

Bath and North East Somerset Council Standards for Licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) 2026

Table of Contents

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Table of Contents	2
Definition of a 'household', 'family', and 'married and cohabiting couples'	3
Notes	4
Space Standards	5
Room sizes in licensed HMO	5
Bedsits or Single Room Let	5
Self-contained flats within HMOs	5
Hostels/Hotels	6
Fire safety	7
Fire precautions (hostels/hotels)	12
Fire precautions (buildings converted entirely into self-contained flats)	12
Alternative Fire Safety Works	12
Kitchens	13
HMO with only a commercial kitchen available to the staff/occupant	14
Bathrooms, shower rooms, toilets, and wash hand basins	14
Heating	16
Carbon monoxide alarm	16
Access	17
Definitions	17
List of Amendments	18
Important information	18
Lower Risk HMOs	18



The Housing Act 2004 sections 254 and 260 provides a definition of a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). A building is defined as an HMO that requires a Mandatory HMO Licence under the following conditions:

- It is occupied as living accommodation by at least five or more people;
- Who form more than one family or household;
- Who live in accommodation that is not self-contained and share amenities such as toilet, bathroom, or kitchen facilities.

The definition applies to single dwellings, to self-contained flats within buildings and residential accommodation above or below a commercial property. An individual tenancy may have exclusive use of the basic facilities (bath/shower, WC and kitchen), but the accommodation would only be defined as self-contained if the sleeping/living area and all the facilities are behind one door (studio flats) and not accessed via a common stairwell, hallway etc.

Purpose-built flats

Not all HMOs occupied by five or more people require a mandatory HMO licence. A purpose-built flat located within a block comprising three or more self-contained flats is exempt from mandatory HMO licensing, even where it would otherwise meet the definition of a licensable HMO.

Non-licensable HMOs

These standards are recommended for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) with fewer than five occupants that do not require a license. Certain standards may be enforced under 'The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006'.

Definition of a 'household', 'family', and 'married and cohabiting couples'.

Under the Housing Act 2004, households are defined as either a single person or members of the same family who are living together. A 'family' is defined as:

- family or single household may consist of the following: husband, wife, cohabitee, child, stepchild, foster child, grandchild, parent, stepparent, foster parent, grandparent, brother, half-brother, sister, half-sister, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or cousins.

Notes

1. Amenity standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) or parts thereof, whether occupied by a socially interactive group (such as shared houses or shared flats typically under a joint tenancy) or by individual households living independently, who either share facilities (bedsits) or have exclusive use of facilities (self-contained flats).
2. Room size standards for properties occupied as described above, including specific standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) where some board is provided, these properties are referred to as 'hostels'.
3. The amenity standards include those prescribed by The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006, as well as The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007.
4. The additional amenity standards specify how the Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) Council will assess compliance with the 'Tests as to suitability for multiple occupation' under Section 65 of the Housing Act 2004.
5. The room size standards specify how the Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) Council will determine the maximum occupancy of a property under Section 64 of the Housing Act 2004; this is referred to as the 'permitted number'.
6. For licensable HMOs that do not meet these standards at the time of application, a licence may be granted subject to conditions requiring compliance within a specified timeframe.
7. The standards do not apply to non-licensable HMOs but can be used as a guide.
8. All licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) shall undergo an assessment in accordance with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) as stipulated under Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004, as well as the relevant HMO management regulations. Consequently, there may be additional requirements that must be fulfilled.
9. Where reasonably practicable, all licensing standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) must be complied with. However, each case must be considered on its own merits, as the council cannot enforce a uniform set of standards for all HMOs within its district. The council should consider the specific circumstances of each HMO, particularly in respect of those standards that are not prescribed by legislation.
10. It is recommended to consult the council prior to commencing any works, if there is any uncertainty regarding the required standards for a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

Space Standards

Minimum room sizes for licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) (Note: Sizes refer to areas with a minimum ceiling height of 1.5 meters).

Room sizes in licensed HMO

These standards apply where there is sharing of some or all facilities i.e. HMOs where:

- occupiers live independently of others e.g. single room lettings or bedsit accommodation (kitchen facilities within own room);
- occupiers forming a group e.g. students, professional persons and others who interact socially.

