



Dorset
Council

Houses in Multiple Occupation Amenity Standards



Houses in Multiple Occupation Amenity Standards

1.0 General information

This guidance has been produced by Dorset Council to assist owners and managers of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) understand and comply with their legal responsibilities and obligations. It can also be used by tenants to help them understand what they should expect when living in such accommodation. Some sections of the guide inform the reader of strict legal requirements, while other sections provide a guide as to what the Council recommends and believes is recognised good practice to ensure compliance with statutory requirements. For HMO's and other properties housing persons on a temporary basis such as B&Bs and hostels, please see Appendix 1 to this document.

2.0 What is a House in Multiple occupation (HMO)?

The full definition of a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) is contained in [section 254](#) of the Housing Act 2004 and is complex.

In summary, an HMO is a building or part of a building, such as a flat, which is occupied as living accommodation by 3 or more people who are not members of the same household, and who share one or more basic amenities, such as a bathroom, toilet, or cooking facilities.

The legislation states that people are 'not members of the same household', when they are from different families, in other words they are not related. [Section 258](#) of the Act and [The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) contains more detailed information.

Some HMOs require a licence, and these are properties occupied by 5 or more persons, who comprise of 2 or more households and share amenities such as kitchens, toilets and/or bathrooms.

HMOs can include a wide range of houses, flats and buildings including those let to a group of friends, 'shared houses', owners who have 3 or more lodgers, hostels, B&B accommodation provided as temporary accommodation, houses let 'room by room' as 'bedsits', staff accommodation and some buildings containing self-contained flats.

A building converted to self-contained flats may be an HMO, where the conversion does not meet the requirements of the 1991 Building Regulations, and at least one third of the flats are occupied under short tenancies.

Please Note:

The above is a simplified guide to the definition of an HMO. Should you have any doubt whether or not the property you own or manage is an HMO, or meets the definition of a licensable HMO, then please contact the Housing Standards team at housingstandards@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

MANAGEMENT AND STANDARDS IN HMOS

Whether the property is deemed to be a licensable HMO or a non-licensable HMO, the property must be managed in a way to ensure the safety of the occupiers and visitors.

For HMOs such as shared houses and bedsits, the following Regulations apply:

[The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

[The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation \(Additional Provisions\) \(England\) Regulations 2007 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

For HMOs that meet the definition of a s257 HMO such as poorly converted flats, the following Regulations will apply:

[The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation \(Additional Provisions\) \(England\) Regulations 2007 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

For all properties irrespective of whether they are HMOs or single dwelling the Housing Health & Safety Rating System applies:

[Housing health and safety rating system \(HHSRS\): guidance for landlords and property-related professionals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

HMO STANDARDS

3.0 Fire safety facilities and equipment

Fire precaution facilities and equipment must be provided of such type, number and location as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the occupants and visitors to the property.

The recognised national guidance for fire safety in residential accommodation (including HMOs) is published by [LACORS, Housing - Fire Safety, Guidance on Fire Safety provisions for certain types of existing housing, July 2008](#).

This document contains advice for landlords and managers to ensure that adequate fire precaution facilities and equipment are provided. The document is based on fire risk assessment principles and provides recommendations, guidance and specific recommended equipment levels for different HMO and property types.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 places a legal duty on the Responsible Person for an HMO to carry out a 'suitable and sufficient' Fire Risk Assessment and to document the 'significant findings' of that assessment. This piece of legislation is 'enforced' by the Fire Authority and further information can be found at <https://www.dwfire.org.uk/business-fire-safety/advice-for-housing-landlords/>.

Should the property meet the definition of a licensable HMO, the Responsible Person will be expected to forward a copy of their written Fire Risk Assessment and 'significant findings' to

Dorset Council, Housing Standards Team and Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service on request.

There is a legal duty that all fire precaution equipment such as fire doors, fire extinguishers and fire alarms are tested and maintained in good order.

