



**STANDARDS FOR LICENSABLE  
HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION  
(HMOs)**

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# STANDARDS FOR LICENSABLE HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

The Housing Act 2004 (“the Act”) introduced a new definition of ‘house in multiple occupation’ (HMO), together with a national mandatory licensing scheme for certain HMOs.

The definition of an HMO can be found in Sections 254-259 of the Act. Basically, an HMO is a building that is occupied, as a main residence, by more than one household, and includes:

- buildings that consist of bedsit rooms where at least some facilities are shared,
- buildings converted into self-contained units that don’t comply with the Building Regulations 1991 AND where less than two thirds of the flats are owner-occupied,
- buildings with multiple units of accommodation that all have their own exclusive facilities but which are not self-contained,
- buildings which contain a mixture of the above types of accommodation,
- hostels, and
- shared houses (houses let to a group of friends on a single tenancy agreement, with areas for communal living and dining).

A ‘household’ comprises:

- an individual
- persons who are married or co-habiting (including same-sex relationships),
- relatives of an individual or of married/co-habiting partners (child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece or cousin),
- foster children or domestic employees (e.g. au pairs, nannies, maids, etc).

Under Part 2 of the Act certain HMOs are now required to be licensed with the Council. These are HMOs of 3 or more storeys occupied by 5 or more persons (N.B. ‘storeys’ includes habitable basements, attic rooms, habitable mezzanine floors, and floors occupied on a commercial basis).

There are a number of exemptions to this requirement, e.g. licensing does **not** apply to:

- converted buildings where all the units are self-contained, regardless of when the conversion took place,
- any building which is controlled or managed by a registered social landlord, or
- any house which is controlled or managed by public sector bodies etc.

The following standards adopted by Haringey Council apply *only* to those HMOs situated within the Borough to which *mandatory licensing* applies, *except for* hostels, for which there is a separate set of standards.

These standards apply to the facilities that are required in respect of heating, personal hygiene, kitchen facilities and fire precautions, and also to minimum space requirements.

**N.B.** HMO owners and their agents are advised to ensure that any licensable HMO does not contravene any Planning restrictions or requirements. The granting of an HMO licence does not confer any Planning permission.

## 1. **Heating**

- 1.1 All units of accommodation must be provided with an adequate means of space heating. 'Adequate' means that heating must be available, if required, to all tenants at all times, control over the amount of heating in each unit must be under the control of the occupying tenant, and the method of heating must be safe and should be efficient and affordable.
- 1.2 Where heating is provided by a central heating system, the fuel supply must be via a quarterly credit meter, not a key or card meter (except where a system is exclusive to a self-contained unit).

## 2. **Personal Hygiene**

### 2.1 Licensable HMOs, other than shared houses

- 2.1.1 Wherever reasonably practicable, each unit of accommodation shall be provided with a wash-hand basin, except where there is exclusive use of a sink. Otherwise, there shall be provided a minimum of one wash-hand basin for every five occupiers, to be situated within a shared bathroom.
- 2.1.2 All units of accommodation shall have the use of a bath or shower, and a WC. Where these facilities are not exclusive, there shall be provided a minimum of one bath or shower and one WC for every five occupiers sharing the facilities.
- 2.1.3 Wherever reasonably practicable, all rooms containing a WC shall also contain a wash-hand basin.
- 2.1.4 No unit of accommodation shall be more than one floor distant from a bathroom or WC compartment.

### 2.2 Shared houses

- 2.2.1 Shared houses licensed for six persons shall be provided with a second bath or shower, WC and wash-hand basin.

### 2.3 General requirements

- 2.3.1 All facilities for personal hygiene shall be located within proper rooms or compartments. External water closets shall be ignored for the purposes of paragraphs 2.1.2 and 2.2.1.
- 2.3.2 All bath/shower rooms shall have a suitable layout and shall be of sufficient size to include adequate drying and changing space. The wall finishes and flooring shall be readily cleansable, the flooring well-fitted and non-absorbent, and a suitable lock provided to the door of each bathroom or shower room. There should be no glazing to the door.
- 2.3.3 The wall finishes and flooring of any separate WC compartment shall be readily cleansable, the flooring well-fitted and non-absorbent, and a suitable lock shall be provided to the door of each such compartment. There should be no glazing to the door.
- 2.3.4 All bath/shower rooms and WC compartments shall be suitably and adequately heated and ventilated and provided with a suitable and adequate means of artificial lighting.