Where the room is shared by occupiers	1- 3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Kitchen	5m ²	6m ²	7m ²	9m ²	9.5m ²	10m ²	10.5m ²	11m ²
Total communal space*	13.5m ²	17m ²	18m ²	20m ²	22m ²	24m ²	26m ²	27.5m ²

For 11 or more occupants: The kitchen must include an additional 0.5m² per person, and the total communal space should have an extra 1.5m² per person.

* occupiers forming a group (includes kitchens, dining rooms and living rooms – the kitchen must be at least the minimum size specified above)

Bedsits or Single Room Let

Occupiers live independently of others e.g. - single room lettings or bedsit accommodation (kitchen facilities within own room)

Where the room is for the sole use of occupiers	1 person	2 people
Kitchen	4m ²	5m ²
Bedroom	6.51m ²	10.22m ²
Combine kitchen and living room	11m ²	15m ²
Combined bedroom and living room	9m ²	14m ²
Combined bedroom, living room and kitchen	13m ²	19m ²

Self-contained flats within HMOs

These standards below apply where all facilities are for the exclusive use of occupiers forming a single household i.e., an individual or family (husband, wife, partner, child, stepchild, stepparent, grandchild, grandparent, brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, aunt, uncle, niece, cousin, foster child) i.e. self-contained flats within HMOs.

Room	Number of persons				
	1	2	3	4	5
Bedroom	6.51m ²	10.22m ²			
Combined bedroom and living room	9m ²	14m ²			
Combined bedroom, living room and kitchen	13m ²	19m ²			
Kitchen	4m ²	5m ²	5m ²	6m ²	7m ²
Living room	8m ²	11m ²	11m ²	11m ²	11m ²

Hostels/Hotels

These standards apply to HMOs where board is provided as part of the occupancy.

For exclusive use of occupants		1	2
Bedroom		6.51m ²	10.22m ²
Combined bedroom and living room where no separate living room is provided.		9m ²	14m ²
Family bedroom (2 adults and 1 child under 10 years old)	14.5m ² or 18.5 m ² where no separate living room is provided.		

For shared use of occupants	1-3	4	5	6	7-10
Kitchen (all main meals* not provided)	5m ²	6m ²	7m ²	9m ²	11m ²
Kitchen (all main meals provided)	5m ²	5m ²	5m ²	5m ²	7m ²
Communal living room (not required if individual bedroom and living room meet the standard above)	8.5m ²	11m ²	11m ²	11m ²	16.5m ²
	11-15	16 or more			
	21.5m ²	At discretion of Local Authority			

*For more information about accommodation with or without providing meals to occupants, see Kitchen on page 13.

Fire safety

Provide fire precaution facilities and equipment to mitigate fire risk and ensure the safety of individuals within the premises, as far as practicable, in accordance with the LACoRS (Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services) publication 'Housing - Fire Safety: Guidance on fire safety provisions for certain types of existing housing.' This includes ensuring that occupants can escape from a fire without passing through high-risk areas such as kitchens or living rooms.

The following fire precautions must be provided:

1 and 2 storey HMO

Fire detection system	A Category D1-LD2 <i>*(see footnotes)</i> fire detection system conforming to BS5839-6: current edition.
Kitchen door	FD30s with self-closer
Living room door	Solid core doors; solid timber panelled doors of substantial construction may also be accepted, provided they are sound, close fitting and free from significant damage, warping, loose panels or excessive gaps. <i>(If the kitchen does not lead directly to the escape route and is accessed through another room, such as a living room, a fire door should be installed to the living room door.)</i>
Bedroom doors	Solid core doors; solid timber panelled doors of substantial construction may also be accepted, provided they are sound, close fitting and free from significant damage, warping, loose panels or excessive gaps.
Emergency lighting	Not required unless FRA requests or the fire escape route is complicated or lack of natural or borrowed light.

3 storey HMO

Fire detection system	A Category D1-LD2 <i>*(see footnotes)</i> fire detection system conforming to BS5839-6: current edition.
Kitchen door	FD30s with self-closer.
Living room door	FD30 or Solid core door, self-closing, and close fitting.
Bedroom doors	Solid core doors, self-closing, and close fitting.
Emergency lighting	Not required unless FRA requests or the fire escape route is complicated or lack of natural or borrowed light.