The appropriate level and scope of fire precaution facilities to be provided will vary from property to property. Exact requirements will often be determined by a property inspection and in consultation with Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service. The following table provides a guide to what may be considered appropriate in certain property types:



3.1 Expected Grades and Coverage of automated fire detection & warning systems for some common property types

The following is based on all properties being of sound traditional construction

Property Description	Details
Shared house HMO of up to two storeys (shared cooking facilities)	Solid, well-fitting doors to all rooms Grade D: LD3 coverage + additional detection to the kitchen (heat), lounge and any cellar containing a risk (interlinked). Fire blankets in kitchens
Shared house HMO of three or four storeys (shared cooking facilities)	30 minute protected route, FD30 self-closing doors to all risk rooms with intumescent seals only (no smoke seals fitted), 30 minute fire resistance to cellars, Grade D: LD3 coverage + additional detection to the kitchen (heat), lounge and any cellar containing a risk (interlinked). Fire blanket in kitchens. Emergency lighting if route is long and/or complex
Shared house HMO of five or six storeys (shared cooking facilities)	30 minute protected route, FD30S self-closing doors with smoke and intumescent seals to all risk rooms, Lobby protection to all floors (if 5 storeys), Secondary means of escape (if 6 storeys) Grade A: LD2 coverage + additional detection to the kitchen (heat), lounge and any cellar containing a risk (interlinked). Fire blankets in kitchens
Bedsit type HMO (no more than 2 storeys) (shared cooking facilities)	Grade D; LD2 coverage interlinked heat alarms with battery backup located in each communal kitchen, interlinked smoke alarm in cellar, Interlinked smoke alarms with battery backup located in each bedsit. Fire signage along fire route if it is complex. Emergency lighting if there is little borrowed light or complex escape route. Fire blankets in kitchens
Bedsit HMO of one or two storeys with individual Cooking facilities within bedsits	Grade D: LD2 coverage in the common areas and heat detectors in kitchens (interlinked) Grade D smoke alarm in each bedsit to protect the sleeping occupants of that bedsit (non-interlinked) Fire signage along fire route if it is complex. Emergency lighting if there is little borrowed light or complex escape route. Fire blankets in kitchens 30 minute protected route, FD30S self-closing doors with smoke and intumescent seals to all risk rooms
Bedsit HMO of three to six storeys with individual cooking facilities WITHIN bedsits	Grade A: LD2 coverage in the common areas and heat detectors in bedsits (interlinked) Grade D smoke alarm in each bedsit to protect the sleeping occupants of that bedsit (non-interlinked). Fire blankets in kitchens, 30 minute protected route, FD30s self-closing doors with smoke and intumescent seals to all risk rooms.
Bedsit HMO of three to six storeys with individual cooking facilities NOT within bedsits	Grade A: LD2 coverage in the common areas and interlinked smoke detectors in bedsits Fire blankets in kitchens, 30 minute protected route, FD30s self-closing doors with smoke and intumescent seals to all risk rooms.
Three- to six-storey house converted to self-contained flats (prior to Building Regulations 1991, approved document B standard)	Grade A: LD2 coverage in the common areas and a heat detector in each flat in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route (interlinked) Grade D: LD3 coverage in each flat (non-interlinked) smoke alarm in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route to protect the sleeping occupants of that flat. Fire blankets in kitchens 30 minute protected route, FD30S self-closing doors with smoke and intumescent seals to flat entrance doors that open onto common areas
Two-storey house converted to self-contained flats (prior to Building Regulations 1991, approved document B standard)	Grade D: LD2 coverage in the common areas and a heat detector in each flat in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route (interlinked) Grade D: LD3 coverage in each flat (non-interlinked) smoke alarm in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route) to protect the sleeping occupants. Fire blankets in kitchens 30 minute protected route, FD30S self-closing doors with smoke and intumescent seals to flat entrance doors onto common areas

Building converted partly into self-contained flats and partly into bedsits or non-self-contained lets	A mixed system: Apply the appropriate recommendation for each unit of accommodation from this table and the appropriate whole-house system based on the storey height
Flat in multiple occupation (FMO) (any storey height and regardless of date of construction/ conversion)	Grade D: LD3 coverage + additional heat detector in the kitchen (and shared living room depending on risk). Fire blankets in kitchens

In using the above table, the following definitions have been used.

