

Houses in multiple occupation

Standards in Licensable Properties

Slough Borough Council is introducing licensing for all Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in Slough. These standards will therefore be taken into account when requiring works in any HMOs, including those under the current mandatory scheme and additional licensing scheme.

These standards have been defined to reflect and, where necessary, improve on the Council's existing standards currently applied to the HMO stock. Specifically:

- Where there is a clear national standard, this will apply
- Where the national standard requires clarification, this has been provided
- Where no national standard exists, the Slough standard has been applied

Index

| Subject | Page |
|----------------------------------|------|
| 1. Heating | 2 |
| 2. Washing and toilet facilities | 3 |
| 3. Kitchens | 4 |
| 4. Fire precautionary facilities | 7 |
| 5. Natural lighting | 8 |
| 6. Artificial lighting | 8 |
| 7. Ventilation | 8 |
| 8. Drainage | 9 |
| 9. Refuse, storage and disposal | 9 |
| 10. Electricity supply | 10 |
| 11. Space standards for rooms | 11 |

1 Heating

- 1.1 Each unit of living accommodation in an HMO must be equipped with adequate means of space heating.
- 1.2 All premises should have effective insulation and efficient heating.
- 1.3 All units of living accommodation shall have a heating appliance installed to satisfy the above which shall be of sufficient output so as to adequately heat the room to a temperature of at least 19°C, when the outside temperature is minus 1°C (-1°C).
- 1.4 Where a central heating system is provided to comply with heating requirements, thermostatic radiator valves are to be installed to allow the occupants some control over room temperatures.
- 1.5 The heating should allow for a minimum temperature of 19 degrees Celsius to be maintained as far as is practically achievable.
- 1.6 Heating may be by means of:-
 - a) Central heating, OR
 - b) Solid fuel in the form of an authorised smokeless fuel or alternatively solid fuel burnt in an approved appliance. If solid fuel is used proper fuel storage facilities shall be provided outside the building in a readily accessible position for each unit of accommodation, OR
 - c) Gas heaters connected to an approved flue and terminal outlet, OR
 - d) Oil heaters connected to an approved flue and terminal outlet, OR
 - e) Electricity. If electricity is to be used to heat a room, an electric point shall be provided for that exclusive purpose.
- 1.7 Individual heaters must be a fixed installation.
- 1.8 Except for central heating, wherever practicable heaters shall be fixed to an existing chimney breast or otherwise be positioned so as to direct heat towards the centre of the room.
- 1.9 Such heating provision must be capable of being used by the occupants at ALL times.
- 1.10 Due to increased fire risk, condensation and carbon monoxide problems associated with their use; portable paraffin or oil fired heaters and liquefied petroleum gas heaters (LPG) (Bottled Gas heaters) shall not be acceptable under any circumstances, whether provided by the landlord or the tenant.
- 1.11 All gas appliances should be properly fixed and ventilated, Gas Safe approved and should be certified as safe by a Gas Safe registered engineer on an annual basis. There should be no evidence of the production of carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide

and sulphur dioxide or un-combusted fuel gas. Copies of their certificates should be provided.

2 Washing and toilet facilities

2.1 Where all or some of the units of living accommodation in an HMO do not contain toilet/washing facilities for the exclusive use of each individual household, facilities should be provided as follows:-

| Number of occupiers | Facilities | Specifications |
|---------------------|--|--|
| 1-4 | 1 x bath/shower room with sink (wash hand basin – WHB) in same room 1 x toilet (water closet - WC) | Standard sized bath/shower and wash hand basin (WHB) with splashback WC can be in same room as bath/shower If WC is in separate compartment, it must have additional WHB with splashback Both bath/shower and WHB to have constant supply of hot and cold running water |
| 5 | 1 x bath/shower room with WHB in same room 1 x WC with WHB in separate room | Standard sized bath/shower and WHB with splashback Both bath/shower and WHB to have constant supply of hot and cold running water |
| 6 or more | Where there are six or more occupiers sharing bathroom facilities; there must be one separate toilet with WHB for every five sharing occupiers and at least one bathroom (which may contain a toilet) with a fixed bath or shower for every five sharing occupiers | Standard sized bath/shower and WHB with splashback WC can be in same room as bath/shower If WC is in separate compartment, it must have additional WHB with splashback Both bath/shower and WHB to have constant supply of hot and cold running water |

2.2 Each water closet should have a flushing apparatus and be connected through a suitable trap to a suitable and effective drainage system.

- 2.3 A wash hand basin must be provided in each room containing a water closet, or in a room or space giving direct access to the room containing a water closet, (provided it is not used for the preparation of food).
- 2.4 Any baths or showers are to be fitted with suitable impermeable splashback to prevent water ingress into floors and walls, e.g. correctly installed tiles with grout.
- 2.5 The splash back to a wash hand basin or bath shall be a minimum 300mm high and extend to at least level with the sides of the fitting and all joints shall be adequately sealed.
- 2.6 Baths and showers should be positioned to prevent falls, and where necessary non-slip surfaces should be provided.
- 2.7 Bathroom facilities should be in good working order and free from defects, and in general should be less than 30 years old.
- 2.8 Hot water may be provided by any of the following methods:-
 - a) Piped from storage and boiler
 - b) Immersion heater
 - c) Fixed gas appliance, e.g. multipoint
 - d) Instantaneous heaters (only to wash hand basins and electric showers) shall have a minimum rating of 6KW.
- 2.9 All bathrooms in an HMO must be suitably and adequately heated and ventilated.
- 2.10 All bathrooms and toilets in an HMO must be of an adequate size and layout.
- 2.11 All baths, toilets and wash hand basins in an HMO must be fit for the purpose.

3 Kitchens

- 3.1 The kitchen should be of satisfactory layout and have provision for hygienic storage, preparation and cooking of food; so minimising the risk of infection to occupants.
- 3.2 The occupants should not be exposed by reason of layout, size, design or other feature to risk from hot surfaces or risk from burns or scalds caused by contact with flames or hot liquids.
- 3.3 Kitchen units and appliances should be free from defects and in good working order. In general, kitchen facilities should be less than 20 years old.

3.4 Kitchens must be of an adequate size to accommodate the number of sharers:-

| Number of sharers | Kitchen size |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Up to 4 | 5m ² |
| 5-6 | 7m ² |
| 7-8 | 9m ² |
| 9+ | 11m ² |

m² = square metres

- 3.5 Where all or some of the units of accommodation within the HMO do not contain any facilities for the cooking of food there must be a kitchen, suitably located in relation to the living accommodation, and equipped with such facilities so as to adequately enable those sharing the facilities to store, prepare and cook food.
- 3.6 For every **five** tenants sharing kitchen facilities, there must be provided one cooker with four ring hob, oven and grill.
- 3.7 For every **five** tenants sharing kitchen facilities, there must be provided one full sized sink with drainer. This is to be set on a base unit, with a constant supply of hot and cold water, and properly connected to the drainage system.
- 3.8 Consideration *may* be given to allowing six tenants to use one set of kitchen sink/cooker facilities, provided a double sink/drainers (or dishwasher) and microwave combination oven are provided.
- 3.9 One standard fridge/freezer must be provided for every 4 occupants. A standard fridge freezer would generally have a capacity of approximately 300 litre Capacity
- 3.10 Kitchen worktop must be provided at a ratio of 0.6m² per tenant. This is to be made of a suitable impervious material, with additional space for any extra appliances, e.g. dishwashers or microwaves.
- 3.11 Food storage must be provided at the ratio of two double wall cupboards, or two single base cupboards **per household**. Units beneath kitchen sinks/drainers cannot be used for food storage.

3.12 For bedsit type accommodation, please see the table below:

| Number of sharers | Facilities | Specifications |
|---|---|---|
| One (bedsit type accommodation with cooking facilities within room) | 1 x cooker with 2 ring hob, oven and grill Sink/drainer Fixed worktop Food storage Refrigerator | Must be permanently and safely attached to a fixed worktop On base unit, with constant supply of hot and cold running water and properly connected to the drainage system 1000x600mm and made of a suitable impervious material One double wall cupboard, or one single base cupboard or equivalent Worktop height fridge/freezer |
| Two (bedsit type accommodation with cooking facilities within room) | 1 x cooker with 3 ring hob, oven and grill Sink/drainer Fixed worktop Food storage Refrigerator | Must be permanently and safely attached to a fixed worktop On base unit, with constant supply of hot and cold running water and properly connected to the drainage system 1000x600mm and made of a suitable impervious material Two double wall cupboards, or two single base cupboards or equivalent Worktop height fridge/freezer |

3.13 There must be appropriate refuse disposal facilities (see section 9).

3.14 There must be appropriate extractor fans, fire blankets and fire doors (see section 4 for fire precautions).

3.15 Waste pipes and taps should be defect free with no leaks or drips. Taps should be easy to operate.

3.16 A kitchen must not be the sole access to a room used for sleeping.

3.17 Kitchen facilities must not be installed in a hallway.

- 3.18 A humidistat controlled mechanical extractor must be provided where there is inadequate ventilation by means of a window. Newly converted kitchens must have a mechanical extractor regardless of whether there is an openable window.
- 3.19 Kitchen facilities within bedsits should be sited away from the entrance door, and cookers should not be sited below a window.
- 3.20 300mm splashbacks should be provided to all sinks/drainers, worktops and cookers (without integral splashbacks).

4 Fire precautionary facilities

4.1 For all Houses in Multiple Occupation:-

- 4.1.1 A Notice stating "FIRE DOOR KEEP SHUT" shall be displayed on all fire doors except those to bedrooms.
- 4.1.2 A Fire Instructional Notice informing residents what to do in the event of fire shall be prominently displayed within the ground floor hallway or adjacent to each break glass call point.
- 4.1.3 The premises should be provided with an adequate means of fire safety and must ensure that any fire-fighting equipment and fire alarms are maintained in good working order.
- 4.1.4 One fire blanket to be provided at each set of cooking facilities and sited remote of the cooking appliance.
- 4.1.5 Thumb turn locks to be installed in all bedroom internal door handles, and all escape routes from building. This is to allow for ease of opening in case of emergency.
- 4.1.6 Carbon monoxide detector to be installed in any room within which gas boiler is situated.
- 4.1.7 Any escape routes are to be kept clear of obstructions.

4.2 Automatic Fire Detection

The required level of automatic fire detection will vary according to the property e.g. the number of floors, amenity locations, type of occupiers and tenancy. For these reasons specific fire safety requirements cannot be provided in this document. It is recommended that any automatic fire detection systems are professionally planned and installed.

The LACORS Housing Fire Safety document is freely available online, and provides the guidance which Slough Borough Council use when advising on fire safety in properties.

In HMOs, the following requirements will be necessary as a **minimum**:

4.2.1 An interlinked automatic fire alarm system throughout the property. This may be either mains wired or battery powered, but must be installed in compliance with the current regulations and in accordance with LACORS guidelines.

4.2.2 A minimum of 30 minutes fire resistance to be provided through the means of escape at the property.

4.3 Note:

Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, licensed houses in multiple occupation may require a Fire Risk Assessment covering the communal areas, e.g. communal hallways and shared kitchens. Within the Slough Borough, this is regulated by the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

5 Natural lighting

5.1 All habitable rooms should be provided with adequate natural lighting, an area of clear glazing in a window and/or door equivalent in total area to at least 1/10th of the floor area of that room. The window shall be so positioned that the light from the window is able to illuminate most of the room.

5.2 All glazing to windows and doors of bath/shower rooms and water closet compartments should be obscured. Where it is not practicable to provide natural light, adequate artificial lighting shall be provided.

6 Artificial lighting

6.1 All rooms, passageways, staircases and cellars in use shall be adequately lit and have suitable switching, including two way switching to stairs and passageways etc. as necessary.

6.2 The lighting should enable the normal activities of individuals and households to be carried out safely and conveniently, and to permit the normal passage of persons in occupation without increasing the risk of accident.

6.3 Time switches to common parts shall be of a type that are illuminated for ease of identification.

7 Ventilation

7.1 As a general guide, the total size of ventilation openings in habitable rooms and naturally ventilated kitchens, bathrooms and water closet compartments should not be less than 1/20th of the floor area. Some part of the opening(s) should be at least 1.75m above floor level.

7.2 The openable parts of a window, a louvre, a progressively openable ventilator or an external door may all contribute to achieve the above requirement. However, an

external side-hung door alone would not be acceptable as it provides inadequate control over the amounts of ventilation and prejudices security.

7.3 Fixed heat producing combustion appliances e.g. cookers, boilers and gas fires, taking air from the interior of the building, should have provision for suitable and sufficient permanent means of ventilation to ensure complete combustion of fuels and the full discharge of the combustion products.

7.4 Continuous or intermittent means of extract ventilation are required in kitchen, utility rooms, bathrooms and sanitary compartments. The levels of ventilation provided should comply with the table below:-

| Area | Minimum intermittent extract | Continuous mechanical extract Minimum high rate |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Kitchen | 30 l/s (adjacent to hob) or 60 l/s elsewhere | 13 l/s |
| Utility room | 30 l/s | 8 l/s |
| Bathroom | 15 l/s | 8 l/s |
| Sanitary accommodation | 6 l/s | 6 l/s |

l/s = litres per second

7.5 Rooms within a habitable basement, the floor of which is more than 0.9m below the surface should be an unobstructed space immediately outside the window opening which extends at least the entire width of the window 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. The average height of such rooms from floor to ceiling should be sufficient to encourage the free convection of air within the room.

8 Drainage

8.1 The property should have an effective system, both above and below ground, for the draining of foul, waste and surface water, which is designed, installed and in a condition so as not to be prejudicial to the health and safety of the occupants or to the structural fabric of the building.

8.2 All new drainage shall comply with the Building Regulations currently in force.

9 Refuse, storage and disposal

9.1 Refuse containers shall be provided in sufficient numbers for the needs of the house, and an acceptable means of disposal provided.

- 9.2 Containers should be located on a hard, impervious, free draining surface in a position with convenient access to the kitchen door. They should be in the open air away from window and ventilation openings and in shade or in a shelter.
- 9.3 The manager/landlord must ensure that residents are aware of the refuse storage arrangements. Residents must be instructed to take the containers to the appropriate location for collection by the waste collection service.

10 Electricity supply

- 10.1 Electrical socket outlets shall be provided to the various individual rooms or lettings as follows:-

| Location | Number of sockets |
|---|---|
| Living rooms | A minimum of 2 x double sockets |
| Bedrooms and studies | A minimum of 2 x double sockets |
| Bedrooms within HMOs (without cooking facilities) | A minimum of 2 x double sockets |
| Bedsits containing cooking facilities | 1 suitably sited socket per appliance in kitchen area 2 x double sockets elsewhere in room |
| Shared kitchens (up to 5 sharers) | A minimum of 1 x suitably sited socket per appliance A minimum of 2 x double sockets above worktop |
| Shared kitchens (more than 5 sharers) | A minimum of 1 x suitably sited socket per appliance A minimum of 3 x double sockets above worktop |

- 10.2 All socket outlets shall be located in positions which permit their safe, convenient and proper use at all times, having regard to likely room layout. They shall not be positioned where they are vulnerable to damage, likely to be obstructed or where the resulting appliance cables are likely to pose a safety hazard.
- 10.3 Electric cookers shall be provided with a dedicated cooker point outlet suitable for the rating of the cooker.
- 10.4 Fixed electric space or water heating appliances shall be provided with a separate dedicated electric point.
- 10.5 All new electrics shall comply with Building Regulations requirements and shall be suitably certified.

11 Space standards for rooms

11.1 All rooms should have a minimum floor to ceiling height of at least 2.14m over at least 75% of the room area. Any floor area where the ceiling height is less than 1.52m shall be disregarded.

11.2 The following table should be used to calculate the permitted number of occupants per room:-

| Maximum number of occupiers per room | Based on floor space in HMOs (with shared kitchen facilities in a separate room) |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 child (under 10 years of age) | 4.64m ² |
| 1 person (over 10 years of age) | 6.51m ² |
| 2 persons | 10.22m ² |

m² = square metres

| Maximum number of occupiers per room | Based on floor space in HMOs with exclusive kitchen facilities within the room, and self contained studio bedsits/flats with kitchen facilities within the room |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 person (of any age) | 13m ² to 17.99 m ² |
| 2 persons | 18m ² or more |

m² = square metres

11.3 Lounges, communal space, hallways, corridors, landings, kitchens, W.C's or bathrooms cannot be used as sleeping accommodation.

11.4 Persons of the opposite sex may sleep in the same room ONLY if they are under the age of 10 years OR they are married to each other or live together as husband and wife (or equivalent relationship).

11.5 Any room in a HMO with a floor area of less than 4.64m² must not be used as sleeping accommodation.

11.6 Any rooms which are undersized for sleeping accommodation must cease to be used as such within a maximum of 18 months from the date of issue of the HMO licence (or as stated on licence). These conditions will be detailed on the licence and supporting documents.

11.7 No more than two persons may occupy any one room.