4 storey HMO

Fire detection system	A Category D1-LD2 <i>*(see footnotes)</i> fire detection system conforming to BS5839-6: current edition.
Kitchen door	FD30s with self-closer.
Living room door	FD30s with self-closer.
Bedroom doors	FD30, self-closing and close fitting.
Emergency lighting	Emergency escape lighting required only if the route is long or complex or where there is no effective natural or borrowed light.

5 or more storey HMO

Fire detection system	A Grade A: LD1 <i>*(see footnotes)</i> fire detection system conforming to BS5839-6: current edition.
Kitchen door	FD30s with self-closer.
Living room door	FD30s with self-closer.
Bedroom doors	FD30s with self-closers.
Emergency lighting	Required.

Bedsits 1 and 2 storeys (Occupiers live independently of others e.g. - single room lettings or bedsit accommodation (kitchen facilities within own room))

Fire detection system	A Category D1-LD1 <i>*(see footnotes)</i> fire detection system conforming to BS5839-6: current edition. The system will normally include interlinked smoke detection in the circulation areas at each floor level, heat detection in kitchens and bedsits with cooking facilities, smoke detection in bedsits without cooking facilities, shared lounges, and any cellar. An additional Grade D non-interlinked smoke detector with integral battery back-up will be required in bedsits with cooking facilities. A sound level of 75dB(A) should be reached at bedheads.
Kitchen door	FD30s with self-closer.
Bedroom doors	FD30s with self-closer.
Emergency lighting	Not required unless FRA requests or the fire escape route is complicated or lack of natural or borrowed light.

Bedsits 3 or more storeys (Occupiers live independently of others e.g. - single room lettings or bedsit accommodation (kitchen facilities within own room))

Fire detection system	Grade A: LD1 <i>*(see footnotes)</i> BS5839-6: current edition. The system will normally include interlinked smoke detection in the circulation areas at each floor level, heat detection in kitchens and bedsits with cooking facilities, smoke detection in bedsits without cooking facilities, shared lounges, and any cellar. An additional Grade D non-interlinked smoke detector with integral battery back-up will be required in bedsits with cooking facilities. A sound level of 75dB(A) should be reached at bedheads.
Kitchen door	FD30s with self-closer.
Bedroom doors	FD30s with self-closers.
Emergency lighting	Emergency escape lighting may be appropriate in a 3-storey building if the route is complex or there is a lack of natural or borrowed light. If over 3 storeys, then emergency escape lighting required conforming to BS 5266-1: current edition.

HMOs with combined bedrooms and living rooms

Fire detection system	A Category D1-LD1 <i>*(see footnotes)</i> fire detection system conforming to BS5839-6: current edition (check HMOs with 5 or more storeys).
Kitchen door	Depending on number of storeys, check above.
Bedroom doors	FD30s (self-closers required if 3 storeys or above).
Emergency lighting	Emergency escape lighting may be appropriate in a 3-storey building if route is complex or lack of natural or borrowed light. If over 3 storeys, then emergency escape lighting required conforming to BS 5266-1: current edition.

* Footnotes

Grade A – separate detectors, sounders and central control and indicating equipment with back-up power supply, which are specified according to the layout and requirements of the property and manufactured to BS EN 54. It also requires a power supply to BS EN 54-4, and installation to BS 5839 Part 1.

D1 – mains powered and interlinked detectors with an integral standby supply consisting of a temper-proof battery.

D2 – mains-powered and interlinked detectors with an integral standby supply consisting of a user-replaceable battery or batteries.

Existing Grade D2 installations – Existing Grade D2 fire detection and alarm systems will not normally require upgrading solely because they are Grade D2, provided they complied with the applicable edition of BS 5839-6 at the time of installation, remain in good working order, provide the required category of coverage and are appropriately maintained and tested.

This does not prevent the Council from requiring improvement or replacement where it considers that the system no longer provides an appropriate level of protection for the property.

New fire detection and alarm systems, and systems that are wholly or substantially replaced, must comply with the requirements of these Standards.

LD1 – a system installed throughout the premises, incorporating detectors in all circulation areas (hallway/landings of each story) 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.

LD2 – a system incorporating detectors in all circulation areas (hallway/landings of each story) 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 living room.

