

## **Amenity Standards in Licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)** **(Standards 2014)**

These standards apply the National Minimum Standards contained in the Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended.

The document only covers those HMOs that require to be licensed, but is offered to managers and owners of non-licensed HMOs as good practice.

Council officers would be able to advise about standards which may be appropriate where a particular HMO has a layout or amenity provision which varies from the specified standard but where the facilities provided have an equivalent benefit.

Advice and information on HMOs can be obtained by contacting the Environmental Health Team by telephone, e-mail or by visiting [www.cumberland.gov.uk](http://www.cumberland.gov.uk)

### **Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)**

The amenity standards for HMOs will be considered along with the requirements of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System which apply to all accommodation types, including HMOs. All HMOs have to be assessed to ensure there are no category 1 hazards within 5 years from an HMO licensing application.

A short guide to the 29 hazards and the background of HHSRS is available on the GOV.UK website. Where there are specific references in HHSRS guidance to matters included in the amenity standards, these are referenced below.

### **Applicable HMO Amenity Standards**

#### **1. Space Heating**

Each unit of living accommodation must be equipped with an adequate means of space heating. In accordance with HHSRS guidance the Council encourages landlords to provide energy efficient means of space heating and insulation where possible. Such heating provision must be capable of being operated at any time and tenants should be in control of heating to their rooms.

Supplemental heaters such as portable paraffin or oil 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 as they are likely to present a hazard under HHSRS.

#### **2. Washing Facilities**

Where all or some of the units of living accommodation in an HMO do not contain bathing and toilet facilities for the exclusive use of each individual household, there must be an adequate number of bathrooms, toilets and wash hand basins for the number of persons sharing the facilities. The following guidelines will apply:

5 Persons	1 bathroom/shower room and 1 separate WC with WHB, The WC and WHB can be contained within a second bathroom
6 - 8 Persons	2 Bathrooms/shower rooms each with a WC and WHB
9- 11 Persons	2 Bathrooms/shower rooms each to include a WC with WHB and a separate WC with WHB or a third bathroom.
12 - 15 Persons	3 Bathrooms/shower rooms each to include a WC and WHB.

#### **Notes;**

- Having regard to the age and character of HMOs in area and the size and layout of the accommodation provided, it will not normally be reasonably practicable or desirable to require the provision of wash hand basins within individual units of accommodation.
- All baths, showers and wash hand basins in an HMO must be capable of providing an adequate supply of cold and constant hot water.
- All bathrooms/ shower rooms must be suitably and adequately heated and ventilated. Energy efficient means of heating and hot water is encouraged.
- All bathrooms/shower rooms and toilets in an HMO must be of adequate size and layout and fit for purpose.
- All bathrooms and toilets in an HMO must be suitably located in relation to the living accommodation within the HMO. Where practicable, the facility should not be more than one floor distant from any user.

In accordance with HHSRS guidance, wall and floor surfaces in bathrooms and WC compartments should be designed, constructed and maintained so they are capable of being kept clean and hygienic.

### **3. Kitchen Facilities**

Where the individual units of accommodation do not contain any facilities for the cooking of food there must be a kitchen, suitably located in relation to the living accommodation and of such layout and size and equipped with such facilities so as to adequately enable those sharing the facilities to store, prepare and cook food. The following guidelines will apply:

#### **Shared Kitchens Standards**

5 persons	1 kitchen with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 sink and draining board with an adequate supply of cold and constant hot water</li> <li>• One cooker with 4 ring hob and oven</li> <li>• 3 double sockets</li> <li>• 0.5m x 0.6m of worktop per person</li> <li>• 0.4m<sup>3</sup> of combination of dry, refrigerated &amp; frozen food storage per person</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate refuse disposal facilities should be provided.</li> <li>• Appropriate extractor fans, fire blankets and fire doors, should be provided</li> </ul>
6 - 8 persons	<p>1 Kitchen with dining area/livingroom attached, adjacent or on the same floor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 sinks and draining boards with an adequate supply of cold and constant hot water. A double drainer may be acceptable or the provision of a dishwasher in place of the second sink</li> <li>• 1 large oven &amp; 6 ring hob or 2 x 4 ring hobs with ovens</li> <li>• 4 double sockets</li> <li>• 0.5m x 0.6m of worktop per person</li> <li>• 0.4m<sup>3</sup> of combination of dry, refrigerated &amp; frozen food storage per person</li> <li>• Appropriate refuse disposal facilities should be provided.</li> <li>• Appropriate extractor fans, fire blankets and fire doors should be provided</li> </ul>
9 - 11 Persons	<p>1 Kitchen with large dining area/livingroom attached, adjacent or on the same floor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 sinks and draining boards with an adequate supply of cold and constant hot water. The provision of a dishwasher in place of the second sink may be acceptable</li> <li>• 2 x 4 ring hob and ovens</li> <li>• 4 double sockets</li> <li>• 0.5m x 0.6m of worktop per person</li> <li>• 0.4m<sup>3</sup> of combination of dry, refrigerated &amp; frozen food storage per person</li> <li>• Appropriate refuse disposal facilities should be provided.</li> <li>• Appropriate extractor fans, fire blankets and fire doors, should be provided</li> </ul>
12 - 15 Persons	<p>2 kitchens and 1 living/dining area. Each kitchen to be equipped with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 sink and draining board with an adequate supply of cold and constant hot water</li> <li>• One cooker with 4 ring hob and oven</li> <li>• 3 double sockets</li> <li>• 0.5m x 0.6m of worktop per person</li> <li>• 0.4m<sup>3</sup> of combination of dry, refrigerated &amp; frozen food storage per person</li> <li>• Appropriate refuse disposal facilities should be provided.</li> <li>• Appropriate extractor fans, fire blankets and fire doors, should be provided</li> </ul>

If catering services are provided, then the Council will consider such circumstances and negotiate with the individual landlord to determine the standards to suit the occupiers' needs.