- Shared house** HMOs where the whole property has been rented out by an identifiable group of sharers such as students, work colleagues or friends as joint tenants. Each occupant normally has their own bedroom, but they share the kitchen, dining facilities, bathroom, WC, living room and all other parts of the house. All the tenants will have exclusive legal possession and control of all parts of the house, including all the bedrooms. There is normally a significant degree of social interaction between the occupants, and they will, in the main, have rented out the house as one group. There is a single joint tenancy agreement. In summary, the group will possess many of the characteristics of a single family household, although the property is still technically an HMO as the occupants are not all related.
- Bedsit** HMOs which have been converted into several separate non-self-contained bedsit lettings or floor-by-floor lets. Typically, there will be individual cooking facilities within each bedsit, but alternatively there may be shared cooking facilities or a mixture of the two. Toilets and bathing/washing facilities will mostly be shared. There is unlikely to be a communal living or dining room. Each bedsit or letting will be let to separate individuals who will live independently, with little or no communal living between tenants. Each letting will have its own individual tenancy agreement and there will usually be a lock on each individual letting door.

3.2 Types of fire alarm system:

Grade A:

A fire detection and alarm system that is designed and installed in accordance with the recommendations of the current British Standard 5839. This comprises a system of electrically operated smoke and/or heat detectors which are linked to a control panel. The control panel must conform to current BS 5839 applicable standards. In general, the system must incorporate manual call points which should be located next to final exits, and, in larger multi-storey properties, on each landing. The alarm signal must achieve sound levels of not less than 65dB (A) in all accessible parts of the building and not less than 75dB (A) at all bed-heads when all doors are shut, to arouse sleeping persons.

Grade D:

A system of one or more mains-powered interlinked smoke (or heat) alarms each with integral battery standby supply. These are designed to operate in the event of mains failure and therefore could be connected to the local lighting circuit rather than an independent circuit at the dwelling's main distribution board. There is no control panel.

3.3 Levels of fire alarm coverage:

LD2 coverage:

A system incorporating detectors in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape routes from the dwelling and in all rooms or areas that present a high fire risk to occupants i.e. risk rooms.

LD3 coverage:

A system incorporating detectors in circulation spaces that form part of the escape routes from the dwelling only.

4.0 Heating and the prevention of 'excess cold'

Each unit of accommodation, bathrooms, toilets and all common areas in an HMO must be equipped with adequate space heating, thermal insulation and be free from unnecessary draughts. Any heating provided is expected to be capable of achieving the following temperatures when the external temperature is -1 degrees C:

	Minimum temperatures when the external temperature is -1 degrees C:
Reception rooms including dining rooms and living rooms	21°C
Kitchens large enough to also accommodate dining space	21°C
Bedrooms	18°C
Bathrooms	22°C
Hallways	19°C

Under most situations it is expected that the above temperatures will be met by the provision of a gas central heating system serving the whole property. Any such system or gas appliance

in the property must be subject to a landlord gas safety check at a frequency not exceeding 12 months. The test shall be carried out by a [Gas Safe](#) registered engineer.

In small, well insulated, draught free bedsit type HMOs, high quality fixed room heaters or night storage heaters that possess a timer and thermostatic controls may be deemed an acceptable alternative to gas central heating.

The acceptability of any heating provision will depend on the following factors

- the properties general orientation and exposure to wind and rain
- thermal insulation of the external walls and roof spaces
- the condition and design of windows including the presence of draught proofing
- the capacity, controllability, coverage and speed of 'heating up' of the fixed heating appliance(s)
- the general provision of ventilation
- the repair of the property, its age and the presence of any damp or condensation

In determining the acceptability of 'on peak' electrical heating, the Council will have regard to its affordability to the current and likely future occupants.

