

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

Guidance for Landlords and Agents

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Introduction

Huntingdonshire District Council is committed to ensuring that privately rented homes are safe and do not present avoidable risks to the health of occupants or visitors. Landlords and letting agents are expected to understand their legal responsibilities and comply with all relevant legislation.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) play an important role in providing affordable accommodation, and demand for this type of housing continues to grow across Huntingdonshire. To support this expanding sector, the Private Sector Housing Team has developed this guidance to help landlords and agents understand the minimum safety, facility, and amenity standards required for HMOs. Landlords and agents are encouraged to seek advice from the Private Sector Housing Team before developing, refurbishing, or letting a property as an HMO.

The team will support landlords and agents by:

- Providing advice on how to achieve minimum legal standards.
- Providing guidance on good practice on managing HMOs successfully.
- Providing information and guidance on existing and new housing legislation.

Huntingdonshire District Council has taken care to ensure that the information in this guidance is accurate and up to date. It is intended to provide general advice on the law; however, it should not be regarded as a definitive or authoritative statement of legal requirements.

What is a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)?

A House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) is, at its simplest, a building or part of a building occupied by three or more people from two or more households (unrelated families) who share facilities such as a kitchen or bathroom, pay rent, and use the property as their main residence. Common examples include a house or flat shared by a group of individuals, properties where residents rent individual bedsit rooms with shared facilities, and buildings that have been converted into several self-contained flats.

The four tests defining an HMO:

1. The standard test: A building in which three or more unrelated persons live, who form two or more households who share one or more communal facility such as a bathroom, toilet or cooking amenities. There must also be an obligation to pay rent (or other consideration) and it is their main or only residence. Their occupation of the living accommodation constitutes the only use of that accommodation. This includes bedsits, where occupants share kitchen(s) or bathroom(s). A 'house' also includes a flat that has multiple occupancy. Section 254(2) Housing Act 2004

2. The self-contained flat test: A building that has been converted to consist of at least one self-contained flat. It is occupied by three or more persons, forming at least two households and they share a bathroom, toilet, or cooking amenity. Rent must be paid, and the living accommodation is their only or main residence. Their occupation of the living accommodation constitutes the only use of that accommodation. Section 254(3) Housing Act 2004

3. The converted building test: A converted building can be classed as a HMO where it has one or more non-self-contained units. A non-self-contained unit is where a toilet, bathroom or kitchen is not within the occupant's room: this applies even if the facility is for the exclusive use of the occupant. It is occupied by three or more persons and forming at least two households. Rent must be paid, and the living accommodation is their only or main residence. Their occupation of the living accommodation constitutes the only use of that accommodation. Section 254(4) Housing Act 2004

4. Certain converted blocks of flats: Any building which has been converted into and consists of self-contained flats only, and it does not comply with 1991 Building Regulations (or the Regulations at the time of the conversion if post-1991) and less than two thirds of the flats are owner occupied. Section 257 Housing Act 2004

Other definitions:

Lodgings:

- A property, with a live-in resident landlord, with three or more lodgers will also be deemed to be an HMO. These types of HMOs can also require licensing if the property is occupied by five or more lodgers, with shared facilities.

Main residence can include:

- Bed and breakfast and hostel accommodation occupied by individuals as their main and permanent address are HMOs if they fit the criteria above.
- A residence for the purpose of undertaking full-time further or higher education.
- A refuge, that is a building or part of a building used by a voluntary organisation for temporary accommodation for people who have left their home as the result of domestic violence.
- Occupation by migrant or seasonal workers where the employer or agent provides the accommodation.
- Occupation by asylum seekers and their dependents, where the accommodation has been provided under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and the accommodation is provided by a private landlord under contract to or on behalf of UKVI.

Definition of a household:

- Single person.
- Couples who are married or civil partners or who live together as if they were married or civil partners.
- Relatives living together: including parents, stepparents, grandparents, children, stepchildren, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, or cousins.

Legal Standards

Due to the nature of their occupancy, all properties occupied as HMOs pose an increased risk to tenants' and visitors' health & safety; therefore, landlords must take measures to minimise these risks. The government introduced regulations SI 372 and 373 that are detailed below, which set out the minimum standard.

The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations (England) 2006 (SI 372)

All HMOs, except s.257 HMO (refer to Test 4 of the section 'the four tests defining a HMO' and refer to section 'The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007 (SI 1903)' for regulations for s.257 HMOs), are subject to these Management Regulations irrespective of whether they require a licence or not (please refer to the licencing section). If you are acting on behalf of the landlord; managing the property and receiving the rent, both you and the landlord are responsible for maintaining the standards of the property and complying with these regulations. Failing to do so, could result in formal enforcement action being taken against either the manager and/or the landlord.

The regulations also place a duty on tenants to behave in an orderly manner and not to hinder the manager in the carrying out of these duties.

HMO Regulations:

To display their contact details (Regulation 3)

- The manager's name, address and contact telephone number must be clearly displayed in a prominent position. On the wall in the entrance hall is usually the best place.

To take safety measures (Regulation 4)

- All means of escape from fire are to be kept clear from obstruction and maintained in good order and repair (means of escape would normally include the landing, stairs and hallway).
- Firefighting equipment and fire alarms are maintained in good working order (firefighting equipment includes a fire blanket but not any fire extinguishers as Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service do not recommend their use by untrained persons).
- All notices indicating the location of the means of escape from fire are displayed in prominent positions that enable them to be clearly visible (this is only applicable to licensable HMOs with 5 or more occupants. (particular requirements are to be found within the LACORS Housing – Fire Safety document).
- Take all such measures as are reasonably required to protect the occupiers from injury, having regard to the design of the HMO, structural conditions of the property, and the number of occupants (this would include the requirement for fire doors on risk rooms (kitchens, living rooms, and letting rooms) and any extra considerations to the numbers occupying, such as fire alarm testing procedures. Particular requirements are to be found within the LACORS Housing – Fire Safety document).
- Ensure any roof or balcony is safe or take all reasonable measures to prevent access to it as long as it remains unsafe.
- Any window with a sill which is at or near the floor level must have bars or other safeguards to prevent the danger of accidents with such windows (this particularly applies to having safety catches on any windows with sills lower than 1.1m from the floor level where on the first floor or above, and bars on any portion of window where the glass is below 80cm from the floor level or these windows to incorporate safety glass).

To maintain the water supply and drainage system (Regulation 5)

- The water supply or drainage system must be maintained in a good, clean and working condition; including any tank, cistern or similar receptacle used for the storage of water or other domestic purpose, with a cover kept over it to keep the water in a clean and proper condition and water fittings to be protected from frost.
- The water or drainage supply must not be unreasonably interrupted from use by any occupier.

To maintain gas and electrical supplies and to provide safety certificates (Regulation 6)

- The latest gas appliance test certificate must be supplied to the Local Housing Authority within 7 days of receiving a request in writing (legislation requires that a certificate is obtained every year as it is for any rental property from a recognised gas installer).
- Ensure that every fixed electrical installation is inspected and tested at intervals not exceeding 5 years by a qualified person. A test certificate should be obtained and supplied to the Local Authority within 7 days of a written request.
- Not to unreasonably cause the gas or electricity supply to be interrupted.

To maintain all common parts and installations within the property (Regulation 7)

- Ensure that all common parts are maintained in good and clean decorative repair; maintained in a safe and working condition; and kept reasonably clear of obstruction (common parts include entrance door; doors to living accommodation (normally bedrooms), staircases, passageways, corridors, halls, lobbies, entrances, balconies, porches and steps in communal areas and any other part which is shared).
- Handrails and banisters are at all times kept in good repair.
- Additional handrails and banisters as are necessary are provided (it is expected that handrails are available to all parts of a staircase).
- Stair coverings are safely fixed and kept in good repair (worn carpets on stairs are to be replaced).
- Windows and other means of ventilation within the common parts are kept in good repair (ventilation includes extractors in bath/shower rooms and kitchens).
- Common parts are fitted with adequate light fittings that are available at all times.
- Fixtures, fittings or appliances used in common by two or more households are maintained in good and safe repair and in clean working order (fixtures, fittings and appliances include lighting; space heating; water heating appliances; toilets; baths; showers; sinks; wash basins; cupboards, shelving or fittings supplied in a bathroom or lavatory; cupboards, shelving or appliances used for the storage, preparation or cooking of food; washing machines or other laundry appliances). These items are not included if an occupier is entitled to remove these items from the HMO or are out of the control of the manager.
- Outbuildings, yards and forecourts used in common are maintained in repair, clean condition and good order.
- Any garden is kept in a safe and tidy condition.
- Boundary walls, fences and railings are kept and maintained in good and safe repair.