### **Units of living accommodation, without shared basic amenities. (e.g bedsits)**

The minimum requirements are:

- Two rings or hotplates together with an oven or grill.
- Sink with draining board and an adequate supply of cold and constant hot water
- At least 1 double electrical socket for kitchen appliances only.
- At least 1m of worktop per person.
- At least 0.4m<sup>3</sup> of combination of dry, refrigerated & frozen food storage space per person.
- Appropriate refuse disposal facilities should be provided.
- Appropriate extraction, fire blankets and fire doors, should be provided

#### **Notes:**

- In accordance with HHSRS guidance, impervious finishes should be provided adjacent to cookers, sinks, drainers and worktops. All joints between a sink, a drainer or a worktop and the adjacent wall surface should be adequately sealed.
- In accordance with HHSRS guidance, dry goods storage facilities must be free from disrepair or dampness and the storage unit must have smooth, easily cleaned surfaces. This makes the space in a sink unit below the sink unsuitable.
- In accordance with HHSRS guidance, cookers and worktops should be sited away from doors or thoroughfares and other potentially hazardous areas.

### **4. Refuse, Storage and Disposal**

Refuse and recycling bins and containers shall be provided in sufficient numbers for the needs of the household, and acceptable means of disposal provided.

All refuse containers should be located on hard standings with suitable access for cleansing of the area and removal of containers. Such hard standing should be located in an area away from habitable rooms and wherever practical, at the rear of a property.

### **5. Electricity Supply**

Electricity socket outlets shall be provided to individual rooms or lettings to a minimum standard as follows:

Living Rooms	2 double sockets
Bedrooms	2 double sockets
Bedrooms, containing cooking facilities	2 double sockets and 1 additional double socket above the work surface for the use of portable kitchen appliances.

All socket outlets shall be located in positions which permit their safe, convenient and proper use at all times, having regard to likely room layouts. They should not be positioned where vulnerable to damage, likely to be obstructed or where the resulting appliance cables are likely to pose a health and safety hazard.

Electric cookers shall be provided with a dedicated cooker point outlet suitable for the rating of the cooker and fixed electric space or water-heating appliances shall be provided with a separate dedicated electric point.

All landlords must also provide an up to date electrical safety report from an NICEIC registered electrician or other suitably qualified electrician on the condition of the whole existing electrical system. This should be undertaken every 5 years.

## **6. Space Standards for Rooms**

Room sizes must comply with the following standards set for each individual type of let.

No. of people	Shared lounge	Shared kitchen	Room size (m <sup>2</sup> )
One	Yes	Yes	6.5
One	No	Yes	10
One	No	No	13
Two	Yes	Yes	10
Two	No	Yes	14
Two	No	No	20.5

### **Shared lounges**

Shared lounges must be of sufficient size and have sufficient soft furnishings, to allow at least two thirds of the occupiers to sit together and socialise.

### **Measurement of rooms**

Room sizes are calculated by taking wall to wall measurements directly above the height of the skirting board. In general, where the layout of the room prevents some parts of it being properly used these areas will be excluded from the assessment of size. This includes areas which can only be used for access (e.g. some “L” shaped rooms with a narrow area in front of a doorway) are excluded.

Also excluded are all parts of rooms located below sloping ceilings etc where the maximum ceiling height is less than 1.5m. The minimum standards apply to each room and the equivalent amount of space cannot be made up by using two smaller rooms.

### **Management of HMOs**

The Management Regulations impose duties on both the managers and the tenants of an HMO. The duties imposed are to ensure the good order, repair and, as appropriate, cleanliness of the following:

- (a) Means of water supply and drainage.
- (b) Parts of the house in common use.
- (c) Installations in common use.
- (c) Living accommodation.
- (d) Windows and ventilation.
- (e) Means of escape from fire, including any fire apparatus.

The Manager is also given certain responsibilities in respect of the disposal of refuse and litter, and the taking of reasonable precautions to protect tenants and lodgers from dangers resulting from structural conditions in the premises.

### **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**

Landlords of HMOs that require to be licensed will need to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, (often referred to as the RRO or just Fire Safety Order). For further information please visit the GOV.UK website for the sleeping guide which relates to HMOs. You can also obtain further information from Cumbria Fire and Rescue Services.

Further information on Fire safety measures applicable to HMO's can also be accessed in the Fire Safety measures guidance produced by LACORS adopted by the Council in the Summer of 2008.

### **Building and Planning Regulation Approval**

Some of the works to HMOs will require Building Regulation or Planning approval including change of use for houses occupied by more than 6 people; installation of plumbing and electrical works; thermal insulation or for structural alterations. Meeting Building Regulation and Planning regulation standards does not imply that the house meets HMO standards and will be free from HHSRS hazards. Landlords submitting an application for Building Regulations or Planning regulations should include HMO in the title of the application to enable the development to be identified so that we may advise you as to any requirements we might have. For further information on any Planning or Building regulations please contact Planning or Building control directly.