Heating of any area of the HMO by an open fire, wood burner type appliance, paraffin heater or liquid petroleum gas (LPG) is generally considered unacceptable.

At all times the tenants must be able to control the operating times and levels of heat in the property. The landlord is not permitted to restrict the availability of heating.

Except in 'shared houses', the heating of common parts, and its cost, is the responsibility of the landlord. This includes any communal staircases, kitchens, bathrooms, dining rooms and lounges.

All heating provided should possess thermostatic controls and appropriate timer mechanisms.

The property may require additional work under the Housing Act 2004 Housing Health and Safety Rating System to remedy an excess cold hazard. Additional work could include provision of heating to kitchens, living/dining rooms and separate toilets, improved insulation to loft and walls, improved glazing, or draught-proofing.

Further guidance on excess cold and heating can be found in the [CIEH Excess Cold Enforcement Guidance](#).

5.0 Bathroom facilities and personal hygiene

Where occupiers of an HMO share washing and toilet facilities there must be an adequate number of baths or showers, toilets and wash-hand basins for the number of persons permitted to occupy the property.

Where bathroom facilities are shared by occupiers it is expected that they will be provided at, or in excess of the ratios detailed in the table below:

No. of persons	Amenity Standard Required
1 – 4	1 bath or shower room, 1 toilet (WC) and 1 wash hand basin (WHB) (the bath/shower room and WC may be combined in one room)
5	1 bath or shower room and 1 separate WC and WHB (the WC can be contained within a second bathroom)
6 – 10	2 bath/shower rooms and 2 WCs with WHBs (1 of the WCs can be contained within 1 of the bathrooms)
11 – 15	3 bath/shower rooms and 3 WCs with WHBs (2 of the WCs can be contained within 2 of the bathrooms)
Definition of a bathroom: A room which contains the following amenities, a bath and/or shower, a toilet and wash hand basin.	

Wherever reasonably practicable, each unit of accommodation shall be provided with a wash-hand basin with tiled splashback (or equivalent) for its own use. Where this is not practicable, they shall be provided at a minimum ratio of one wash-hand basin for every five occupiers or part thereof.

Wherever reasonably practicable, all rooms containing a WC shall also contain a wash hand basin and tiled splashback (or equivalent). Otherwise, a wash-hand basin must be provided in a readily accessible location within the vicinity of the room containing the WC.

All WCs shall be provided with a suitable seat, be properly connected to the soil drainage system and the cisterns provided with a suitable and sufficient supply of water. All rooms with a WC shall be adequately ventilated by either an openable window or a mechanical extractor fan.

No room used as a bedroom shall be more than one floor distance from a bathroom or WC compartment.

All facilities for personal hygiene shall be located within appropriately constructed rooms or compartments.

All bath or shower rooms shall have a suitable layout and be of sufficient size (minimum 3.74m² for full-size bathroom and 2.74m² for a shower-room). All wall finishes and flooring shall be impervious, easy to keep clean and a suitable lock must be provided to the door of each bathroom/shower room or WC. Ventilation shall be provided by an openable window and/or an extractor fan.

All baths, showers and wash-hand basins shall be provided with a suitable and sufficient supply of hot and cold water via suitable fittings and shall be properly connected to the foul drainage system.

Where practicable, all baths and wash-hand basins shall be provided with glazed tiled (or equivalent) splash backs to a minimum height 450mm.

Showers shall be provided using purpose-made or properly constructed cubicles, or where showers are located over baths, they shall be located behind a well fitted screen or curtain with adequate full height splash back ceramic tiling.

6.0 Kitchens

Each occupant must have access to safe and appropriate facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food. Such facilities can be located within a bedroom (normally described as bedsit accommodation) or within a shared kitchen.

No unit of accommodation shall be more than one floor distance (storey) from a kitchen, whether it's for the exclusive use of the occupants or shared. 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 distance from a kitchen.