To maintain living accommodation (Regulation 8)

- Ensure any furniture supplied in the living accommodation is in a clean condition at the beginning of any tenancy. Refer to Furniture & Furnishings section on Page 22.
- The internal structure of the living accommodation is to be maintained in good condition, unless any repair is due to the result of a non-tenant-like manner.
- Fixtures, fittings or appliances within the living accommodation are maintained in good repair and in a clean working order, unless any repair is due to the result of a non-tenant-like manner.
- Windows and other means of ventilation within the living accommodation are to be kept in good order, unless any repair is the result of a non-tenant-like manner.
- The above duties do not relate to any item that is owned by the tenant and is outside the control of the manager.
- A non-tenant-like manner is when a tenant fails to treat the property as per the conditions contained in their tenancy agreement or when they fail to conduct themselves as a reasonable tenant would do.

To provide waste disposal facilities (Regulation 9)

- Ensure that sufficient bins or other suitable receptacles are provided for each household for the adequate storage of refuse and litter (larger HMOs may require a commercial refuse contract due to the quantity of waste produced).
- Make such arrangements for the disposal of refuse and litter as may be necessary (waste is not to be stored on the property and it is the manager's responsibility to have this removed as soon as possible).

The regulations also place a duty on all occupiers of an HMO to: (Regulation 10)

- Conduct themselves in a way that will not hinder or frustrate the manager in the performance of their duties.
- Allow the manager at all reasonable times to enter any living accommodation to enable them to carry out any duty (except in the case of emergencies, at least 24 hours' notice either in writing or by phone of any intended

visit should be given to the occupiers).

- Provide the manager with any information requested to enable him/her to carry out their duties.
- Take reasonable care to avoid causing damage to the property and its contents.
- Store and dispose of refuse in accordance with the arrangements made by the manager.
- Comply with the reasonable instructions of the manager in respect of any means of escape from fire, the prevention of fire and the use of fire equipment.

General (Regulation 11)

- The manager is not expected to carry out any works or actions with respect to the supply of water, gas or electricity or to the drainage of the house where responsibility for a particular fault or problem lies with either the Local Authority or the supply company. The manager is however expected to bring any such faults or problems to the attention of the appropriate person, authority, or company as necessary as soon as they become aware of the matter (for example a blocked sewer or power failure).

The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI 373)

These Regulations clarify which individuals are considered part of a single household and which are to be treated as occupying a property as their only or main residence. They also set out the processes that both applicants and the Local Authority must follow when licensing HMOs occupied by five or more people. Further information is provided in the Licensing section.

Schedule 3 specifies the prescribed standards used to determine whether an HMO is suitable for occupation by a particular maximum number of households or persons. These standards require the following:

Heating

- Each unit of living accommodation in an HMO must be equipped with adequate* means of space heating. (*is legally compliant, safe, and effective system capable of maintaining a comfortable, healthy, and consistent temperature in all habitable rooms of a dwelling (typically 18°C–21°C, even when external temperatures are -1°C). It must be controllable by the occupants, usually via a thermostat and timer, and is typically a fixed, permanent installation rather than a portable device)

Washing facilities

- Where all or some of the letting rooms in an HMO do not contain bathing and toilet facilities for the exclusive use of each individual household —
 - (a) there must be an adequate number of bathrooms, toilets, and wash-hand basins (suitable for personal washing) for the number of persons sharing those facilities, and
 - (b) where reasonably practicable there must be a wash hand basin with appropriate splash back in each letting room other than a letting room in which a sink has been provided as part of a kitchen within the living accommodation, having regard to the age and character of the HMO, the size and layout of each flat and its existing provision for wash-hand basins, toilets, and bathrooms.
- All baths, showers, and wash hand basins in an HMO must be equipped with taps providing an adequate supply of cold and constant hot water.
- All bathrooms in an HMO must be suitably and adequately* heated and ventilated.
- All bathrooms and toilets in an HMO must be of an adequate size and layout.
- All baths, toilets and wash hand basins in an HMO must be fit for the purpose.
- All bathrooms and toilets in an HMO must be suitably located in or in relation to the living accommodation in the HMO.

Kitchens

- Where all or some of the letting rooms within the HMO do not contain any facilities for the cooking of food:
 - (a) 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, and,
 - (b) the kitchen must be equipped with the following equipment, which must be fit for the purpose and supplied in a sufficient quantity for the number of those sharing the facilities:

- (i) sinks with draining boards,
- (ii) an adequate supply of cold and constant hot water to each sink supplied,
- (iii) installations or equipment for the cooking of food,
- (iv) electrical sockets,
- (v) worktops for the preparation of food,
- (vi) cupboards for the storage of food or kitchen and cooking utensils,
- (vii) refrigerators with an adequate freezer compartment (or, where the freezer compartment is not adequate, adequate separate freezers),
- (viii) appropriate refuse disposal facilities, and
- (ix) appropriate extractor fans, fire blankets and fire doors.

Units of living accommodation without shared basic amenities

- Where a letting room contains kitchen facilities for the exclusive use of the individual household, and there are no other kitchen facilities available for that household, that letting room must be provided with:
 - (a) adequate appliances and equipment for the cooking of food,
 - (b) a sink with an adequate supply of cold and constant hot water,
 - (c) a worktop for the preparation of food,
 - (d) sufficient electrical sockets,
 - (e) a cupboard for the storage of kitchen utensils and crockery, and
 - (f) a refrigerator.
- The standards referred to prior do not apply in relation to a letting room where:
 - (a) the landlord is not contractually bound to provide such appliances or equipment,
 - (b) the occupier of the unit of accommodation is entitled to remove such appliances or equipment from the HMO, or
 - (c) the appliances or equipment are otherwise outside the control of the landlord.
- Where there are no adequate shared washing facilities provided for a letting room, as mentioned in the above section 'Washing facilities', an enclosed and adequately laid out and ventilated room with a toilet and bath or fixed shower supplying adequate cold and constant hot water must be provided for the exclusive use of the occupiers of that letting room either:
 - (a) within the living accommodation, or
 - (b) within reasonable proximity to the living accommodation.
- Appropriate fire precaution facilities and equipment must be provided of such type, number and location as is considered necessary.

The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007 (SI 1903)

In addition to the SI 372/3 regulations, the following Regulation was added in relation to s.257 HMO's (converted building of self-contained flats prior to June 1992 (see Test 4 in the section 'The four tests defining an HMO'). In the main this is identical to SI 372 but has the additional regulation below:

Manager's duties: general (Regulation 3)

- The manager's duty shall only apply in relation to such parts of the HMO over which it would be reasonable to expect the licence holder, in all the circumstances, to exercise control.
- The manager's duty to maintain or keep in repair is to be construed as requiring a standard of maintenance or repair that is reasonable in all the circumstances, taking account of the age, character and prospective life of the house and the locality in which, it is situated.
- No requirement for anything to be done in connection with the water supply or drainage or the supply of gas or electricity otherwise than in accordance with any enactment.
- No obligation for the manager to take, in connection with those matters in the previous point, any action which is the responsibility of a local authority or any other person, other than such action as may be necessary to bring the matter promptly to the attention of the authority or person concerned.

Penalties for non-compliance

Landlords should be aware that where the Local Authority identifies a breach of these regulations, enforcement action may follow. This could include the imposition of a financial penalty or, in more serious cases, prosecution. Further

details can be found in Huntingdonshire District Council's Housing Enforcement Policy.

To help minimise the risk of non-compliance, the Council offers a chargeable inspection service for landlords and letting agents. For a set fee, an officer will visit the property, carry out a full inspection, and identify any remedial work required to meet HMO standards.

Please also note that the Local Authority is not required to notify a landlord before entering the communal areas of an HMO where there is reason to believe that regulations are not being met. Landlords and agents are therefore strongly advised to conduct regular inspections and keep clear records of these visits, as these may be requested by the Council.

Private Sector Tenants in an HMO

Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour encompasses a wide range of issues and includes any conduct that can cause nuisance or annoyance to individuals or to the wider community.

This type of behaviour can include:

- Harassment and intimidating behaviour
- Hate crime, for example racist or homophobic abuse
- Behaviour that creates alarm and fear
- Noisy neighbours and loud parties
- Problems associated with people supplying, dealing or using drugs
- People acting in a manner which is likely to cause distress or nuisance to others, due to the consumption of alcohol
- Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property
- Rubbish or litter lying around, abandoned cars

It is common for tenancy agreements to include a clause prohibiting tenants from engaging in anti-social behaviour. Where any tenant in a licensed HMO is engaging in such behaviour, the landlord is required under the licence conditions to take reasonable steps to prevent it from continuing. Landlords and agents should act promptly when issues arise, and where behaviour persists or is serious in nature, enforcement of the tenancy conditions should be considered. Where appropriate, landlords are encouraged to contact the Council for advice, as working in partnership with relevant agencies usually leads to the most effective outcomes.

Some forms of anti-social behaviour may involve serious criminal activity or hate-related offences. In such cases, the police must be contacted immediately, and the Council should also be informed.

The Council will, where appropriate, support landlords who are actively working to address issues of anti-social behaviour. However, enforcement action may be taken against landlords who fail to engage or who are found to be in breach of their HMO licence conditions.

Huntingdonshire District Council HMO Fire Safety Standards

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Huntingdonshire Private Sector Housing Team have adopted the LACORS Housing – Fire Safety guidance* as part of their formal Memorandum of Understanding, ensuring a consistent minimum fire safety standard across the private rented sector, including HMOs. In 2019, British Standard 5839-6 for fire detection and alarm systems was updated, and as a result, some elements of the LACORS guidance are now out of date. The Standard was further revised in 2020 to BS 5839-6:2019+A1:2020. This document sets out the current requirements needed to comply with the relevant regulations at the time of writing.

Each property will be assessed by the local Fire Safety Officer and/or a Housing Officer, considering its individual characteristics. Where remedial works are required to meet the minimum standards (as outlined in the tables below), the landlord will be advised accordingly to ensure compliance. If a property is considered to present an immediate risk to health or safety, the Fire Officer has the authority to prohibit the use of the HMO with immediate effect. Where a building is occupied in a way that differs from its original design or construction, compliance with the Building Regulations in place at that time does not remove the need for additional fire safety measures.

The factors affecting means of escape in the event of fire vary significantly between properties. Landlords are therefore strongly encouraged to consult the Private Sector Housing Team for case-specific advice. The Council will have regard to current legislation and recognised fire safety guidance (including LACORS*) when determining the appropriate level of fire protection.

* www.cieh.org/media/1244/guidance-on-fire-safety-provisions-for-certain-types-of-existing-housing.pdf

Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs)

As per The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 the landlord or HMO manager must make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to which the tenants are exposed, for the purpose of identifying the general fire precautions they need to take to comply with the requirements of the Order. The FRA is only required for the communal areas (which would include the letting room doors). They must be reviewed regularly which we would recommend being annually, after any significant fire related event or if there have been any significant changes to the structure of the building.

The FRA must include the findings of the assessment, including the measures which have been or will be taken by the responsible person and any group of persons identified by the assessment as being specifically at risk.

As part of any HMO licence application a suitable FRA is required to have been undertaken and produced to the council before any licence is issued.

Design considerations / grades of fire detection system

The most recent update to the British Standard for domestic fire detection and alarm systems—specifically Part 6 of BS 5839—sets out the current code of practice for the design, installation, commissioning, and maintenance of fire detection and alarm systems in domestic premises. This section summarises the key changes that professionals should be aware of to ensure continued compliance when specifying, installing, or maintaining fire detection systems in such properties.

First introduced in 1995, BS 5839-6 has long been a core reference for specifiers, architects, and fire safety practitioners. It outlines the systems required to support life safety and protect property and applies to domestic premises including HMOs. The Standard covers fire precautions within individual dwelling units as well as common areas, and is relevant to new builds, materially altered dwellings (alongside regional building regulations), and existing properties. Its recommendations also apply to the fire detection components of combined domestic fire and intruder alarm systems, or fire and social alarm systems.

The following section highlights the key updates to BS 5839-6 and the areas that landlords and agents should understand to ensure they provide the highest level of fire protection within their HMO properties.

Revised system grading for fire detection and fire alarm systems

Whilst BS 5839-6 has previously been split into six varying Grades, each outlining the level of protection appropriate for certain properties and their corresponding levels of risk, the new update has altered the six sections, removing

Grade B and Grade E, whilst Grade D and Grade F have been split into Grade D1 / Grade D2 and Grade F1 / Grade F2 respectively. Grade C has been revised and its recommendations expanded.

The new grading system is as follows:

Grade A	Interlinked system of smoke & heat detectors, a central control panel, alarm sounders, and support equipment – all with a back-up power supply. Must conform to British Standards (BS EN 54)
Grade C	Interlinked system of smoke & heat detectors and sounders that are mains powered with back-up power supply and central control equipment.
Grade D1	A system of one or more (linked) mains powered detectors, each with a tamper-proof standby supply consisting of a battery or batteries.
Grade D2	A system of one or more (linked mains-powered detectors, each with an integral standby supply consisting of a user-replaceable battery or batteries.
Grade F1	A system of one or more battery-powered detectors powered by a tamper-proof primary battery or batteries.
Grade F2	A system of one or more battery-powered detectors powered by a user-replaceable primary battery or batteries.

The current Grades applicable within HMOs are either Grade A or D1

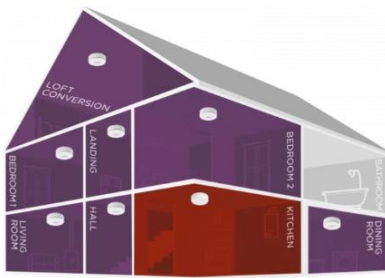
Levels of coverage

Automatic fire detection and warning systems are specified in BS 5839: part 6. Only the two highest categories are applicable to HMOs and are as follows:

Category LD1 coverage: a system installed throughout the premises, incorporating detectors in all circulation areas that form part of the escape routes from the premises, and in all rooms and areas, other than those with negligible sources of ignition, such as toilets, bathrooms, and shower rooms.

Category LD2 coverage: a system incorporating detectors in all circulation areas that form part of the escape routes from the premises, and in all specified rooms or areas that present a high fire risk to occupants, including any kitchen and the principle habitable rooms (letting rooms and living room). See following tables:

LD1 Maximum Protection

Escape routes, high-risk rooms plus all areas where a fire might start	Category LD1: The highest level of protection of all occupants who might occupy the dwelling over the lifetime of the fire detection and fire alarm system. A system installed throughout the premises, incorporating detectors in all circulation areas that form part of the escape routes from the premises, and in all rooms and areas, other than those with negligible sources of ignition, such as toilets, bathrooms and shower rooms. • Hallway • Landing • Living Room • Kitchen (heat alarm) • Bedroom • Airing / meter cupboards • Loft • Garage	
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LD2 Additional Protection

Escape routes plus high-risk rooms	Escape routes plus high-risk rooms. Category LD2: A system incorporating detectors in all circulation areas that form part of the escape routes from the premises, and in all specified rooms or areas that present a high fire risk to occupants, including any kitchen and the principal habitable rooms. • Hallway & Landings • Letting Rooms • Living Room • Kitchen (heat alarm)	
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Buildings containing self-contained flats above or connected to commercial premises.

These buildings require additional fire precautions. Please contact the Private Sector Housing Team for further information before undertaking works.

Types of HMO and their fire safety requirements

The following examples are based on typical properties with a simple layout. For example, where all bedrooms lead onto the means of escape (generally the landing and hallway) and do not have to pass through any other room. These are also based on low-risk occupants.

Individual room lets and bedsit-type HMOs

In bedsit HMOs where the cooking facilities are within the bedsits or where an HMO is located in a block of self-contained flats then a mixed fire detection system is usually recommended, where the escape routes and common parts are protected by an interlinked system of alarms or detectors and the individual units have a separate stand-alone system to alert a sleeping occupant of fire in their own unit of accommodation. This has the benefit of reducing nuisance/false alarms throughout the whole property caused by activities such as cooking within any one unit.

Bedsit-type HMOs of no more than two storeys	Typically, shared cooking and bathing facilities but some may have self-contained elements. Individual room tenancy agreements will be issued, and occupants will live independently.
Escape routes	30-minute protected route is required, including 30-minute fire-resisting construction and FD30S* fire doors to all risk rooms (please see below). A full 30-minute protected route is the preferred (ideal) option. However, in two-storey, normal risk HMOs the provision of suitable escape windows from all bedsit rooms may be acceptable in lieu of a fully protected route. Travel distance must not be excessive. * FD30S fire doors include intumescent strips and cold smoke seals along with face fixed overhead closers to be installed on all kitchen, living rooms, and letting rooms. Final exit and letting room doors must have a security lock that can be opened from the inside without a key (thumb turn lock).
Fire separation	No requirement for additional fire resistance, but walls and floors should be of sound, traditional construction. If a basement/cellar is present, 30-minute separation between the cellar and the ground floor escape route is the ideal (see LACORS paragraph 19.6 regarding existing construction)
Fire detection and alarm system	<u>No floor greater than 200m² in area</u> - Existing premise - Grade D1, Category LD2 system. - New or materially altered premise – Grade D1, Category LD1 system. <u>One or more floor greater than 200m² in area</u> Existing, new, or materially altered premise – Grade A, Category LD2 system in the communal areas, in accordance with British Standard 5839-1:2017 for a Category L2 system with: Grade D1, Category LD1 system in the individual dwelling units comprising of a single room where there are no cooking facilities within the unit and the unit comprises of one room. This should be a smoke detector. Grade D1, Category LD1 system* in the individual dwelling units where there are cooking facilities in the unit. Grade D1, Category LD2 system in the individual dwelling units comprising of two or more rooms. * In individual bedsits which include cooking facilities, a heat sensor or multi-sensor fire alarm should be fitted. In the case of a multi-sensor fire alarm, the provision of an alarm silence facility would be beneficial. Where there is no multi-sensor alarm, a standalone smoke detector should be installed in the room away from the cooking facilities. Again, an alarm silence facility would be beneficial.
Lighting of escape routes	Emergency escape lighting required only if the route is long or complex** or where there is no effective borrowed light. Conventional artificial lighting required.
Firefighting equipment	Fire blanket to be provided in each bedsit with cooking facilities and in shared kitchens.
Fire safety signs	Signage along escape route if the escape route is complex**.
Surface finishes & floor coverings	(See paragraph 28 – 29 of LACORS)
Management & maintenance of fire safety	The responsible person (the licensee, landlord or managing agent) has a duty to ensure that the day-to-day management of fire safety in the premises is properly undertaken and that essential routine maintenance and emergency repairs are properly carried out. (See paragraph 32 of LACORS)

Bedsit-type HMOs of 3 to 6 storeys	Typically, shared cooking and bathing facilities but some may have self-contained elements. Occupancy is with Individual room tenancy agreements and tenants will live independently.
Escape routes	30-minute protected route is required, including 30-minute fire-resisting construction and FD30S* fire doors to all risk rooms (please see below). A full 30-minute protected route is the preferred (ideal) option. Travel distance must not be excessive. Five storeys - Lobby protection to all floors except the top floor or secondary means of escape from top floor. Six storeys - Lobby protection to all floors except the top floor and secondary means of escape from top two floors. * FD30S fire doors include intumescent strips and cold smoke seals along with face fixed overhead closers to be installed on all kitchen, living rooms, and letting rooms. Final exit and letting room doors must have a security lock that can be opened from the inside without a key (thumb turn lock).
Fire separation	Three or four storeys - No requirement for additional fire-resisting separation between units, but walls and floors should be of sound, traditional construction. Five or six storeys - 30-minute fire separation between units of accommodation throughout. 30-minute fire separation across the stairway between second and third floors and between fourth and fifth floors.
Fire detection and alarm System	Existing, new, or materially altered premise – Grade A, Category LD2 system in the communal areas, in accordance with British Standard 5839-1:2017 for a Category L2 system with: • Grade D1, Category LD1 system in the individual dwelling units comprising of a single room where there are no cooking facilities within the unit and the unit comprises of one room. • Grade D1, Category LD1 system* in the individual dwelling units where there are cooking facilities in the unit. • Grade D1, Category LD2 system in the individual dwelling units comprising of two or more rooms. * In individual bedsits which include cooking facilities, a heat sensor or multi-sensor fire alarm should be fitted. In the case of a multi-sensor fire alarm, the provision of an alarm silence facility would be beneficial. Where there is no multi-sensor alarm, a standalone smoke detector should be installed in the room away from the cooking facilities. Again, an alarm silence facility would be beneficial.
Lighting of escape routes	Conventional artificial lighting is required. Emergency escape lighting maybe required if escape route is complex or dark* * Five or six storeys - emergency lighting is required.
Firefighting equipment	Fire blanket to be provided in each bedsit with cooking facilities and in shared kitchens.
Fire safety signs	Fire exit sign required. Three or four storeys - directional signage along escape route if escape route is complex. Five or six storeys - directional signage along escape route required.
Surface finishes & floor coverings	(See paragraph 28 – 29 of LACORS)
Management & maintenance of fire safety	The responsible person (the licensee, landlord or managing agent) has a duty to ensure that the day-to-day management of fire safety in the premises is properly undertaken and that essential routine maintenance and emergency repairs are properly carried out (see paragraph 32 of LACORS).

Single tenancy (shared) HMO properties

The following table indicates the minimum fire safety requirements. However, where an increased risk is identified. For example, due to tenants' lifestyle or property layout additional fire safety measures maybe be required. These should be identified as part of any Fire Risk Assessment (FRA).

Shared house of no more than 2 storeys	Typically, where a group of non-related occupants, who are known to each other, occupy a property and are named as joint tenants on one tenancy agreement.
Escape routes	No requirement for full 30-minute protected route*, but the escape route should have sound, traditional construction and should not pass-through risk rooms (kitchen, living room and letting rooms). No requirement for fire doors*, but sound, well-constructed and close-fitting conventional doors are required. Alternatively, provide suitable escape windows from bedrooms and living rooms (see LACORS paragraph 14). Final exit doors must have a security lock that can be opened from the inside without a key (thumb turn lock). Where letting room doors are lockable, they must be provided with a lock that can be opened from the inside without a key (thumb turn lock). * Where construction standards are poor, travel distances are long or other higher risk factors are present, a 30-minute protected route may be required.
Fire separation	No requirement for additional fire resistance, but walls and floors should be of sound, traditional construction. If a basement/cellar is present, 30-minute separation between the cellar and the ground floor escape route is the ideal (see LACORS paragraph 19.6 regarding existing construction).
Fire detection and alarm system	<u>No floor greater than 200m² in area</u> - Existing, new, or materially altered premise – two storey houses, bungalows, flats, single-storey units, and maisonettes with no floors above 4.5m from ground level - Grade D1, Category LD2 system* - Existing, new, or materially altered premise – maisonettes with any floor above 4.5m from ground level - Grade D1, Category LD1 system* <u>One or more floor greater than 200m² in area</u> - Existing, new, or materially altered premise – bungalows, flats, or single-storey units – Grade D1, Category LD2 system* - Existing premise – two storey houses or maisonettes with no floor above 4.5m from ground level – Grade D1, Category LD2 system* - Existing premise – maisonettes with any floor above 4.5m from ground level and no alternate means of escape – Grade D1, Category LD1 system* - New or materially altered premise – two-storey houses and maisonettes with no floor above 4.5m from ground level – Grade A, Category LD2 system* - New or materially altered premise – maisonettes with any floor above 4.5m from ground level – Grade A, Category LD1 system* * Where cooking facilities are situated within the bedrooms: - Interlinked heat alarms to the communal system with integral tamper-proof standby supply battery back-up located in each bedroom; and - Additional non-interlinked smoke alarm with integral tamper-proof standby supply battery back-up located in each bedroom. Any shared house where there are more than 6 persons the fire detection and alarm systems shall comply with bedsit type HMO requirements.
Lighting of escape routes	No requirement for emergency escape lighting, but conventional artificial lighting is required.
Fire-fighting equipment	Fire blanket to be provided in the kitchen.
Fire safety signs	No requirement unless the layout is complex

Shared house of 3 or 4 storeys	Typically, where a group of non-related occupants, who are known to each other, occupy a property and are named as joint tenants on one tenancy agreement.
Escape routes	30-minute protected route is required*, including 30-minute fire-resisting construction and FD30** doors to all risk rooms (kitchen, living room and letting rooms). Final exit doors must have a security lock that can be opened from the inside without a key (thumb turn lock). Where letting room doors are lockable, they must be provided with a lock that can be opened from the inside without a key (thumb turn lock). Travel distance must not be excessive. * Three storey properties only: the ideal situation is for the escape route to be enclosed in 30-minute fire resisting construction and FD30 fire doors. However, in existing three-storey shared houses of low risk it may be possible to accept existing walls and partitions if 20-minute fire resistance can be achieved. This is likely to be met if walls and partitions are of sound, conventional construction. Sound lath and plaster construction should meet this requirement. Doors onto the escape route may be acceptable if they are sound, solid construction, are close fitting and self-closing. ** FD30 fire doors include intumescent strips along with face fixed overhead closers to be installed on letting rooms.
Fire separation	No requirement for additional fire resistance, but walls and floors should be of sound, traditional construction. If a basement/cellar is present, 30-minute separation between the cellar and the ground floor escape route is the ideal
Fire detection and alarm system	<u>No floor greater than 200m² in area</u> - Existing, new, or materially altered premise – three storey house - Grade D1, Category LD2 system* - Existing premise – four-storey house – Grade D1, Category LD1 system* - New or materially altered premise – four-storey house - Grade A, Category LD1 system* <u>One or more floor greater than 200m² in area</u> - Existing premise – three-storey house – Grade D1, Category LD2 system* - New or materially altered premise – three-storey house – Grade A, Category LD2 system* - Existing, new, or materially altered premise – four-storey house – Grade A, Category LD1 system* * Where cooking facilities are situated within the bedrooms: - Interlinked heat alarms to the communal system with integral tamper-proof standby supply battery back-up located in each bedroom; and - Additional non-interlinked smoke alarm with integral tamper-proof standby supply battery back-up located in each bedroom. Any shared house where there are more than 6 persons the fire detection and alarm systems shall comply with bedsit type HMO requirements
Lighting of escape routes	Emergency escape lighting required only if the route is long or complex or where there is no effective borrowed light Conventional artificial lighting required
Fire-fighting equipment	Fire blanket to be provided in the kitchen
Fire safety signs	Signage only required if the escape route is complex

Flats in multiple occupation

Any self-contained flat which is occupied by 3 or more persons who do not form a single household.