FD30 – refers to a 30-minute fire door and (fire) door set; one that offers at least 30 minutes of protection against fires (but no integrated smoke and heat seals, unless fire detectors are installed on each side of the door). Fire doors must conform to BS 476-22: current edition and BS EN 1634-1: current edition.

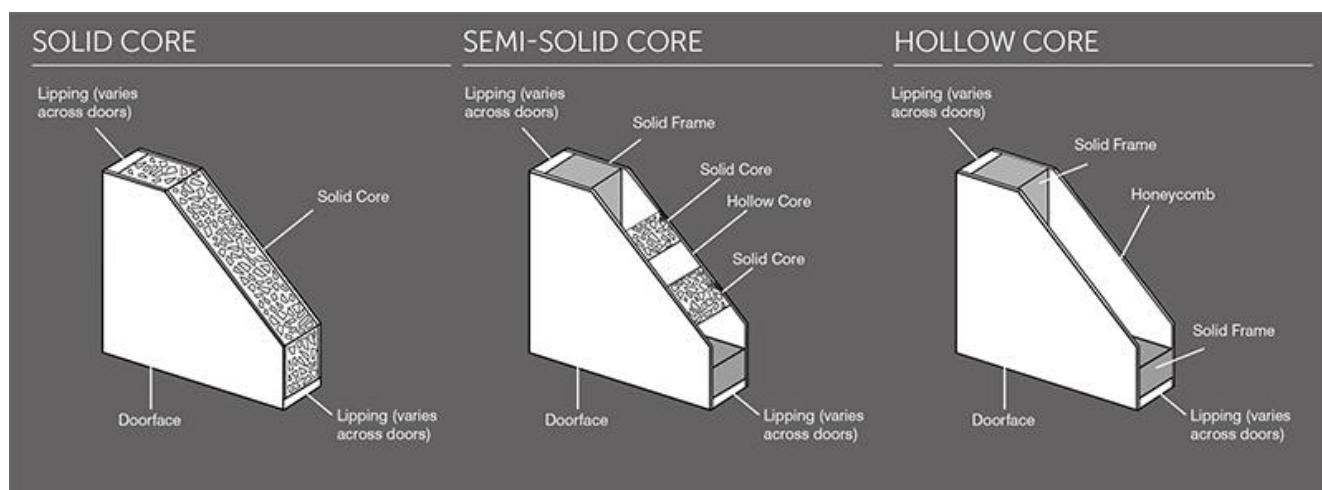
FD30s – As above, equipped with integrated flexible smoke and heat seals. Additionally, a self-closer complying with BSEN 1154:1997+A1:2003, with a minimum power size of EN3 for 30 and 30s fire doors.

SC - self-closer* complying with BSEN 1154:1997+A1:2003, with a minimum power size of EN3 for 30 and 30s fire doors.

**In HMOs of three or more storeys, including split-level layouts where the escape route passes through all levels, bedrooms and risk rooms opening onto the protected escape route will normally be required to be fitted with FD30 fire doors with effective self-closing devices. This is to maintain the integrity of the escape route, particularly where higher risk uses such as kitchens are located in basements.*¹*

¹ This requirement is based on the Housing Act 2004 (Housing Health and Safety Rating System), the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006, and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which require appropriate fire precautions based on risk assessment. It also reflects the principles set out in LACORS 'Housing – Fire Safety' (2008), which recommends protected escape routes with fire-resisting, self-closing doors to rooms opening onto those routes in higher-risk HMOs.

Solid door – solid core, well-constructed, of conventional design, in sound condition and close fitting - see picture below:



Locks – all locks on doors leading on to the means of escape and final exit doors must be capable of being opened or unlocked from the inside without the use of a key.

A Fire Blanket (FB) – conforming to BS EN 1869: current edition in each room containing a kitchen is required.

Fire detection (self-contained flat in a converted house/block) – in addition to fire detection system in the flat, a heat detector in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route linked to the fire detection system in the common parts must be installed.

Fire extinguishers – fire extinguishers are no longer asked for. If a landlord wishes to provide extinguishers, then tenants must be trained in use of equipment, and the landlord must service them annually. Where provided, fire extinguishers should comply with BS EN 3-7:2004+A1:2007: current edition and be maintained in accordance with BS 5306-3 and BS 5306-8: current editions. They are only required if there are staff who work or sleep at the property. Staff must be trained in their use.