- 2.3.5 All facilities provided for personal hygiene must be of suitable size and design, and must be readily cleansable.
- 2.3.6 All baths, showers and wash-hand basins shall be properly connected to the soil drainage system and shall be provided with adequate and constantly available hot and cold water supplied via suitable fittings.
- 2.3.7 All baths and wash-hand basins shall be provided with glazed tiled splashbacks of minimum height 450mm, where practicable. Showers shall be provided in purpose-made or properly constructed cubicles.
- 2.3.8 All WCs shall be provided with a suitable seat and must be securely fixed. They shall be properly connected to the soil drainage system and the cisterns provided with an adequate and constantly available supply of water.

### 3. **Kitchen Facilities**

#### 3.1 *Licensable HMOs, other than shared houses*

3.1.1 Ideally, each letting shall be provided with facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food for the exclusive use of the occupants. A set of exclusive kitchen facilities is to consist of the following as a minimum:-

- adequate cupboard space for food storage, to consist of a 500mm base unit or a 1000mm wall unit as a minimum (a sink base unit will **not** be acceptable for this purpose);
- an adequately-sized refrigerator with a freezer compartment;
- a sink and drainer, set on a suitable base, with proper connection to the soil drainage system and adequate and constantly available hot and cold drinking water supplied via suitable taps.
- an impervious work surface of minimum length 1000mm (**excluding** any area covered by a major appliance);
- adequate cupboard space for the storage of kitchen utensils (a sink base unit will suffice);
- mains gas or electric cooking facilities consisting of oven, grill and a minimum of two burners or hotplates. Portable hotplates are not acceptable, and any mini oven or Belling type cooker shall be securely fixed, with the hotplates at work surface level;
- glazed tiled splashbacks provided to the sink unit, cooking appliance and work surface to a minimum height of 300mm, where practicable; and
- one double power socket, located at least 150mm above the work surface, in addition to any sockets used for the connection of major appliances.

3.1.2 Where some or all of the units of accommodation do not have exclusive kitchen facilities, shared facilities shall be provided in a ratio of one set of facilities to a maximum of three lettings sharing. **Each set** of facilities is to consist of the following as a minimum:

- adequate cupboard space for food storage for each letting, to consist of a 500mm base unit or a 1000mm wall unit as a minimum (a sink base unit will **not** be acceptable for this purpose). NB these can be provided within the bedsit rooms if preferred;
- an adequately-sized refrigerator with a freezer compartment for each letting. NB these can be provided within the bedsit rooms if preferred;
- a sink and drainer, set on a suitable base, with proper connection to the soil drainage system and adequate and constantly available hot and cold drinking water supplied via suitable taps.

- an impervious work surface of minimum length 2000mm (**excluding** any area covered by a major appliance) or two separate lengths of 1000mm each;
- adequate cupboard space for the storage of kitchen utensils;
- a suitable gas or electric cooking appliance with oven, grill and a minimum of four burners or hotplates;
- glazed tiled splashbacks provided to the sink unit, cooking appliance and work surface(s) to a minimum height of 300mm, where practicable;
- one double power socket **per** 1000mm of work surface, located at least 150mm above the work surface(s), in addition to any sockets used for the connection of major appliances; and
- a suitable bin for kitchen waste.

3.1.3 Shared kitchens will not be acceptable in the case of lettings where there are children, or for units of accommodation comprising two or more rooms

3.1.4 Where more than one set of shared kitchen facilities are required, these may be provided within one room, **but** they must be arranged in distinct areas for the convenience of the occupiers.