Where kitchen facilities are provided within a bedsit room, they should be provided to meet the following specification:

Bedsit kitchens:

- For 1 person: a gas or electric cooker with a minimum of two burners/hobs, an oven and a grill
- For 2 persons: a gas or electric cooker with a minimum of four burners/hobs, an oven and a grill

Alternatively, a combination microwave oven or an air fryer may be substituted for one (in single bedsits) or two (in double bedsits) of the burners/hobs respectively or in place of a conventional oven

- A suitable sink and drainer provided with an adequate supply of hot and cold water and connected to the foul drainage system.
- A fixed impervious work surface to enable each user to prepare food safely and hygienically. A minimum of 500 mm clear run of work surface for a single person bedsit and 1000 mm for a double bedsit.
- A refrigerator of sufficient size for the number of occupant(s)
- Sufficient storage cupboard space for dry and canned food goods plus cooking utensils, crockery and cutlery (e.g. 500mm wide wall or base unit per occupier, minimum of 0.18 cubic metres).
- Electric power sockets: two twin switched power sockets set at a convenient height and safe position in relation to the kitchen facilities.

Kitchen facilities should be situated in a distinct 'kitchen area' and this area should, where practicable, be located as far from the room exit door as possible. Where it is not practicable for the cooking appliance to be located remote from the rooms exit 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.

Minimum kitchen room sizes in a shared houses (as m²)

Numbers of persons	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Shared Kitchen*	5.5	5.5	5.5	7	7	11	11	11	11	11	15	15

* in m² - if no other living or dining space available

All kitchens and kitchen areas shall 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 cooker rings or hotplates, and
- c) the minimum clearance between the cooker burners/hobs and any cupboard or extractor above must comply with manufacturer's instructions.

The following table gives recommendations of the necessary facilities required for the storage, preparation and cooking of food in properties where there are communal kitchen facilities.

Table detailing expected HMO amenity standard provision

Persons	Cooking Appliance	Sinks	Refrigerated Storage	Dry Goods Storage	Worktops	Electrics
2 - 5	One conventional cooker (including oven, grill & four burners/hobs)	One single bowl sink and integral drainer	One under counter refrigerator and a separate freezer or one equivalent combined fridge/freezer	Two 600mm base units and two 1000mm wall units with doors or equivalent	1 - 5 2000mm (L) x 600mm (D)	Two twin electrical sockets, located at least 150 mm above the work surface,
6 - 7	Two conventional cookers (a combination Microwave may be used in lieu of second cooker)	One double bowl sink and integral drainer (a one and a half bowl sink is acceptable where a dishwasher is provided)	6 + Two under counter refrigerators and a separate freezer or two equivalent combined fridge/freezers	6 -10 Four 600mm base units and two 1000mm wall units with doors or equivalent	6 - 9 2500mm (L) x 600mm (D)	6 - 10 Three twin sockets, located at least 150 mm above the work surface
8 - 10	Two conventional cookers (irrespective of whether a combination Microwave is provided)	Two single bowl sinks and integral drainer	6 + Two under counter refrigerators and a separate freezer or two equivalent combined fridge/freezers	6 -10 Four 600mm base units and two 1000mm wall units with doors or equivalent	10+ 3000mm (L) x 600mm (D)	11+ Three twin sockets, located at least 150 mm above the work surface
11 -12	Two conventional cookers and two combination Microwave ovens	10+ Two single bowl sinks and integral drainer and a standard dishwasher	6 + Two under counter refrigerators and a separate freezer or two equivalent combined fridge/freezers	11+ Five 600mm base units and three 1000mm wall units with doors or equivalent	10+ 3000mm (L) x 600mm (D)	11+ Three twin sockets, located at least 150 mm above the work surface
Notes	Properly connected to the electric or gas supplies, electric cookers; must be on their own fused spur.	Each sink shall be set on a suitable base unit and provided with adequate hot and cold potable water properly connected to the drainage system	Fridge: 84cm(H) 60cm(W) 60cm(D) 100 litre capacity Freezer: 84cm (H) 60cm (W) 60cm(D) 85 Litre capacity Upright fridge/freezer: 175cm (H) 60cm (W) 65cm (D) 150 litre fresh food storage, 85 litre frozen food storage	The space below a sink shall not be used for dry goods storage	This shall be provided in addition to any space required for cooking appliances	In addition to any sockets used for the connection of major appliances