A key, card, or coin meters – are not permitted for the fire alarm power supply to ensure there is no interruption. Ideally, this should be achieved by the installation of a dedicated, separate landlord's electricity supply that powers the alarm system and emergency lighting in common parts areas.

Means of Escape – should be maintained free of any obstructions and fire risks (e.g., no shoe racks, desks where loose items can be stored/encouraged and pose an obstruction). Under stair and built-in cupboard doors to hallways should comply with the bedroom door requirements. Cupboards on the means of escape with higher risk items (e.g., white goods) or high fire load such as electrical utilities and gas meters to have 30-minute fire separation to the walls, ceiling, and doors.

Boilers – Boilers should not be installed in areas where they could compromise escape routes or where flammable materials are stored*. Please note that boilers should not be located on stairwells. For guidance on the required fire separation in a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), please contact the Housing Standards Team.

Building Control (BC) has approved the installation of a boiler on the Means of Escape (MoE) if escape windows are present in all bedrooms. However, a protected route is required in accordance with these standards. Alternatively, the installation will be treated in accordance with the 'Inner Room' requirements.

Electricity and gas meters – should be boxed-in to provide 30 minutes fire separation to the means of escape in HMOs with 3 or more storeys. (Within 2 storey HMOs – it is considered best practice to enclose meters in fire-resisting construction). The metal cased consumer units (RCD box) do not need to be enclosed.

Inner bedroom – an inner bedroom is a bedroom where the route of escape passes through a kitchen, living room or other habitable room. Inner room arrangements should be avoided where reasonably practicable. Applicants should seek advice from the Housing Standards Team where an inner room arrangement is proposed or exists.

Undercroft/Basement (if accessible) – an additional main wired heat detector, interlinked with the existing fire alarm system. Accessible under crofts or basements that are sited below the means of escape must have a ceiling that gives 30-minutes fire separation.

Fire Risk Assessment – under the HMO licensing conditions, a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) is mandatory. A 'Responsible Person' could be the employer, owner, landlord, or appointed managing agent of the premises. All fire risk assessments must be carried out by a 'competent person' that is someone with sufficient training, experience, knowledge, and other qualities to properly assist in making or reviewing the assessment, ensuring the assessment is suitable and sufficient.

Electric sockets – the use of extension leads should be avoided due to the risk of overloading and potential fire hazards; they pose a risk of trips and falls. A requisite number of electrical sockets must be provided and suitably distributed around the room, as specified below:

Room type	Number of sockets
Single bedroom	2 double or 4 single power outlets
Double bedroom	4 double or 8 single power outlets
Living room	4 double or 8 single power outlets

Additional fire precautions may be needed in addition to those required in LACoRS.

Higher risk properties include:

- bedsits,
- hostels,
- properties occupied by vulnerable tenants (alcohol/mobility or drug dependency),
- high occupancy level,
- properties with long or complex layouts or inner room arrangements and
- those where there is very poor confidence in management.

Fire precautions (hostels/hotels)

Requirements established in conjunction with Avon Fire and Rescue Service (AFRS) upon application.

Fire precautions (buildings converted entirely into self-contained flats)

Follow LACoRS publication 'Housing - Fire Safety. Guidance on fire safety provisions for certain types of existing housing.'

High Risk Properties

Further fire precautions may be required in addition to those required in LACoRS. Higher risk properties include: - bedsits, hostels, mixed residential and commercial use, occupied by vulnerable tenants' (occupiers who are not able-bodied and not capable of evacuating the building unaided; occupiers with impaired sight or hearing, the elderly or frail, or people with alcohol or drug dependency), high occupancy level, properties with long or complex layouts or inner room arrangements and those where there is very poor confidence in management.

Alternative Fire Safety Works

When opting for alternative fire safety measures a fire risk assessment must be provided, detailing these measures in accordance with LACoRS publication 'Housing - Fire Safety. Guidance on fire safety provisions for certain types of existing housing.' To be reviewed by The Housing Standards team.

Kitchens

If kitchens lack an appropriate dining area, a suitable facility must be provided within one floor's distance. This may include a living room, bedsit, or bedroom of suitable size, in accordance with the standards for room sizes.

