

STANDARDS FOR HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

Housing Act 2004

This paper outlines Islington Council's **minimum** standards for room sizes and the provision of kitchens and bathrooms in houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). The Council is planning to introduce these standards under [section 65\(2\) Housing Act 2004](#) in order to help determine the suitability and maximum number of occupiers and households for an HMO licence.

Wherever possible these standards are expected in all HMOs (both licensed and non-licensed HMOs) to promote good quality accommodation and fairer market conditions. Where sub-standard conditions are found in non-licensable HMOs, the Council will look to use other legal provisions to bring these homes up to the minimum standards set out below.

The standards are based on the government's "Prescribed standards for deciding the suitability for occupation of an HMO by a particular maximum number of households or persons". These are in The Licensing and Management of HMOs and other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2006, Schedule 3, see:

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/373/pdfs/ukxi_20060373_en.pdf

Alternatively you can obtain a copy by telephoning Residential Environmental Health (phone 020 7527 3083 or by emailing resid.envh@islington.gov.uk).

1. Provision of Kitchen Facilities

1.1. Households of more than one person

Each letting must be provided with exclusive use kitchen facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food, either within the bedsitting room or in another suitably located room.

1.2 Households with children

All households where there is a child under the age of sixteen are to have an exclusive use kitchen provided in a separate room from the sleeping.

1.3 Single person households

Where a room is let to a single person exclusive use kitchen facilities are to be provided within their letting. However where their room is not large enough (see table below) and no other room can be converted to a kitchen for their exclusive use, up to **three** single people may share a kitchen. In such cases fridges and food storage cupboards are to be located within each bedsit or letting.

1.4 Shared houses

A shared house is defined as one:

- Which is occupied by a group of people over the age of sixteen
- Each occupier has the use of a communal living room and a suitable dining area with adequate space for use by all occupiers, and
- There is evidence of communal living. There is likely to be e.g. one tenancy and no locks on bedroom doors.

In these houses, up to **five** people can share a kitchen.



2. Room Sizes for Sleeping and Living Accommodation

2.1 The minimum floor areas for sleeping and living accommodation are listed in the table below. These areas are only adequate if the room is large enough to accommodate essential furniture and facilities and to enable their safe use.

	Bedsit containing kitchen facilities and studios*	Bedsit where shared kitchen facilities are provided in a separate room for 2 or 3 single people.	Rooms in shared houses and rooms where exclusive use kitchen facilities are in a separate room
Single Room	12 m ² (130 sq. ft)	9m ² (96.75 sq. ft)	8m ² (86 sq. ft)
Double Room	15 m ² (160 sq. ft)	Not acceptable	11m ² (118 sq. ft)

**A studio is a self-contained unit comprising bedroom, living space and kitchen with en-suite bathroom facilities. NB: The minimum acceptable room size does not include any area taken up by bathroom facilities*

2.2 No more than two people can share a room. Shared sleeping accommodation is only considered suitable for adults who are married, cohabiters, consenting friends or relatives.

2.3 No two persons over the age of twelve, of opposite sex, can sleep in the same room, unless they are married or cohabiters.

2.4 Floor to ceiling height to be a minimum of 2.14m (7ft) over 85% floor area. Any floor area where ceiling height is less than 1.53m (5ft) shall be disregarded. Where bunk beds are used, there shall be a minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.5m (8'2").

When measuring the size of a room, include floor areas under fitted cupboards, kitchen units and other furniture, but do not include chimney breasts or lobbies.

3. Kitchens Standards

Kitchen Facilities for bedsits (exclusive use)

A kitchen within a bedsit or studio letting, or for households without children, is to contain:

3.1 A fixed integrated worktop of minimum dimensions 1000 x 600mm (40" x 24") incorporating two inset electric hotplates and an inset sink / drainer with cold drinking water and adequate hot water supply.

3.2 Combination microwave/oven 26 litre (0.92 cu ft) 900 watts i.e. includes grill & conventional facilities (Conventional cookers with integrated hobs can be provided in place of microwave ovens, and electric hotplates, but portable hobs or worktop ovens such as Baby Bellings are not acceptable.) (Electric cookers are recommended for safety reasons).

3.3 Power outlets (or fused spurs) for all appliances provided by the landlord, plus an additional two electric power outlets at worktop level.

3.4 A fixed impervious worktop minimum dimensions of 1000 x 600mm (40" x 24") (an extra 500mm (20") to be provided if the microwave is to be sited on the worktop).