3.1.5 No unit of accommodation shall be more than one floor distant from a kitchen, whether for exclusive or shared use. However, this condition may be waived where a suitable, adequately-sized dining room or dining area is provided for the occupiers of such lettings either on the same floor as, or no more than one floor distant, from a kitchen. The maximum sharing ratio in 3.1.2 above must still be complied with.

### 3.2 Shared houses

3.2.1 In shared houses the minimum requirements are as follows:

- adequate cupboard space for the numbers of occupiers;
- adequate refrigerator and freezer space for the numbers of occupiers;
- a sink and drainer, set on a suitable base, with proper connection to the soil drainage system and adequate and constantly available hot and cold drinking water supplied via suitable taps.
- an impervious work surface of minimum length 2000mm (**excluding** any area covered by a major appliance) or two separate lengths of 1000mm each;
- adequate cupboard space for the storage of kitchen utensils;
- a suitable gas or electric cooking appliance with oven, grill and a minimum of four burners or hotplates;
- glazed tiled splashbacks provided to the sink unit, cooking appliance and work surface(s) to a minimum height of 300mm, where practicable;
- one double power socket **per** 1000mm of work surface, located at least 150mm above the work surface(s), in addition to any sockets used for the connection of major appliances; and
- a suitable bin for kitchen waste.

### 3.3 General requirements

3.3.1 Where kitchen facilities are provided within a bedsit room, they should be situated in a distinct 'kitchen area' and this area should, where practicable, be located as far from the room door as possible. Where it is not practicable for the cooking appliance to be located remote from the door, a fire-resisting screen of suitable height should be constructed to shield the door from flames in the event of a fire occurring in the kitchen area.

3.3.2 Separate kitchens, whether for exclusive or shared use, shall be of sufficient size to enable a safe and practical layout.

- 3.3.3 In no circumstances shall kitchen facilities be installed within a staircase enclosure.
- 3.3.4 In no circumstances shall access to a room used for sleeping be via a room containing kitchen facilities, unless an alternative escape route is available in the event of a fire.
- 3.3.5 All kitchens and kitchen areas must be provided with adequate ventilation and artificial lighting.
- 3.3.6 All kitchens and kitchen areas must be provided with suitable impervious, well-fitted floor covering.
- 3.3.7 All kitchens and kitchen areas must have a safe and practical layout. In particular:-
  - (a) cooking appliances should, wherever practicable, have an adjacent work surface;
  - (b) no soft furnishings are to be within 600 mm of the cooking appliance;
  - (c) the minimum clearance between the top of a cooking appliance and any cupboard or extractor above must comply with manufacturer's instructions.

#### 4. Fire Precautions

- 4.1 Shared kitchens shall be provided with fire doors providing a minimum fire-resistance of 30 minutes. Fire doors are to be close-fitting and they must be provided with intumescent and cold smoke seals and suitable self-closers.
- 4.2 All kitchens and kitchen areas shall be provided with a properly-mounted fire blanket.
- 4.3 A multi-purpose fire extinguisher shall be provided at each level within the staircase enclosure.
- 4.4 An automatic fire detection and alarm system shall be provided to ensure early warning in the event of a fire. The actual works required in any particular case will depend on the layout of the property and are decided upon by the Council following consultation with the Fire Authority.
- 4.5 An emergency lighting system shall be provided in most cases, with luminaries provided in such numbers and locations so as to adequately illuminate the staircase enclosure in the event of a failure of the main lighting.
- 4.6 Electricity supplies to automatic fire detection and alarm systems and to emergency lighting systems shall be from a landlord's supply.

#### 5. Space Standards

- 5.1 All rooms shall be of a convenient and usable shape for their intended purpose.
- 5.2 No staircase, landing, passage, kitchen or bath/shower room shall be used for sleeping accommodation.
- 5.3 The minimum space standards below relate to **available space**, this being the floor area remaining after deductions are made for corridors, bath/shower rooms, WC compartments, chimney breasts and those areas covered by sloping ceilings where the floor-to-ceiling height is less than 1.5m.

- 5.4 For the purposes of these standards:

