living room should have a window or windows of an aggregate glazed area equal to at least 1/10th of the floor area of the room and situated in an external wall or roof.

5.2 Artificial Lighting

- There should be an electric lighting system providing at least one lighting point to every circulation space, bedroom, living room, kitchen, bathroom, separate toilet facility and other space having a floor area of 2 square metres or more. Any lighting point serving a stair within an HMO should have controlling switches at each storey.

5.3 Ventilation

- Every bedroom and living room should have a window or windows with an opening area equal at least 1/20th of the floor area of the room and situated in an external wall or roof. Kitchens, bathrooms, and separate toilet facilities should either have natural ventilation (with a window or windows with an opening area equal to at least 1/20th of the floor area) or adequate mechanical ventilation.

6. Electrical Safety

- At least once every five years certification must be obtained to confirm that the electrical installation and has been inspected and tested by an electrician registered with a governing body recognised by the Government's Competent Persons Scheme.
- There should be a minimum of:
 - In each kitchen, six socket outlets;
 - In each bedroom and living room, four socket outlets; and
 - Anywhere in the building, four additional socket outlets.

- The Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994 places a duty on all landlords to ensure that any electrical appliances that are supplied as part of the tenancy are maintained in a safe condition. Such equipment may include kettles, fridges, washing machines, ovens, microwaves, toasters, etc.
- Testing of Portable Electrical Appliances should be carried out on a regular basis, dependant on the outcome of a risk assessment carried out by the landlord.

7. Fire Safety

- Properties must have adequate fire precautions. National fire safety guidance issued by LACORS details the fire safety measures required in HMOs;
http://www.cieh.org/library/Knowledge/Housing/National_fire_safety_guidance_08.pdf
- Adequate fire and sound insulation must be provided between bedrooms and bedrooms and living rooms.
- Rugby Borough Council works closely with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service to ensure that fire precautions are proportionate to the risk.
- Landlords must routinely check all fire precautions within their property and should keep a log of these checks. Further information is available at <http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/frsequipment>.

8. Recycling and Waste

- Landlords are required to provide adequate bins for the storage of refuse having regard to the disposal services provided by the Council.
- Rugby Council will not collect recycling or refuse material unless correctly presented in a bin meeting the Council's specification; recycling material must be presented in the blue lidded wheeled bin; garden waste and food scraps in the green wheeled bin; and all other household waste in the black wheely bin.
- Any blue-lidded or green wheeled bin which is contaminated by other waste will not be collected.
- Bins must be placed at the designated place for collection before 07:30 on the designated collection day. All bins must be removed within 24 hours after collection and returned to the property.

- Excess waste and/or bulky items left by the side of, or on top of any waste receptacle(s)/bin(s), or left on the street, will NOT be collected.
- Landlords must ensure the HMO property, including gardens, yards and forecourts remain clear of waste and wheeled bins are used correctly and on a regular basis.
- Visit www.rugby.gov.uk or ring 01788 533332 for further information on the presentation of bins for collection and for further details on refuse and recycling collections.

10. General Standards

8.1 Handrails

- Every stairs with a change in level of more than 600mm should be fitted with a handrail, fixed at a height of at least 900mm and not more than 1 metre above the pitch line of a flight or surface of a landing.

8.2 Other Recommended Additional Facilities

- A number of additional facilities are recommended where appropriate.
 - i. Laundry and drying facilities.
 - ii. Cycle storage on site.
 - iii. Communal amenity space with direct access from all units.
 - iv. Access for people with disabilities.

For further information contact Housing Enforcement on 01788 533882 or email hen@rugby.gov.uk