

Advice for **LANDLORDS** of Houses in Multiple Occupation

Residential team

Housing Operations
Civic Centre
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HOUSING



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

As part of a wider strategy, Housing Services aims:

- to maintain and improve the fabric of dwellings in the private sector as part of a National and Borough resource.
- to maintain and improve the health of people living in the private sector and ensure that their homes are safe and meet legislative standards.

This advice is written for tenants who live in houses in multiple occupation. A house in multiple occupation (HMO) is any house or flat which is occupied by more than one household who share (or do not have) kitchen, bathroom or toilet facilities. If these facilities are for exclusive use but are not self-contained within the living accommodation, the property will still count as a HMO.

HMOs include bedsits, some shared houses, hostels and houses converted into flats. A household means members of the same family and includes co-habiting couples.

Self contained flats in converted buildings may also be HMOs if they were converted before 1991 and at least one third of the flats are occupied under short tenancies.

With respect to HMOs, the aim of the Department is to ensure that all HMOs are safe to live in. This means that HMOs must be kept clean and in good repair, well maintained with adequate amenities (kitchens, toilets, washing facilities etc.) and proper fire precautions.

The Residential Team

To help meet this aim, the Department's Residential Team will:

- Provide guidance and general advice to landlords and tenants
- Advise where HMO Licences are required and deal with licence applications
- Carry out regular inspections of HMOs
- Respond to complaints
- Enforce housing standards
- Administer the grant service to landlords

The Team can be contacted by ringing **020 8487 5123** or at residential@richmond.gov.uk or writing to the Residential Team, 2nd Floor, Civic Centre, 44 York Street, Twickenham, TW1 3BZ.

For help and advice from other Council services please call 08456 122 660

Other useful numbers are:

| | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Emergency Gas Number | 0800 111 999 |
|----------------------|--------------|

HOUSING STANDARDS FOR HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

This guidance outlines the standards required by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames for houses in multiple occupation.

In each case what is required depends on the number of people and households living there and on the type of premises. In all cases the responsibility for maintaining the property rests with the owner or manager of the premises.

There are six categories of houses in multiple occupation. These are shown below. If you are not sure what category your premises is in please contact the Residential Team on **020 8891 7857** or **020 8891 7892/3/4/6**.

| Categories of Houses in Multiple Occupation | |
|---|---|
| A | Houses occupied as individual rooms with some sharing of bathroom, toilet and/or kitchen |
| B | Houses occupied by a defined group of people, who generally live independently of one another. They may have exclusive use of a bedroom, but, for example, cook, eat, shop and clean separately |
| C | Houses with some sharing and occupied by people whose accommodation is linked to their employment or education |
| D | Houses generally referred to as Hotels, Guesthouses and Bed & Breakfasts providing permanent places of residence, including provision for homeless families |
| E | Houses which require registration under the Registered Homes Act usually for people with special needs |
| F | Self contained homes with their own entrance leading from a common area or hallway, with no sharing of rooms |

How to Use this Guidance

The section on **GENERAL STANDARDS** lists the requirements that apply to **ALL** premises no matter what category they fall into.

Separate sections list the additional requirements for each of the categories A to F. Only those requirements that are listed in your premises category will apply.

Every effort has been made to ensure that this guidance is up to date. However, the law changes frequently, and if you have concerns about any particular point, please contact the Residential Team.

HOUSING HEALTH AND SAFETY RATING SYSTEM

This is the system used to inspect properties and to decide on the most appropriate action.

Full details are set out in the Housing Act 2004.

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040034.htm>

In addition please refer to the guide prepared by the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme for information relating to the 29 hazards used to assess the suitability of a dwelling under the new Housing Act 2004.

It is also available at: <http://www.richmond.gov.uk/>

HMO LICENSING

From April 2006 the owners of certain types of HMOs will need to apply to the Council to have their property licensed. The Council must maintain a register of licensed HMOs for the public to view.

The legislation about licensing, including detailed definitions is in the new Housing Act 2004 which can be found at:

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040034.htm>

An HMO must have a licence if all three of the following apply:

- it is three or more storeys high (including basements and attics)
- it has five or more people in more than one household, and
- the occupants share amenities such as bathrooms, toilets or cooking facilities.

The following exemptions apply:

- if the whole property is in self-contained flats
- if the basement is in commercial use and there are only two residential storeys above

Please see our HMO licensing policy for further information at:

<http://www.richmond.gov.uk/>

GENERAL STANDARDS

These standards apply to **all** premises

Space Standards

Each category of HMO has its own standards. In general, consideration should always be given to the useable space in each room in determining whether it is suitable for occupation. In particular, the position of doors, windows and ceiling heights should be considered.

Toilets (WCs)

At least 1 WC shall be provided per 5 individuals whatever their age. Each WC must be readily accessible and may not be more than one floor away from the people expected to use it. At least 1 WC should be separate from a bathroom or shower room.

The walls and floors of the WC must be able to be cleaned easily.

The following minimum dimensions are given as a guide only:

| Room with: | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| WC only | 1300mm x 800mm |
| WC and hand basin | 1800mm x 800mm |

Personal Washing

Each rented unit shall be provided with a wash hand basin (WHB) with a supply of hot and cold water. If a sink is provided within the accommodation then a separate hand basin is not required.

Where possible a WHB with constant hot and cold water shall be provided within each toilet. If it is not possible than a WHB should be provided in the nearest shared bathroom.

1 shower or bathroom shall be provided for every 5 persons whatever their age. The room should be private and no more than 1 floor away from the people expected to use it. The wall and floor surfaces should be able to be cleaned easily.

The following dimensions are given as a guide only. Doors, windows and head height must also be considered.

| | |
|--------|----------------|
| Shower | 900mm x 900mm |
| Bath | 1700mm x 700mm |
| WHB | 600mm x 400mm |

| Room with: | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Shower only | 900mm x 1600mm |
| Bath only | 1400mm x 1700mm |
| Shower & WHB | 2000mm x 900mm |
| Bath & WHB | 1700mm x 1600mm |
| Shower, WHB & WC | 1900mm x 1700mm |
| Bath, WHB & WC | 2000mm x 1700mm |

Power supply

Each room within the rented unit shall be provided with a minimum of 4 x 13 amp sockets. Additional sockets shall be provided for heaters, refrigerators, and kitchen use (all must comply with IEE Regulations).

Means of escape in case of fire

Requirements will vary according to the type and use of the premises. Guidance will be based on the relevant Government circulars the Housing Act 2004 and in consultation with the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA).

A three or more storey house can require half hour fire-resistant doors, automatic fire detection, emergency lighting, fire fighting equipment, and fire escape notices. See separate guidance sheet about Fire Precautions.

Management

The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations 2006 <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/20060372.htm> sets out certain requirements for managers.

The regulations place on the manager a

- Duty to provide information to occupier
- Duty to take safety measures
- Duty to maintain water supply and drainage
- Duty to supply and maintain gas and electricity
- Duty to maintain common parts, fixtures, fittings and appliances
- Duty to maintain living accommodation
- Duty to provide waste disposal facilities

There are also duties on the occupiers of HMOs.

Gas and Electricity supply

Gas

All gas appliances must be safe to use. As a landlord you must ensure that:

- Gas appliances are checked for safety at least once a year
- The safety check is carried out by a registered CORGI fitter
- A copy of the safety certificate must be given to your tenants.

Electricity

The wiring to the property should be checked and certified by a NICEIC – registered electrician. Any electrical work carried out must comply with the latest NICEIC regulations.

HMOs OCCUPIED BY INDIVIDUALS

These are HMOs occupied as individual room with some sharing of bathrooms, toilets and/or kitchens. Each occupancy is totally independent of all others, e.g. bed sits.

Space standards

One person unit of accommodation

| 1 One room units: | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Including kitchen facilities: | 13m ² |
| Where provided with separate kitchen: | 10m ² |

| 2 Two or more roomed units: | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Each living/kitchen: | 1m ² |
| Each living room | 9m ² |
| Each bedroom | 6.5m ² |

Two or more person units of accommodation

| 1 One room units: | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Including kitchen facilities: | 18m ² |
| Where provided with separate kitchen: | 15m ² |

| 2 Two or more roomed units: | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Each living/kitchen: | 15m ² |
| Each living room | 12m ² |
| Each living/bedroom | 14m ² |
| Each bedroom | 10m ² |

The sharing of bedrooms by persons of the opposite sex over the age of 12 and who do not live as co-habitees shall not be permitted.

NOTE: Where rooms have sloped ceilings, all areas below 1.5m are disregarded when calculating the room size.

Facilities for the Storage, Preparation and Cooking of Food

Each rented unit shall have its own kitchen facilities. Where these are provided in a separate room, the kitchen should be lockable and both rooms should be on the same floor or not more than one floor away from each other.

Where the Council is satisfied that the provision of kitchen facilities for individual use is not practicable, shared kitchens should be provided on a ration of one kitchen per five individuals. This should be irrespective of age and each kitchen should not be more than one floor away from any individual user.

Kitchens shall be of sufficient size for their purpose and allow for the safe provision and use of the necessary facilities.

In determining the size of shared kitchens a space standard of 3m² per individual using the kitchen is required.

Facilities required for kitchens (not shared)

Food Storage

Refrigerators shall be provided with a minimum capacity at 0.08m³ (2.9ft³).

NB: If an electrical refrigerator is provided an electric socket shall be provided exclusively for that purpose complying with the current edition of the institute of Electrical Engineers Regulations (IEE).

Storage for dry goods shall also be provided; the minimum capacity being 0.11m³ (4ft³). Such storage may be located under any work surface or in a wall mounted cupboard. An under sink cupboard will not be acceptable for this purpose.

Food preparation

A readily cleansable impervious surface shall be provided of minimum dimensions 600mm x 500mm, adequately supported at each corner. Any wall surface abutting the work surface shall be impervious and readily cleansable and a suitable seal must be provided between the surface and any wall. A 13 amp twin electric socket outlet shall be provided adjacent to the work surface in order that the electrical appliances can be readily used for food preparation.

Cooking

Cookers shall be provided with two rings/hot plates as well as an oven and grill. Location on staircases, landings or in halls will not be accepted.

NB: If an electrical cooking appliance is provided an electric socket shall be provided exclusively for that purpose complying with the current edition of the institute of Electrical Engineers Regulations (IEE).

Sinks

A sink must be provided together with a minimum of a single draining board. The sink must be provided with a constant supply of hot water and cold drinking water. The hot supply must be of sufficient temperature and rate of supply as will allow normal domestic activities to be undertaken. When a sink combined with a single drainer is provided it would normally be expected that a suitable base unit would be provided to support it. A two-course tiled splash back shall be provided, with suitable sealant between sink and splash back. A wash hand basin shall not be used in place of a sink.

Facilities required for shared kitchens

No more than five individuals, irrespective of age, should share a kitchen.

Food Storage

A refrigerator of minimum capacity 0.08m^3 (2.9ft^3), and a storage cupboard of a minimum capacity being 0.11m^3 (4ft^3) shall be provided within each occupancy. Shared fridges in communal kitchens are not favoured because of the risk of poor storage practice and the resulting contamination of food. If a shared fridge is unavoidable, then 0.06m^3 (2ft^3) fridge space per person should be provided.

NB: If an electrical refrigerator is provided an electric socket shall be provided exclusively for that purpose complying with the current edition of the institute of Electrical Engineers Regulations (IEE).