Single and two-storey building	
Escape routes	No requirement for full 30-minute protected route within flat*, but the escape route should have sound, traditional construction and should not pass-through risk rooms (kitchen, living room and bedrooms). Travel distance must not be excessive. No requirement for fire doors within flat, but sound, well-constructed and close-fitting conventional doors are required. FD30S** door to flat entrance must have a security lock that can be opened from the inside without a key (thumb turn lock). In converted or purpose-built flats, 30-minute construction and fire doors are likely to be in place. * Where construction standards are poor, travel distances are long or other higher risk factors are present, a 30-minute protected route may be required and/or LD2 fire detection may be appropriate. ** FD30S fire doors include intumescent and cold smoke seals along with face fixed overhead closers.
Fire detection and alarm System	Existing premises - Grade D1, LD2 system New or materially altered premises – Grade D1, LD1 system
Lighting of escape routes	Single Storey - no requirement for emergency lightening, but conventional artificial lighting is required. Two-Storey – conventional artificial lighting required. Emergency lighting may be required if there is no effective borrowed light.
Firefighting equipment	Fire blanket to be provided in the shared kitchen.
Fire safety signs	No requirement.
Surface finishes & floor coverings	(See paragraph 28 – 29 of LACORS)
Management & maintenance of fire safety	(See paragraph 32 of LACORS)

Houses / buildings converted to self-contained flats

Houses or buildings converted into self-contained flats where the conversion did not (and does not) meet the building standards under the Building Regulations 1991 are deemed HMOs (s.257). Buildings that were converted to a standard meeting those regulations and which still meet them are not included here, as they will not require additional fire safety measures unless occupied in a manner other than intended under the original conversion scheme – for example, occupation of a flat as a flat in multiple occupation (which can be found above) or where an additional risk has been introduced post-conversion:

Two storey building converted into self-contained flats	
Escape routes	30-minute protected route is required, including 30-minute fire-resisting construction and FD30S* doors to rooms opening onto communal escape route. No requirement for fire doors within flats, but sound, well-constructed and close-fitting conventional doors are required. Travel distance must not be excessive. It may be possible to accept an existing lower standard of protection in the protected route if there are suitable escape windows from bedrooms and living rooms. * FD30S fire doors include intumescent and cold smoke seals along with face fixed overhead closers. Flat entrance doors must have a security lock that can be opened from the inside without a key (thumb turn lock).
Fire separation	30-minute fire separation between flats throughout units of accommodation throughout is the ideal, but on risk assessment there may be no requirement for additional fire-resisting separation between units providing walls and floors are of sound, traditional construction and additional compensatory detection is fitted.
Fire detection and alarm System	Mixed system* • Grade D1, Category LD2 system in the common areas and a heat alarm in each flat in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route; and • Grade D1, Category LD2 system in each flat, separate to the communal system. Subject to fire separation (above) * Where the fire risk assessment identifies higher than normal risk, the BS 5839: part 6, LD2 interpretation of “rooms or areas that present a high fire risk to occupants” may include living rooms, bedrooms, and kitchens within the flats, thereby providing automatic detection in these rooms in addition to the common parts and internal entrance hall/lobby within flats. Where this is the case, this additional detection would be an additional grade D system within the flat (i.e., a mixed system overall) to avoid whole-house false alarms.
Lighting of escape routes	Conventional artificial lighting is required. Emergency escape lighting is required if route is long or complex** or where there is no effective borrowed light.
Firefighting equipment	Fire blanket to be provided in each kitchen (recommended good practice).
Fire safety signs	No requirement.
Surface finishes & floor coverings	(See paragraph 28 – 29 of LACORS)
Management & maintenance of fire safety	The responsible person (the licensee, landlord or managing agent) has a duty to ensure that the day-to-day management of fire safety in the premises is properly undertaken and that essential routine maintenance and emergency repairs are properly carried out (see paragraph 32 of LACORS).

Three to six storey building converted into self-contained flats (more than 4.5m above ground level)	
Escape routes	Protected communal escape route is required, including 30-minute fire-resisting construction and FD30S* doors to rooms opening onto communal escape route. No requirement for fire doors within flats**, provided that no point in any habitable room is over 9m from the flat entrance door and that kitchen facilities are remote from the main entrance door, but sound, well-constructed and close-fitting conventional doors are required. If these conditions cannot be met, then a protected entrance*** hall is required serving all habitable rooms (not bathrooms or cupboards). Travel distance must not be excessive. * FD30S fire doors include intumescent and cold smoke seals along with face fixed overhead closers. Flat entrance doors must have a security lock that can be opened from the inside without a key (thumb turn lock). ** Five or six storeys - FD30 doors (self-closures are not required) are required to risk rooms within flats *** Protected entrance has 30-minutes fire resistant construction and FD30S fire doors.
Fire separation	30-minute fire resistance between flats throughout is the ideal, but on risk assessment there may be no requirement for additional fire-resisting separation between units providing walls and floors are of sound, traditional construction and additional compensatory detection is fitted*. * <u>Five or six storeys</u> • 30-minute fire separation between units of accommodation throughout. • 30-minute separation is required across the communal stairway between fourth and fifth floors and first and second floors.
Fire detection and alarm System	Mixed system * • Grade A, Category LD2 system in the common areas and a heat alarm in each flat in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route in accordance with British Standard 5839-1:2017 Category L2; and • Grade D1, Category LD2 system in each flat, separate to the communal system. Subject to fire separation (above - applicable to 3 to 4 storeys only). * Where the fire risk assessment identifies higher than normal risk, the BS 5839: part 6, LD2 interpretation of “rooms or areas that present a high fire risk to occupants” may include living rooms, bedrooms, and kitchens within the flats, thereby providing automatic detection in these rooms in addition to the common parts and internal entrance hall/lobby within flats. Where this is the case, this additional detection would be an additional grade D system within the flat (i.e., a mixed system overall) to avoid whole-house false alarms.
Lighting of escape routes	Conventional artificial lighting is required. Emergency escape lighting is required if the route is long or complex** or where there is no effective borrowed light * * Five or six storeys - emergency Lighting is required
Firefighting equipment	Fire blanket to be provided in each kitchen (recommended best practice)
Fire safety signs	Final exit sign required and directional signage along escape route* if the escape route is complex**. * Five or six storeys - Directional signage along escape route is required. ** Meaning of complex layout: • There are any changes in direction in corridors, stairways and open spaces which form part of the escape route. • There are any areas where confusion may occur when exiting the building. • There are multiple escape routes. • There are any areas where confusion may occur when exiting the building.

Surface finishes & floor coverings	(See paragraph 28 – 29 of LACORS)
Management & maintenance of fire safety	The responsible person (the licensee, landlord or managing agent) has a duty to ensure that the day-to-day management of fire safety in the premises is properly undertaken and that essential routine maintenance and emergency repairs are properly carried out. (See paragraph 32 of LACORS)

Testing and maintenance of alarm systems and fire safety measures

- Landlords are required to test and maintain fire alarm and emergency lighting systems in accordance with the British Standard 5838-6:2019+A1:2020.
- Grade D1 and D2 fire alarm systems should be tested at least monthly. All detectors must be cleaned at least annually. Testing and maintenance must be in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Landlords can self-certify this has been completed.
- Grade A fire alarm systems should be tested weekly. The system must be inspected and serviced at periods not exceeding six months in accordance with the recommendations of BS 5839-1:2017. An inspection and servicing certificate of the type contained in BS 5839-1:2017 should be issued by a suitably qualified and competent person.
- All emergency lighting systems must be tested monthly. The test is a short functional test in accordance with BS EN 50172 / BS 5266-8. The period of simulated failure should be sufficient for the purpose of this test while minimising damage to the system components, e.g., lamps. During this period, all luminaires and signs shall be checked to ensure that they are present, clean, and functioning correctly. A test for the full rated duration of the emergency lights (e.g., 3 hours) must be carried out annually. The emergency lights must still be working at the end of this test. The result of the monthly and annual tests must be recorded and, if failures are detected, these must be remedied as soon as possible.
- The Fire Service discourages the provision of fire extinguishers except in premises with full time onsite staff who are trained in their use. The emphasis is on escape from danger rather than fighting a fire. Where fire extinguishers are provided, they must be serviced or replaced annually, and a record of date of servicing or replacement attached to the equipment.
- Fire blankets shall be provided in kitchens to enable fires on hobs to be tackled before they get out of hand. They should be prominently mounted on the wall away from the hob, towards the escape route, and advice on their use should be prominently displayed nearby.

Logbooks

Where a Grade A system is installed, a logbook needs to be kept recording all events that occur in respect to the fire alarm system. This includes fire signals, fault signals and include any works on the system. The logbook needs to be accessible to all interested parties. The following information should be recorded in a logbook:

- The name of those persons delegated as responsible for the fire detection and fire alarm system,
- Brief details of maintenance arrangements,
- Dates and times of all fire alarm signals (regardless of whether the signal is a false alarm or is initiated as the result of a test, fire drill or genuine fire); if the fire alarm signal has resulted from the operation of a manual call point or fire detector, the device and its location should be recorded,
- Causes, circumstances surrounding and category of all false alarms,
- Dates, times and types of all tests, faults, and defects,
- Dates and types of all maintenance (e.g., service visit or non-routine attention).

Where the property is a licenced HMO, and has a Grade D1 system installed, the licence holder shall keep a logbook detailing safety checks, testing, and servicing of the communal fire detection system.

The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1998

A landlord must ensure that where furniture is provided, it is fire resistant and complies with this regulation. Failure to comply is a criminal offence and is enforceable by the local Trading Standards department. Landlords can be fined up to £5,000 and imprisoned for six months.

Items include beds, headboards, mattresses, sofas, cushions, pillows, etc. Furniture that complies with the regulation should display a permanent label indicating fire resistance. This label should be displayed on both new and second-hand furniture.

Amenity Standards

These standards enable landlords and managing agents to identify what amenity provision and living space is required in an HMO for any given number of occupants.

The council reserves the right to permit some leeway with room sizes in extenuating circumstances (excluding the absolute legal minimum letting room sizes listed below).

Letting rooms

Room sizes

As of the 1 October 2018 bedroom sizes were regulated in all licensable HMOs by The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Mandatory Conditions of Licences) (England) Regulations 2018. The regulations set out the following minimum room sizes and calculation method:

- 10.22m² for two persons aged over 10 years.
- 6.51m² for one person aged over 10 years.
- 4.64m² for one child under the age of ten years.
- Any room of less than 4.64m² must not be used as sleeping accommodation. An HMO licence holder will need to notify the Council of any room in the HMO with a floor area of less than 4.64m².
- Any floor area, within a room in where the ceiling height is less than 1.5m, cannot be used within the minimum room size calculation.

Huntingdonshire District Council require that rooms in HMOs to also meet the following conditions in order to:

- protect tenants—particularly vulnerable groups—from health and welfare harms,
- ensure healthy and safe living environments, and
- reduce impact on neighbouring properties

The following are the minimum sizes accepted:

Occupancy	Cooking Facilities Provided in Letting Room	Communal Lounge Provided	Dining Room/Area Provided	Room Area (m ²)
Single		✓	✓	6.51
Single		✓		8
Single			✓	8.5
Single				10
Single	✓	✓	✓	12
Single	✓	✓		13.5
Single	✓		✓	14
Single	✓			15.5
Double		✓	✓	10.22
Double		✓		12.75
Double			✓	13.25
Double				15.75
Double	✓	✓	✓	15.75
Double	✓	✓		18.25
Double	✓		✓	18.75
Double	✓			21.25

The above room sizes represent the space required within a bedroom exclusive of any en-suite bathroom. Ensuite

bathroom floor areas will be discounted when calculating the room size. This will include any floor area next to baths and showers that is required to practically use those facilities.

Room size increases are based on:

- 5.5m² being provided for kitchen area,
- 2m² for a single and 3m² for a double occupancy room with no shared communal lounge, and
- 1.5m² for a single and 2.5m² for a double occupancy room with no shared dining area.

Floor to ceiling inbuilt storage units are included in any room size calculation.

In addition to the above room sizes, 750mm minimum wide clear access route must be provided from the doorway to the window and 750mm minimum clear access zone to one side of any bed. This is in accordance with the Building Regulations 2010 Approved Document M – Volume 1.

Natural light and ventilation

Clear glazing equivalent in area to 10% of the floor area of the room should be provided in each letting room. Openable windows equivalent to 5% of the floor area should be provided in each letting room. Doors to open air cannot be included in any calculation.

Socket provision

Each letting room shall have at least 4 sockets available for the use of the tenant. They are to be suitably located to discourage the need to use extension leads. Where the room is a bedsit-type letting room then at least 4 sockets additional sockets are required above the kitchen area work surface. Electrical sockets used for washing machines, cookers, refrigerators, etc shall be excluded when calculating the number of socket outlets available above the work surfaces.

Kitchens

Location

Ideally, a shared kitchen should not be more than one floor's distance (suitably located) from any unit of accommodation it serves. It is, however, acceptable for a kitchen to be a maximum of three floors distant where there is a furnished dining room adjacent or within the kitchen.

Room size

Huntingdonshire District Council require the following kitchen sizes based on HMO occupancy:

HMO occupied by 3 persons	5m ²
HMO occupied by 4 persons	6m ²
HMO occupied by 5 persons	7m ²
HMO occupied by 6 persons	8m ²
HMO occupied by 7 persons	9m ²
HMO occupied by 8 persons	12m ²
HMO occupied by 9 persons	13m ²
HMO occupied by 10 persons	14m ²
HMO occupied by 11 persons	15m ²
HMO occupied by 12 persons	16m ²
HMO occupied by 13 persons	19m ²

Kitchen space standards will not take into consideration any dining or lounge space where they are open plan with the

kitchen.

Any floor area, within a room in where the ceiling height is less than 1.5m, cannot be used within the minimum room size calculation.

Amenity provision

HMO occupancy	Cooker (minimum 4 ring hob, oven and grill) (see note 2 & 3 below)	Sink and drainer (sink to be 400mm wide minimum)	Fridge freezer (minimum capacity – fridge 150 litres, freezer 70 litres) (see note 4 below)	Work Surface length (minimum depth 600mm) (see notes 5 & 6 below)	Electrical sockets above work surfaces (see notes 7 & 8 below)
3	1	1	1	1500mm	4
4	1	1	1	2000mm	4
5	1	1	1	2500mm	6
6	2 or 1 cooker and 1 combination microwave oven and grill	2 or full-size double sink and drainer. Or 1 sink and 1 dishwasher	2	3000mm	6
7	2 or 1 cooker and 1 combination microwave oven and grill	2 or full-size double sink and drainer. Or 1 sink and 1 dishwasher	2	3500mm	6
8	2	2	2	4000mm	8
9	2	2	2	4500mm	8
10	2	2	2	5000mm	8
11	3 or 2 cookers and 1 combination microwave oven and grill	3 or 2 full-size double sinks and drainers. Or 2 sinks and 1 dishwasher	3	5500mm	10
12	3 or 2 cookers and 1 combination microwave oven and grill	3 or 2 full-size double sinks and drainers. Or 2 sinks and 1 dishwasher	3	6000mm	10
13	3	3	3	6500mm	10

1. All kitchens must have refuse container of a capacity of 30 litres for every 5 occupants.
2. A double oven may be provided instead of a combination microwave oven and grill, but each compartment must provide at least 60 litre capacity.
3. Splash back to cooker hobs must be to a height of 45cm, be durable and easily cleansable.
4. A fridge freezer could be located in each letting room. However, extra room size provision to the letting rooms should be provided above the minimum requirements in this document equal or greater than the area taken for the appliance(s). Your fire risk assessment should take this into consideration when considering any fire safety requirements.
5. There must be a minimum of 300mm of work surface to each side of any hob.
6. A 20 per cent shortfall may be acceptable to the length of work surface provision provided there are good practical working areas.
7. Electrical sockets used for washing machines, cookers, refrigerators, etc shall be excluded when calculating the number of socket outlets available above the work surfaces.
8. Electrical socket provision is to be evenly spaced out above the kitchen worktop.
9. Food storage units per occupant should be either one 500mm wide base unit or two 500mm wide wall units at a minimum.

10. Under sink base units are not suitable for food storage and shall be excluded when calculating the amount of food storage available.
11. All equipment and facilities within a kitchen shall be fit for purpose and any kitchen shall be of such a layout and size so as to adequately enable those sharing to safely store, prepare and cook food taking into account the amenities that are required within the kitchen.

Ventilation

All shared kitchens must be provided with adequate mechanical extraction ventilation of minimum 60 litres / second flow rate.

Bedsit-type HMOs

Where cooking facilities are provided in letting rooms the following standards apply:

Cooker (minimum 2 ring hob, oven and grill)	Sink and drainer	Fridge (minimum capacity 150 litres)	Work surface length (minimum depth 600mm)	Electrical sockets above work surfaces (see note 4 below)	Base/wall units for food storage
1	1	1	1000mm + a minimum of 300mm to each side of the cooker	4	900mm

1. Under sink base units are not suitable for food storage and shall be excluded when calculating the amount of food storage available.
2. There must be a minimum of 300mm work surface to each side of any cooking appliance.
3. All equipment and facilities within a kitchen shall be fit for purpose and any kitchen shall be of such a layout and size so as to adequately enable those sharing to safely store, prepare and cook food taking into account the amenities that are required within the kitchen.
4. Electrical sockets used for washing machines, cookers, refrigerators, etc shall be excluded when calculating the number of socket outlets available above the work surfaces.