- 3.5 A minimum 200mm (8") high tiled splash back.
- 3.6 A fridge with freezer, minimum 100 litres. To minimise disturbance from noise, an A rated energy efficient fridge is recommended.
- 3.7 A storage cupboard minimum 1000 x 800 x 300mm (40" x 32" x 12"), not to be sited above hobs.
- 3.8 Ensure the layout sites the worktop and drainer either side of the hobs. Alternatively, fire resistant protection must be provided adjacent to the hobs, if sited against a wall or cupboard.

NB: Proposals for well designed, bespoke mini kitchens will be considered.

Shared kitchen facilities for bedsits and for households including children

4. A shared kitchen to be a minimum of 5.5 m² (59 sq ft), or 11 m² (118 sq ft) where two sets of facilities are provided in a kitchen. No more than two sets of shared cooking facilities can be provided in one room.
 - 4.1 A cooker with four rings, oven and grill, electric cookers are recommended.
 - 4.2 A sink with minimum internal dimensions of 400 x 340 x 150mm (16" x 14" x 6") with integral impervious drainer, provided with a piped supply of cold drinking water and adequate hot water and set on a base unit.
 - 4.3 Power outlets (or fused spurs) for all appliances provided by the landlord plus an additional two electric power outlets at worktop level
 - 4.4 A fixed worktop of impervious material of not less than 1500 x 600mm (59" x 24").
 - 4.5 A tiled splash back at least 200mm (8") high, behind each sink and worktop.
 - 4.6 A microwave cooker with minimum 800-watt output.

In addition to the shared kitchen, each bedsit must also be provided with:

 - 4.7 A fridge with freezer, minimum 100 litres (3.53 cu ft). To minimise disturbance from noise, an A-rated energy efficient fridge is recommended.
 - 4.8 A storage cupboard of minimum dimensions 1000 x 800 x 300mm (40" x 32" x 12").

Kitchen facilities in shared houses/flats

5. Each house or flat must be provided with its own food preparation/cooking/storage facilities for the exclusive use of the occupiers, up to a maximum of five persons.

A shared kitchen to be a minimum of 5.5m² (59 sq ft), or 11m² (118 sq ft) where two sets of facilities are provided in a kitchen. No more than two sets of shared cooking facilities can be provided in one room.

- 5.1 A cooker with four rings, oven and grill. (Electric cookers are recommended for safety reasons).
- 5.2 A sink with minimum internal dimensions of 400 x 340 x 150mm (16" x 14" x 6") with integral impervious drainer, provided with a piped supply of cold drinking water and adequate hot water and set on a base unit.
- 5.3 power outlets (or fused spurs) for all appliances provided by the landlord plus an additional two electric power outlets at worktop level
- 5.4 A fixed worktop of impervious material of not less than 1500 x 600mm (59" x 24").
- 5.5 A tiled splash back at least 200mm (8") high, behind each sink and worktop.

- 5.6 A microwave cooker with minimum 800-watt output.
- 5.7 A fridge with freezer, minimum 200 litres (7.06 cu ft). To minimise disturbance from noise, an A-rated energy efficient fridge is recommended.
- 5.8 A storage cupboard of minimum dimensions 1000 x 800 x 300mm (40" x 32" x 12").

6. All kitchen facilities

Standards for all kitchen facilities are as follows:

- 6.1 All finishes are to be non-absorbent and readily cleansable including the floor covering which will must be provided under all appliances and at least 1000mm (40") in front of the appliances. No furniture, bedding, curtains etc. shall be within 600mm (24") of the cooker.
- 6.2 All kitchens are to be on the same floor as the living accommodation, unless dining facilities are within the kitchen, where it must be no more than one floor away (this does not apply to shared houses). Kitchen facilities must be available for use 24 hours a day
- 6.3 Kitchen units and equipment must be securely fixed to a wall and cookers must be positioned away from the room door
- 6.4 A mechanical extractor must be provided, ducted to the open air, with the outlet away from any adjacent windows.
- 6.5 A fire blanket to be available in a container fixed to a wall, within reach of the cooker (to comply with BS 6575:1985).
- 6.6 The Fire Brigade recommend that 'No deep fat frying' notices should be placed next to cookers to ensure their safe use.
- 6.7 A fire door of 30 minute fire resistant construction with intumescent strips and smoke seals and an overhead type door closer must be installed to all shared kitchens (also known as FD30(s)).
- 6.8 Suitable and appropriate containers for the storage of refuse must be provided. Refuse disposal facilities must be readily accessible and sufficient for the number of occupants within the building

7. WCs

- 7.1 One water closet separate from any bath/shower room, to be provided for every five occupants of minimum size 800x1300mm (32" x 52"). Where four or fewer occupants share a WC, it can be in the bath/shower room.
- 7.2 Each WC compartment shall be provided with a wash hand basin with a constant supply of hot and cold water.
- 7.3 The WC must be within one floor of the living accommodation it serves.

8. Personal Washing Facilities

- 8.1 Each letting to contain a wash hand basin of minimum dimensions 560 x 430 mm (22" x 17") unless a sink is provided within the bed-sitting room. Such wash-hand basins are not required in shared houses or where listed building requirements prohibit it. Where the cold water supply to a wash hand basin is not drinking water, it should be labelled "not drinking water".
- 8.2 One bath/shower shall be provided for every five occupants. Households with children under 16 are to have a bath/shower (preferably a bath) for their exclusive

use. Baths to be of minimum 1500 x 750mm (60" x 30") and showers to be of minimum 700 x 700 mm (28" x 28"). Baths/shower rooms to have sufficient space for drying and changing, minimum 700mm x 700mm (28"x28"). Bath/shower rooms to be within one floor from the living accommodation they serve.

8.3 Tiled splash-back minimum height 200mm (8") and tiled shower surrounds of minimum height 1800 mm (60") to be provided. Adequate, impervious shower curtain or screen to be available for all showers. The walls and floors to any bath/shower rooms to be non-absorbent and readily cleansable.

8.4 All bath/shower rooms, to be provided with adequate fixed heating appliances to achieve a recommended temperature of 22°C.

8.5 Mechanical ventilation to be provided to the open air if there is no openable window to the bathroom. Given the intensive use of personal washing facilities in HMOs and the risk of moisture migration causing condensation and mould in other rooms, the installation of quiet running humidistat type mechanical ventilation is recommended for all bath/shower rooms.

9. Water supplies

Stopcocks to be provided within lettings and shared kitchens to all-direct water supplies. Accessible stopcocks to tanked water supplies are to be provided in common parts.

10. Gas installations

Only Gas Safe registered contractors should install, service or repair gas water heaters, boilers and gas cookers and associated pipe-work etc.

11. Space Heating

Each unit of accommodation must be provided with an adequate means of fixed space heating which is economic to run and controllable by the occupier.

Note: [Islington's Private Rented Standard](#) provides further guidance on heating and thermal comfort. Where homes are not capable of being kept economically warm, the Council will be under a duty to require further works under [part 1 Housing Act 2004](#) (subject to assessment using the [Housing Health and Safety Rating System](#)).

12. Fire safety

The HMO must be provided with appropriate detection and alarm systems. As a minimum, mains wired smoke alarms (with battery back-up) must be installed and maintained in proper working order to:

- Each landing level of any staircase in buildings converted into flats and flats above/below commercial premises (interlinked to form one system)
- The circulation space inside any shared flat or house with shared facilities

Buildings or houses converted into self-contained flats or bedsits (but not shared houses) must have a [Fire Risk Assessment](#) (FRA) carried out in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order. The FRA must be available for inspection.

Note: National guidance on fire safety in HMOs is provided in [The LACoRS guide to fire safety](#). The LACoRS guide provides more detailed information on how to assess and control risks in various types of HMO. Where HMOs present a significant fire safety risk that has not been adequately controlled then the Council will require further works under [part 1 Housing Act 2004](#) (subject to assessment using the [Housing Health and Safety Rating System](#)).

Further Information

The Housing Act 2004 introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) which is a risk based method for assessing conditions in residential properties including HMOs. There is a list of 29 hazards that can be taken into consideration including damp and mould, excess cold, falls on stairs, fire safety and inadequate security measures. An HHSRS assessment will consider the type of hazard present, its severity and likely risk of harm on the occupier(s).

If a hazard gives rise to a serious threat to health or safety it is known as a Category 1 Hazard. If a local housing authority considers that a Category 1 hazard exists in any residential premises, they must take the appropriate enforcement action in relation to the hazard. Less significant threats to health and safety are known as Category 2 Hazards and a local authority may take appropriate enforcement action to reduce the hazard to an acceptable level.

HMOs will be inspected to assess hazards, compliance with these minimum standards and compliance with HMO management regulations:

- [Management Regulations for HMOs that are entirely comprised of self-contained flats](#) (known as [section 257 HMOs](#))
- [Management Regulations for all other HMOs](#)

Landlords will be required to bring their property up to standard within a fixed period and ensure that they are managed in accordance with the applicable management regulations. If you would like further advice then please telephone Residential Environmental Health (phone 020 7527 3083 or email resid.envh@islington.gov.uk).