Food Preparation Cooking

A readily cleansable impervious surface shall be provided of minimum dimensions $600\text{mm} \times 500\text{mm}$, adequately supported at each corner. Any wall surface abutting the work surface shall be impervious and readily cleansable and a suitable seal must be provided between the surface and any wall. Two 13 amp twin electric socket outlet shall be provided in the kitchen area, one of which should be sited adjacent to the work surface in order that the electrical appliances can be readily used for food preparation.

Cookers shall be provided with four rings/hot plates as well as an oven and grill. Location on staircases, landings or in halls will not be accepted.

NB: If an electrical cooking appliance is provided an electric socket shall be provided exclusively for that purpose complying with the current edition of the institute of Electrical Engineers Regulations (IEE).

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HMOs THAT ARE SHARED

These are HMOs that are occupied by a defined group, e.g. a group of students or young single adults. Occupiers are likely to have exclusive use of a bedroom.

Space standards

Bedrooms

| One person units of accommodation | |
|---|-------------------|
| Each bedroom/study: | 10m ² |
| If separate living room (not kitchen or kitchen/dining room) is provided: | 6.5m ² |

| Two person units of accommodation | |
|---|------------------|
| Each bedroom/study: | 15m ² |
| If separate living room (not kitchen or kitchen/dining room) is provided: | 11m ² |

Common Rooms

| 1 Bathrooms: | |
|--|--|
| No more than 5 individuals, irrespective of age, should share a bathroom (see general standards) | |

| 2 Kitchens: | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Used by 1-3 persons | 5m ² |
| Used by 4 persons | 6m ² |
| Used by 5 persons | 7m ² |
| Used by 6 persons | 9m ² |

NB: The above are minimum space standards based on optimum shape and layout. In practice it may be necessary to have a larger space standard to ensure that there is sufficient space to fit in all the facilities required and provide a circulation area which permits safe use of the kitchen for the number of users.

NOTE: Where rooms have sloped ceilings, all areas below 1.5m are disregarded when calculating the room size.

Facilities for the Storage, Preparation and Cooking of Food

The sharing of bedrooms by persons of the opposite sex over the age of 12 and who do not live as co-habitees shall not be permitted.

The occupancy shall have use of a shared kitchen no more than one floor distant from the large majority of users and in any event, no more than two floors distant from any user.

Dining facilities for shared kitchen users shall be provided within a dining/kitchen or in a separate adjacent dining room to the kitchen.

No more than 5 individuals, irrespective of age should share a kitchen.

Food Storage

Refrigerators shall be provided with a minimum capacity at 0.06m³ (2ft³).

NB: If an electrical refrigerator is provided an electric socket shall be provided exclusively for that purpose complying with the current edition of the institute of Electrical Engineers Regulations (IEE).

Storage for dry goods shall also be provided; the minimum capacity being 0.11m³ (4ft³). Such storage may be located under any work surface or in a wall mounted cupboard. An under sink cupboard will not be acceptable for this purpose.

Food Preparation

A readily cleansable impervious surface shall be provided of minimum dimensions 600mm x 500mm, adequately supported at each corner. Any wall surface abutting the work surface shall be impervious and readily cleansable and a suitable seal must be provided between the surface and any wall. Two 13 amp twin electric socket outlet shall be provided in the kitchen area, one of which should be sited adjacent to the work surface in order that the electrical appliances can be readily used for food preparation.

Cooking

Cookers shall be provided with four rings/hot plates as well as an oven and grill. Location on staircases, landings or in halls will not be accepted.

NB: If an electrical cooking appliance is provided an electric socket shall be provided exclusively for that purpose complying with the current edition of the institute of Electrical Engineers Regulations (IEE).

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A sink must be provided together with a minimum of a single draining board. The sink must be provided with a constant supply of hot water and cold drinking water. The hot supply must be of sufficient temperature and rate of supply as will allow normal domestic activities to be undertaken. When a sink combined with a single drainer is provided it would normally be expected that a suitable base unit would be provided to support it. A two-course tiled splash back shall be provided, with suitable sealant between sink and splash back.

HMOs LINKED TO EMPLOYMENT

These are HMOs with some degree of shared facilities occupied by people whose accommodation is linked to their employment or education and is provided by an educational establishment or employer, such as Halls of Residence or accommodation above a shop or pub.

Space standards

Bedrooms

| Each bedroom: | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 1 person: | 6.5m ² |
| 2 persons: | 10m ² |
| 3 persons: | 16.5m ² |
| 4 persons: | 21m ² |

Common Rooms

| 1 Bathrooms: |
|--|
| No more than 5 individuals, irrespective of age, should share a bathroom (see general standards) |

| 2 Kitchens: | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Used by 1-3 persons | 5m ² |
| Used by 4 persons | 6m ² |
| Used by 5 persons | 7m ² |
| Used by 6 persons | 9m ² |

| 3 Living/dining rooms: | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Used by 1-5 persons | 11m ² |
| Used by 6-10 persons | 16.5m ² |
| Used by 11-15 persons | 21.5m ² |
| Used by 16 persons | 25m ² |

NOTE: Where rooms have sloped ceilings, all areas below 1.5m are disregarded when calculating the room size.

Facilities for the Storage, Preparation and Cooking of Food

The occupancy shall have use of a shared kitchen no more than one floor distant from the large majority of users and in any event, no more than two floors distant from any user.

Dining facilities for shared kitchen users shall be provided within a dining/kitchen or in a separate adjacent dining room to the kitchen

No more than 5 individuals, irrespective of age should share a kitchen.

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HOSTELS

Houses generally referred to as 'hostels', 'guesthouses' and 'bed and breakfast accommodation', which provide a permanent place of residence, as distinct from a hotel which provides temporary accommodation for visitors.

This category would include:

1. Hotels and bed and breakfast establishments used by local authorities to house homeless families
2. Hotels used for accommodation for casual workers
3. Hotels having a mix of temporary and permanent occupants

N.B. Properties (1) above, which currently house homeless families are assessed by the Bed and Breakfast Exchange Scheme (BABIE), details of their standards that are applied by the Council can be found at

<http://www.communities.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1149999>

SELF CATERING HOSTELS

Facilities for the Storage, Preparation and Cooking of Food

Either (1) Each occupancy shall have its own kitchen separate from the sleeping room and of an area of 4m². Where this is not practicable, each occupancy shall have its own kitchen facilities within the unit of accommodation and 4m² shall be added to the bedroom floor areas.

Or (2) Shared kitchen may be provided for single room occupancies but on the same floor as the occupancy. A standard of 3m² per person using the kitchen is required

No more than 5 individuals, irrespective of age should share a kitchen.

Facilities required for kitchens (not shared)

Food Storage

Refrigerators shall be provided with a minimum capacity at 0.08m³ (2.9ft³).

NB: If an electrical refrigerator is provided an electric socket shall be provided exclusively for that purpose complying with the current edition of the institute of Electrical Engineers Regulations (IEE).

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Facilities for the Preparation and Cooking of Food

HOSTELS PROVIDING MEALS

- (a) The facilities preparation, cooking and serving shall comply with the Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 2004. (Contact Residential team for further information). Kitchen facilities for the cooking and preparation of food for residents as part of the service provided by the establishment should not be used by residents themselves.
- (b) Separate provision for residents to prepare and cook their own food shall be provided within the property. A suitable kitchen for this purpose will be provided on each occupied floor and will contain the following facilities:
 - i. a cooker with four burners, oven and grill
 - ii. Sink with constant hot and cold water supplies properly connected to the drainage system
 - iii. four 13 amp electric power outlets
 - iv. a worktop of sufficient size
- (c) Kitchen facilities for the purpose of (b) above shall be available for use 24 hours a day and the cost of running the appliances will be included in the residential charge.

Note: A lesser standard may be adopted if the Residential Team Officer is satisfied with the usage and location of the existing facilities.