Communal lounges/dining rooms

Room sizes

Huntingdonshire District Council require the following communal lounges/dining room collective sizes to constitute as being adequate based on HMO occupancy:

HMO occupied by 3 persons	9m ²
HMO occupied by more than 3 persons	Add 1.5m ² per additional person over 3 occupants

The spaces should provide comfortable relaxed seating and a suitable dining area that does not interfere with the kitchen worktop space usability.

Where the dining or lounge areas are open plan with a kitchen then they will be subject to the above space standards for just that section of the room.

Any floor area, within a room in where the ceiling height is less than 1.5m, cannot be used within the minimum room size calculation.

It is generally expected that 40% of the space requirement is to be for the use of dining and 60% as a lounge for relaxing.

Personal washing facilities / toilets

Baths and showers

For bedsit type accommodation where all or some of the units of living accommodation do not contain bathing facilities for the exclusive use of each individual household, there must be an adequate number of suitably located bathrooms, which are accessible from the communal areas, to enable those facilities to be used on a shared basis. Either a bath or shower is suitable for this purpose.

- Any shower must be provided with a constant supply of hot water.
- There must be a shower or bath on a ratio of one bath or shower to every 5 persons.
- Baths must be a minimum dimension of 1700mm x 450mm and be provided with a suitable splash back of a minimum height of 450mm along the length of the bath where it abuts any wall.
- Showers must be a minimum dimension of 800mm x 800mm and be tiled (or similar) to a height of 2.4m.
- Facilities must be provided not more than two floors distant (suitably located) from letting rooms. Shared facilities shall also be accessible from a common area.
- The walls and floors of all bathrooms should be reasonably impervious, decorated using suitable materials to abut walls and capable of being readily cleansed.
- Bathrooms/shower rooms shall be suitably and adequately heated and ventilated. Mechanical extraction must be provided with capacity a minimum of 15 litres per second with a 20-minute run on facility.

Toilet facilities

Toilet facilities should be provided not more than one floor distant from any user on a ratio of at least:

- One WC per 5 persons where the WC is separate from the bathroom (and is suitably located and accessible from a communal area without going through the bathroom).
- One full suite per 4 persons where the WC is located within the bathroom.
- Facilities must be provided not more than one floor distant (suitably located) from letting rooms. They should also be accessible from a common area.
- The walls and floors of all toilet cubicles should be reasonably impervious, decorated using suitable materials to abut walls and facilities and capable of being readily cleansed.
- WCs shall be provided with mechanical extraction with a minimum capacity of 6 litres per second, which operates when the light is turned on, where a window with a vent latch mechanism is not provided.
- Any room containing a toilet shall have a hand wash basin in the same room.

Sanitary provisions

Examples of acceptable minimum combinations of WCs and bathrooms are given in the table below (other combinations may achieve the same required minimum provisions).

Number of persons	Full Suite	Bath/Shower Only	Separate WC
3 or 4	1		
5	1		1
5		1	1
6-8	2		
9	1	1	1
9-10	2		1
11-12	3		
13-15	3		1
16	4		
17-20	4		1

Wash hand basins

Where some, or all the units of accommodation do not contain wash hand basins, for the exclusive use of the individual unit, there must be a ratio of 1 for every 5 persons sharing.

Shared wash hand basins may be located within shared bathrooms, WCs, or other suitable room however all rooms containing a WC must also be provided with a wash hand basin.

All basins are to be provided with a suitable splashback of a minimum height of 450mm along the length of the basin.

A mirror is to be provided above each basin of width close to that of the basin and a height at least equal to the width.

Lighting and electrical

All parts of the property shall be provided with artificial lighting.

Any room that is used as a bedroom or living room must contain a minimum of 4 sockets which are provided electricity direct from the ring main. An Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) on the electrics shall be carried out every five years as required by the Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020.

Ventilation

Adequate ventilation is important in minimising the hazards and harm outcomes associated with damp and mould, excess heat, carbon monoxide and other fuel combustion products.

Every room used for living and accommodation must be provided with adequate ventilation. This can be either mechanical or passive ventilation.

Heating

Each unit of accommodation in an HMO must be equipped with adequate means of space heating. Where heating is provided to communal rooms or areas this cost should be met by the general rental or energy charges rather than via a pre-payment meter.

All bedrooms, hallways and WCs shall be provided with a fixed heating appliance capable of heating the room to a temperature of 18 degrees centigrade. Bathrooms, living and dining rooms at 21 degrees centigrade, and kitchens at 20 degrees centigrade. The heating should be efficient, safely designed and be sited / guarded as to minimise the risks to health and safety. Any such appliances shall be maintained by a competent person. Any electric heating, where provided, must be hard wired into the electrical installation.

All forms of heating must be always controllable by the occupants. Paraffin, LPG heaters and freestanding plug-in electric heaters are not acceptable.

Any bathroom, whether for shared or exclusive use must also be provided with suitable heating. Electric fan or radiant wall heaters are acceptable in bathrooms provided they are designed to operate in moist atmospheres.

Proper provision for space heating is important. In addition to maintaining a comfortable temperature for the tenants, good heating will also reduce the maintenance and redecoration needed where condensation forms and leads to mould growth. Therefore, good heating is also likely to protect the structure of the building.

Requirements for central heating systems

A radiator in each bedroom should be fitted with a thermostatic radiator valve (TRV) so the occupant can control the temperature of the radiator without the need to adjust the central controls. One radiator in the system should be left without a thermostatic valve (normally in a bathroom).

Requirements for electric storage heaters

Electric storage heaters are to be fixed to the electrical installation and capable of being run on economy tariffs with minimum standards of auto-charge control in accordance with Building Regulations Part L1 and manual backup. A reasonable proportion of the heating should be provided at off-peak rates: a target of 90% is recommended. Time controls and automatic input and output charge controls, with an internal or external temperature sensor (which is used to set the amount of heat to be stored automatically) should be provided.

Prepayment meters

Where lettings are on an inclusive basis and gas and electricity are supplied by the landlord, the use of prepayment meters are discouraged, but where they are used, there must be a robust arrangement in place to ensure that the supplies of gas and electricity are always maintained without requiring tenants to contact the landlord to arrange for the "topping up" of meters.

Re-sale of gas and electricity to tenants

The practice of charging tenants separately for their use of gas and electricity, usually through individual meters is not encouraged, but where it does occur it is to be restricted to the maximum resale price.

Waste management and recycling

Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 require landlords to provide adequate bins for the storage of refuse, having regard to the disposal services provided by the Local Authority. These Regulations also require landlords to arrange for the disposal and storage of waste, as necessary, to comply with the service provided by the local authority.

For further information on waste and recycling go to:

<https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/bins-waste>

Please contact the Private Sector Housing Team if you have any questions or you need to discuss any variations from the standards that may be appropriate for a particular HMO perhaps due to internal layout or long distances to the nearest exit.

Licensing

As of October 2018, any rental property housing 5 or more persons, forming two or more separate households, who share at least one facility and using the property as their main residence, is required to be licensed.

The licence

Where a licence is granted by a Local Authority, it is linked to the property, not the owner. However, when the name of the owner is amended on the Land Registry deeds, the licence cannot be transferred into the new owner's name; a new licence application is required.

The licence holder and the person who manages the property will have to be considered 'fit and proper' for a licence to be granted.

The licence holder

The landlord can hold the licence or nominate someone else, such as a manager or agent, to be the licence holder. Whoever holds a licence must be the person who is most appropriate to hold the licence.

How licensing works

Anyone who owns or manages a HMO, that is required to be licensed, must apply to the Council for a licence. The Council will grant a licence if it is satisfied that:

- The HMO is suitable for occupation by the number of people allowed under the licence,
- The proposed licence holder is a 'fit and proper' person,
- The proposed licence holder is the most appropriate person to hold the licence,
- The proposed manager(s), is a 'fit and proper' person,
- The proposed management arrangements are satisfactory,
- The person involved in the management of the HMO is competent,
- Whether any person proposed to be involved in the management of the house (other than the manager) is a 'fit and proper' person, and
- The financial structures for the management are suitable.

The meaning of 'fit and proper' person

In deciding whether someone is 'fit and proper', the Council must consider:

- Any previous convictions relating to violence, sexual offences, drugs, and fraud,
- Whether the proposed licence holder has broken any laws relating to housing, landlord and tenant issues, and
- Whether the person has previously managed HMOs which have broken any approved Code of Practice.

Details of the application process, including how to apply for a HMO licence from Huntingdonshire District Council can be found at: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/licensing/all-licences-and-permits/houses-in-multiple-occupation-hmo/>

Pre-licensing application advice

The Housing Team offers an HMO licence pre-application property inspection service at an hourly rate fee. Please contact the Private Sector Housing Team for more information.

Should you wish to arrange an inspection, please contact the Private Sector Housing Team on 01480 388388 or email <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/licensing/all-licences-and-permits/houses-in-multiple-occupation-hmo/> for further information.

Council's refusal to licence a property

The Council can refuse to license a property if it does not meet the standards above, or the landlord is not deemed to be 'fit and proper'. We will endeavour to work with landlords who apply for a licence where the property may not meet the required standards.

Appeal process

You may appeal if the Council decides:

- To refuse a licence,
- To grant a licence with conditions,
- To revoke a licence,
- To vary a licence, and
- To refuse to vary a licence.

You can contact the Council who will advise you of the procedure involved to submit an appeal to the First-tier Tribunal.

There are a number of consequences for landlords and agents who do not comply with this legislation, which include, but are not exhaustive to:

- Being registered on the National Rogue Landlords Register,
- Being unable to operate as a rental manager in England & Wales,
- Being unable to legally evict a tenant,
- Receiving an unlimited fine from the court, and
- Receiving a Civil Penalty of up to £30,000.

Exemptions

The Housing Act 2004, Section 61, requires every HMO meeting the criteria of the Act to be licensed unless there is in force a Temporary Exemption Notice (TEN), or an interim or final management order.

Schedule 14 of the Act also provides a list of buildings which are not considered to be HMOs for any purpose of the Act, except for matters relating to the condition of the building assessed under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (Part 1):

- Buildings where 2 people who share and form 2 households,
- Buildings occupied by students,
- Buildings occupied entirely by freeholders or long leaseholders (over 21 years),
- Buildings managed or owned by a public body i.e., the police, NHS, fire authority, a local housing authority, a non-profit registered provider of social housing, a body registered as a social landlord,
- Buildings occupied principally for the purposes of a religious community,
- Certain buildings that are controlled or managed by a co-operative society, and
- Buildings regulated otherwise such as bail hostels or care homes.

Temporary exemption from licensing

If a landlord or a person in control of a property intends to stop operating a licensed HMO or wants to reduce the numbers of occupants, rendering it no longer licensable, and can give clear evidence of this, then he or she is at liberty to apply for a Temporary Exemption Notice (TEN). A TEN can be in force initially for 3 months, with a further 3 months being considered at a further application to the Council. Landlords will need to provide evidence that the property does not require a licence but cannot request a TEN in order to avoid licensing.

Unlicensed HMOs

It is a criminal offence to be a person having control of or managing a licensable HMO without applying for licence or a temporary exemption. Failure to apply for a licence is a criminal offence and can result in an unlimited fine if a prosecution is sought. Alternatively, the Council can issue a Civil Penalty up to a maximum of £40,000 as an alternative to prosecution. More information can be found on Huntingdonshire District Council's Housing Enforcement Policy at www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk. If a landlord is found to be operating a licensable HMO without a licence, rent from housing benefits, or rent paid by tenants themselves can also be reclaimed under a "Rent Repayment Order".

Inspections

The Council wants to reduce the burden on landlords when making an application for an HMO licence. All such applications can be made online (although a paper application can be requested) and advice is readily available via our website, or by contacting the Private Sector Housing Team at environmentalhealth@huntingdonshire.gov.uk.

The Council carries out inspections of HMOs:

- When it receives information that a property may be unsafe or in disrepair,
- When it has received a report that relevant housing law is being broken,
- When an application has been received for a HMO licence,
- As part of its proactive program of HMO inspections whether licensed or not,
- When it suspects a property is in HMO use, or
- At the landlord's request for a property health inspection (chargeable service).

The Council does not have to give any prior notification of any visit to an HMO or one suspected of being an HMO.

Planning Guidance

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (SI 418) grants what are called “permitted development rights”. Permitted development rights are a right to make changes to a building without the need to apply for planning permission. Under this order planning permission is not needed for changes in use of buildings within each class and for certain changes of use between some of the classes.

A table on the Government’s Planning Portal website sets out which changes of use between classes are permitted: www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/commonprojects/changeofuse

Not every use of a building is put into a use class under this legislation and is classed as ‘Sui Generis’. Being sui generis or not falling with the permitted class use change does not preclude a change of use it just means that a planning application must be made so that the Local Planning Authority can consider the implications in detail. No prior approval can be made without the submission of a full planning application, and each application is dealt with on its own merit.

Class C3 – dwelling-houses – this class is formed of 3 parts:

C3(a): covers use by a single person or a family (a couple whether married or not, a person related to one another with members of the family of one of the couple to be treated as members of the family of the other), an employer and certain domestic employees (such as an au pair, nanny, nurse, governess, servant, chauffeur, gardener, secretary and personal assistant), carers, the person receiving the care, a foster parent and foster children.

C3(b): covers up to 6 people living together as a single household and receiving care e.g., supported housing schemes such as those for people with learning disabilities or mental health problems.

C3(c) allows for groups of people (up to 6) living together as a single household. This allows for those groupings that do not fall within the C4 HMO definition, but which fell within the previous C3 use class, to be provided for i.e., a small religious community may fall into this section as could a homeowner who is living with a lodger.

Class C4 – Houses in Multiple Occupation

Class C4: gives small, shared houses occupied by between 3 and 6 unrelated individuals, as their only or main residence, who share basic amenities such as kitchen or bathroom. Planning permission is not needed when both the present and proposed uses fall within the same ‘class’, or if the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order says that a change of class is permitted to another specified class. This means in relation to an HMO that a change of use between Classes C3a, b, c and Class 4 do not require planning permission.

However, HMO management would not be expected to be the same for a single-family unit. This means that if a landlord or agent allows house occupants of a HMO to sublet their rooms, bring in another tenant or let another person (related or not) live in the property (free or otherwise) that causes an increase to the occupation over the ‘permitted’ allowance the landowner will be responsible for the breach of planning control under planning law and to rectify the breach.

Sui Generis – large HMOs over 6 occupants

HMOs with over 6 occupants will require ‘Sui Generis’ permission.

Breaches of planning control

A breach of planning control is defined in section 171A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as:

- The carrying out of development without the required planning permission, or
- Failing to comply with any condition or limitation subject to which planning permission has been granted.

Any contravention of the limitations on, or conditions belonging to, permitted development rights, under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, constitutes a breach of planning control against which enforcement action may be taken. Under planning remit the onus of planning control falls to the landowner and any third-party issue remains a civil matter between the landowner and the third party.

Permitted rights of entry

Local planning authorities can authorise named officers to enter land specifically for enforcement purposes (Sections 196A, 196B and Section 196C of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990). This right is limited to what is regarded as essential, in the circumstances, for effective enforcement of planning control.

Building control

Building regulations apply to a wide range of works relating to converting a building to HMO use. These include the installing of new kitchen and bathroom facilities, new doors and windows, and fire and sound insulation between units of accommodation, upgrading/renewing electrical wiring, and upgrading/renewing certain heating systems.

When arranging works you should check that your contractor is operating under an approved industry scheme or apply for the correct approval under the Building Regulations.

You can access further information and advice on the Huntingdonshire District Council website at:

www.3csharedservices.org/building-control/.

Appendix

Legislation

[Housing Act 2004](#)

[Renters' Rights Act 2025](#)

[Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

[The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and other houses \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

[The Houses in Multiple Occupation \(Certain Blocks of Flats\) \(Modification of the Housing Act 2004 and Transitional provisions for section 257 HMOs\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)

[The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation \(Additional Provisions\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)

[The Energy Performance of Buildings \(Certificates and Inspections\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2007](#)

[The Energy Efficiency \(Private Rented Property\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2015](#)

[Furniture and Furnishings \(Fire\) \(Safety\) Regulations 1988 and the Furniture and Furnishings \(Fire\) \(Safety\) Amendment\) Regulations 1993](#)

[The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector \(England\) Regulations 2020](#)

Other useful links

[Huntingdonshire District Council Housing Enforcement Policy](#)

[Huntingdonshire District Council Housing Civil Penalty Policy](#)

[Housing Fire Safety - LACORS](#)

[Fire Safety Risk Assessment – Sleeping Accommodation](#)

[Housing Health and Safety Rating System Guidance](#)

[Housing Health and Safety Rating System Enforcement Guidance](#)

[Housing Health and Safety Rating System Guidance for Landlords and Property Related Professionals](#)

[Landlords Guide to Electrical Safety](#)

[Domestic private rented property: minimum energy efficiency standard - landlord guidance](#)

[Energy Performance Certificates – Guide for Landlords](#)

[Electrical Safety Council](#)