If hostels/hotels provide all main meals, the kitchen facilities are to be provided for every 10 rather than 5 occupants and the cooker can be replaced with a combination microwave with grill and oven options.

Kitchens must have a safe and efficient layout and be of a suitable size - see standards for room sizes on pages 5 and 6.

Kitchens should be designed with a safe and efficient layout and must be of a suitable size. For detailed standards on room sizes, please refer to pages 5 and 6.

All facilities and equipment must be fit for purpose.

Shared Facilities (No)	3-5	6	7-10	11-15	16-20
Sink	1	1½	2	3	4
Cooking facilities	1*	2	2	3	4

* A cooker equipped with two rings or hot plates, an oven, and a grill, along with appropriate power connection, is generally considered acceptable for bedsits accommodating up to two occupants.

Sink – A sink with continuous hot and cold water, a draining board, and a tiled splash back should be provided for up to 5 occupants (a dishwasher will be acceptable as a second sink) or within an individual unit of accommodation. For 6 occupants, a 1 and ½ bowl sink is acceptable. For exclusive use, a sink with constant hot and cold water, a tiled splash back, and a draining board are required.

Cooking facilities – For every 5 occupants, there must be a conventional gas or electric cooker with at least four burners, an oven, and a grill. For 6-7 occupants, a 27-litre combination microwave with oven and grill, positioned on a fixed worktop, may replace one conventional cooker. For 8-10 occupants, at least two conventional cookers are required. For 11-15 occupants, at least three conventional cookers are required, regardless of any additional microwaves. In single-occupancy accommodation, a cooker with a four-ring or two-ring hob, oven and grill, positioned at worktop level and capable of operating all parts simultaneously, together with a microwave, is acceptable. Alternatively, a 27-litre combination microwave with oven and grill may be provided where additional worktop space is available. Freestanding cookers without worktop space on both sides are not acceptable.

Fridge and freezer – A large, combined fridge freezer or one worktop height fridge and one worktop height freezer are required per 5 occupants. A large American-style fridge is considered equivalent to 1½ fridge freezer (suitable for 6 occupants only). For exclusive use, a worktop-height refrigerator with a freezer compartment is suitable.

Number of Occupants	Minimum Requirements
3-5	1 x Fridge - H85cm x W60cm x D60cm 1 x Freezer - H85cm x W60cm x D60cm Or

	1 x combined fridge freezer - H186cm x W60cm x D60cm
6-10	2 x Fridges - H85cm x W60cm x D60cm 2 x Freezers - H85cm x W60cm x D60cm Or 2 x Combined Fridge Freezers - H186cm x W60cm x D60cm
11-15	3 x Fridges - H85cm x W60cm x D60cm 3 x Freezers - H85cm x W60cm x D60cm Or 3x Combined Fridge Freezers - H186cm x W60cm x D60cm
16-20	4 x Fridges - H85cm x W60cm x D60cm 4 x Freezers - H85cm x W60cm x D60cm Or 4x Combined Fridge Freezers - H186cm x W60cm x D60cm

Storage – Shared usage – a dry goods storage cupboard with a capacity of 0.3m³ is required for each occupant, either within their individual rooms or in a shared kitchen (The space in the unit beneath the sink and drainer is not permissible for food storage).

Storage – Exclusive usage – a dry goods storage cupboard with a capacity of 0.6m³ is required (The space in the unit beneath the sink and drainer is not permissible for food storage).

Electric sockets – 4 suitably positioned (e.g. work top height) electric sockets are required plus one per major appliance (i.e. a cooker microwave, refrigerator/freezer, washing machine etc.).

Waste – sufficient containers with lids must be provided for household rubbish and recycling both within the accommodation unit and outside. The external containers must be kept in a designated appropriate area, fitted with lids, and maintained in a tidy condition to minimise their visual impact.

HMO with only a commercial kitchen available to the staff/occupant

If meals are provided and there is no separate kitchen within the HMO accommodation, the following facilities are required within the common room or individual bedroom of the HMO.

Meals provided – three times a day.

The facilities below are needed either in the living room or in each bedroom (if in each bedroom, a heat detector interlinked with the existing system and a standalone smoke detector is needed).

Kettle, Microwave/oven, Refrigerator – worktop height size for up to 5 people, sink with hot and cold water, Worktop – food preparation area, Electrical points for small kitchen equipment located above worktop.