7.0 Licensable HMO Minimum Room Sizes Standards

These standards apply to HMOs where:

- a) occupiers live independently of others e.g. single room lettings or bedsit accommodation (kitchen facilities within the occupants room and other facilities shared);
- occupiers form a group sharing facilities e.g. students, professional persons, employees and others who may interact socially.

7.1 Minimum bedroom sizes:

	1 person	2 persons (couple)
Bedroom used for sleeping only (with kitchen and lounge sited elsewhere)	6.51m ² ***	10.22m ² ***
Bedroom used for sleeping for person under 10 years only (with kitchen and lounge sited elsewhere)	4.65m ² ***	Not suitable for use
Bedroom used for sleeping and living (where there is no separate lounge)	9m ²	14m ²
Bedroom which contains kitchen facilities	10m ²	19m ²
Bedroom containing a lounge and kitchen facilities	13m ²	21m ²

Please note:

*** These are minimum bedroom sizes are prescribed by [Regulations](#) and cannot be relaxed

Rooms between 4.65 and 6.50m² can only be used as a bedroom if the occupant is under 10 years old

7.2 Minimum dining room and living room sizes

Where a dining room or a living room are available for the use of the occupiers, the minimum room sizes shall apply:

	Dining Room	Living Room
For 1 to 5 persons	11m ²	14m ²
For 6 to 10 persons *	11m ²	14m ²

* for every additional person an additional 2m² is required

Measurement of room sizes

When measuring a room, the following area shall not be included in the calculation.

- where the ceiling height is less than 1.5m
- En-suite toilets or bathrooms
- Chimney breasts
- any other unusable areas of the room

Note: Where the size of a room (except bedrooms in licensable HMOs which cannot be relaxed) are below the applicable minimum standards, an assessment will be carried out by the Council to determine whether it is appropriate for the room to continue to be used for that purpose. The criteria's to be considered will include:

- An assessment under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- The shape and layout of the room
- The availability of other space or storage in other areas of the property for the exclusive use of the occupiers
- The nature and position of the furniture and fittings required in the room
- The intended use of the room and nature of occupancy
- The wishes of the tenant

8.0 Other Requirements

Electricity and Gas

Due to the cost to the tenant, the use of prepayment methods for paying for gas and electricity and the use of prepayment cards only available to purchase from the landlord are discouraged. If prepayment cards can only be bought from the landlord, they must be available for purchase at all reasonable times. It is an offence for a landlord to charge the tenant more than the 'maximum resale price' for gas and electricity.

Natural lighting

Every habitable room should possess a clear glazed window opening directly to the external air. The area of glazing is recommended to be at least one-tenth of the floor area.

All glazing to windows in bathrooms and toilet compartments shall be obscured.

Artificial Lighting

All habitable rooms, kitchens, bathrooms, toilet compartments, staircases, landings and passageways shall be adequately lit.

Artificial lighting for staircases shall be operable from the entrance hall and each landing. Where timer switches are used, they should be set to allow sufficient time to enter and exit the property safely.

Ventilation

All habitable rooms should be ventilated directly to the external air by a window, the openable area of which is recommended to be equivalent to at least one-twentieth of the floor area.

All kitchens, bathrooms, toilet compartments should comply with the above requirement. Where this is not practicable, mechanical ventilation complying with Building Control Approved Document F. Such an installation should be fitted with an over-run device activated by the lighting circuit.

Water supply

Each occupant must have ready access to a suitable and sufficient piped supply of cold running water suitable for drinking purposes. This is to be supplied directly from the mains water supply.

Storage tanks should not be used for supplying drinking water.

Any storage tank supplying water for washing or bathing purposes shall be adequately covered.

Planning Permission and Building Regulation approval

These standards provide guidance to assist owners of HMO's to meet their statutory obligations with regard to Housing Act legislation, associated regulations and approved guidance. They do not provide guidance or confer any approval under other legislation relating to Planning Permission, Conservation Consent or Building Regulation Approval.

Appendix 1

Houses in Multiple Occupation

Guidance for temporary accommodation

1. Introduction

This guidance refers to premises that provide temporary accommodation for persons who have no other place of residence, such as homeless single persons and families. Typically, this is likely to be bed and breakfast or hotel type accommodation. It may also include accommodation specifically built or adapted for that purpose.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the HMO Amenity Standards and any other information sources referred to in this document. This appendix is intended as guidance and Dorset Council will have regard to it when making decisions about amenity provision in such accommodation, including decisions about any necessary enforcement action or licence conditions.

This guidance is based on the fact that this type of accommodation is being used as an individual's only and main residence, all be it on a temporary basis. Most temporary accommodation allocations should only last a short period of time, for example no more than 6 weeks. Where allocations to temporary accommodation are for longer periods of time, then reference shall also be made to the guidance detailed in the main HMO Amenity Standards.

Each case will be assessed individually and therefore accommodation providers are encouraged to contact the Housing Standards Team to discuss any specific queries that may deviate from this guidance.

2. Minimum Room sizes for sleeping accommodation

The following tables detail the minimum room sizes for different types of temporary accommodation.

All minimum room sizes for sleeping accommodation shall be applied irrespective of the age of the occupants. Persons aged 10 years or older, of the opposite sex, shall not be required to sleep together in the same room, unless they are co-habiting or are members of the same family household.

3. Rooms where cooking facilities are provided separately

Maximum number of occupants per room	Minimum size of sleeping room
1	Not less than 6.51m ²
2	Not less than 10.22m ²
3	Not less than 15.0m ²
4	Not less than 19.5m ²

Where rooms are provided for more than 4 occupants, there should be an additional 4.5m² of floor area for each additional person

4. Minimum room sizes where kitchen facilities are provided within the bedroom

Maximum number of occupants per room	Minimum size of
1	Not less than 10.0m ²
2	Not less than 14.0m ²
3	Not less than 19.0m ²
4	Not less than 24.0m ²

Where rooms are provided for more than 4 occupants, there should be an additional 5.0 m² of floor area for each additional person.

5. General information relating to room sizes

These standards reflect the temporary nature of the accommodation, where placements should normally be no more than 6 weeks in length. Where longer residency arrangements exist, reference should also be made to section 7.1 of the HMO Amenity Standard.

Under certain circumstances where rooms fail to meet the above minimum floor areas then a range of factors maybe taken into consideration. This shall include but is not limited to the provision of communal areas such as dining rooms or shared lounges. Such communal areas shall normally have a minimum floor area of at least 15m².

Where accommodation providers believe the size of any rooms do not meet the above standards they should contact the Housing Standard Team for further advice.

When calculating room sizes/floor areas reference should be made to section 7.3 of the HMO Amenity Standards.

6. Facilities for the Storage, Cooking and Preparation of Food

Below are the minimum guideline requirements for the storage, cooking and preparation of food in temporary accommodation.

7. Exclusive Use of Facilities

Where the living accommodation has its own kitchen facilities for the exclusive use of each occupant or family, then the following shall normally be provided:

Each separate unit of living accommodation is provided with a suitable cooking appliance. The acceptable standard is:

1. A two ring hob together with a grill and oven for a one-person unit of living accommodation.
2. A cooker with three or four rings together with a grill and an oven for a unit of accommodation for more than one person.
3. Microwaves are acceptable only as a secondary cooking appliance
4. A suitable sink provided with an adequate supply of hot and cold water and connected to the foul drainage system.
5. A fixed impervious preparation surface (minimum size 800mm x 600mm) with adjacent power sockets (minimum 2 twin sockets serving the kitchen area)
6. A storage cupboard with sufficient space for dry food goods plus cooking utensils, crockery and cutlery.
7. A fridge and freezer space of adequate size according to the number of occupants

8. Shared Use Facilities

Shared kitchen facilities; for the cooking, storage and preparation of food shall be provided at a ratio of at least 1 set of facilities per 5 households or part thereof. The facilities should not be situated more than one floor distant from each letting. A single set of shared kitchen facilities shall consist of:

- a) Items 1- 5 as per the exclusive use requirements (with a preparation surface extended to at least 2000mm x 600mm)
- b) Food storage cupboards should be provided within the individual accommodation units. If food storage is provided in the shared kitchen, it shall be for the exclusive use of each household, labelled, lockable and be of suitable size to store dry food goods.
- c) Shared storage cupboards with sufficient space for cooking utensils, crockery and cutlery.
- d) Fridges should be provided in the kitchen and if necessary, in individual rooms, if the space allows.

9. Catered Accommodation

Where as part of the accommodation, one or more meals are provided the following guidance would normally apply:

10.Full meal provision on the premises

This means a service provided on site whereby 3 meals are provided (breakfast, lunch and evening meal), 7 days a week, all year around.

Where practicable the following should still be provided in each separate unit of living accommodation

- a) A fridge minimum size 0.13 cubic metres e.g. to allow for the storage of small amounts of perishable items such as milk

- b) A food storage cupboard of suitable size to contain dry food goods.
- c) Hot and cold drinks must also be available at other times between meal times or the provision to make them

11. Limited meal provision on the premises

Limited meal provision may include situations where food is not provided 3 times per day, and/or not 7 days per week, and/or not consistently all year round. This may commonly include situations where breakfast only is provided

In such instances the standards detailed in 7) or 8) above shall apply

12. Bathroom Facilities – including toilet, bath/showers and wash basin provision

The number and type of bathroom facilities required will vary depending on a range of factors including the number of facilities that are for the exclusive use (e.g. en-suite facilities) of the occupants and the number of shared facilities available.

Reference shall be made to section 5 of the HMO Amenity Standard

Fire precautionary facilities

All temporary accommodation will be expected to have adequate precautions in the event of a fire. The exact requirements will vary from property to property but in general it is expected that the accommodation will meet the standards detailed within “[Housing – Fire Safety](#)” guidance document published by LACORS (July 2008)

The responsible person for such accommodation shall also carry out a Fire Risk Assessment and document their ‘significant findings’ in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. They will be expected to provide a copy of their Fire Risk Assessment and Significant Findings to [Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service](#) and to Dorset Council upon request.

It is also expected that risk assessments and their ‘significant findings’ will be updated should the occupation of a property change from a traditional Bed and Breakfast or hotel type accommodation to providing temporary accommodation.

Housing Standards

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Summary of HMO Amenity Standard Changes

The table below summarises the main differences between the Council's previous HMO amenity standards, the standards presented for consultation, and the standards contained within this document which reflects consultation comments.

	Difference from previously adopted HMO amenity standard	Amendment following consultation
HMO Definition	Not included in previous amenity standards. Simple licensable/non licensable HMO definition included	HMO definition expanded to reflect comments
HMO Management Requirements	Not included in previous amenity standards. Summary of management requirements included	New dedicated section on HMO management requirements with links to management regulations
Fire Safety	Expanded section. Additional guidance on common fire safety solutions now included. Guidance based upon LACORS Fire Safety Guide.	None
Heating	Expanded section which considers Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Excess Cold Enforcement guidance, dated December 2019	New paragraph relating to the use of gas/electric card meters controlled by the landlord
Bathroom Facilities	Additional detail on expected bathroom facilities in various types of HMO	None
Kitchens	Expanded section. Additional guidance on expected kitchen facilities in various types of HMO	None
Room Sizes	Expanded section. Minor alteration to expected room sizes	None
Temporary Accommodation Standards	No previous guidance adopted by the Council. New guidance to help temporary accommodation owners to provide decent and safe accommodation	None

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