Bathrooms, shower rooms, toilets, and wash hand basins

All facilities must be situated in rooms of adequate size and layout within two floors of any bedroom and accessible from communal areas, unless provided as en-suite facilities for the exclusive use of the occupant. Facilities should be located inside the building.

All baths or shower rooms, toilets, and wash hand basins must be of adequate size and provided with a sufficient water supply, necessary fittings, and drainage. They should be maintained in satisfactory condition, to enable thorough cleaning. Constant hot water at a suitable temperature must be provided for baths, showers, and wash basins. Baths, showers, and wash hand basins should be properly sealed to wall surfaces and have a 300mm tiled splash back (or equivalent). Bathrooms and toilet compartments must be of adequate size and layout.

Number of persons sharing	Total number of baths/showers and toilets* required	Number of toilets* that need to be separate	Or, number of complete bathrooms accepted (bath/shower toilet and WHB)
3	1	0	-
4	1	0	-
5	1	1**	2
6	2	1**	3
7	2	1**	3
8	2	1	3
9	2	1	3
10	2	1	3
11	3	1	4
12	3	1	4
13	3	1	4
14	3	1	4
15	3	1	4

* excluding outside toilets, a wash hand basin (WHB) is to be provided within each room or compartment containing a toilet.

**only if reasonably practicable to provide i.e. there must be a suitable room (includes creating an en-suite facility within a suitably sized bedroom) or space to install a toilet (with HWB) from which a connection can be made into the foul drainage system without the need for a pumped system; alternatively, a bathroom could be partitioned off without the need to make an opening in a structural wall, the resultant layout should leave reasonable space for changing, drying etc.

Heating

Bedrooms, living room, dining room, kitchen and hallways: A fixed and efficient heating appliance(s), equipped with time and temperature controls; must be capable of maintaining an indoor temperature of 21°C with an outside temperature of -1°C in each unit of living accommodation (electrical appliances must have a dedicated socket). Heating must be available at all times and be controllable by the occupier regarding both time and temperature.

Bathrooms and Shower rooms: a fixed heating appliance in each bathroom or shower room sufficient to minimise condensation and provide thermal comfort must be installed.

Ventilation

Kitchen – mechanical ventilation to the outside air at a minimum extraction rate of 60 litres per second or 30 litres per second if the fan is sited within 300mm of the centre of the hob. (This is in addition to any windows, should damp and mould be found to be present).

Bathrooms and shower rooms – mechanical ventilation to the outside air at a minimum extraction rate of 15 litres per second (this is in addition to any windows, should damp and mould be found to be present).

Toilets – each toilet in a separate compartment is required to have a window equivalent to 1/20th of the floor area or mechanical ventilation to the outside air at a minimum extraction rate of 6 litres per second. Ventilation should not be obstructed externally.

Bedrooms – each bedroom must have adequate ventilation that can be securely maintained in the absence of occupants to minimise the risk of damp and mould. On the ground floor, external doors, or patio doors as the sole source of ventilation are not acceptable. However, an openable fanlight or a tilt-and-turn door or patio door is permissible.

Carbon monoxide alarm

A carbon monoxide alarm must be installed in any room within the house that is used wholly or partly as living accommodation, including halls, landings, bathrooms, and toilets that contain a fixed combustion appliance (e.g. gas boiler) or a gas cooker or open fire. The alarm(s) must be kept in proper working order and tested regularly, typically monthly, and serviced according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Access

All facilities are to be available at all times and should be internally accessed from all bedrooms and bedsits.

Definitions

Shared use	Where one or more basic amenities (personal washing, toilet, or kitchen) are shared by two or more households.
Exclusive use	Where a basic amenity is provided for the use of a single household.
Bedsit accommodation	Accommodation occupied by person(s) living independently of others in the HMO, cooking facilities may be in the room or shared (separate tenancy agreement).
Single household	Person(s) of the same family group, this includes an individual living on their own. An individual living in a group (e.g., in a shared house) is also regarded as a single household.
Family/household	Includes husband, wife, partner, child, stepchild, stepparent, grandchild, grandparent, brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, aunt, uncle, niece, cousin, foster child.
Unit of living accommodation	Part of the HMO occupied by a single household, this includes bedrooms in shared houses or flats, bedsitting rooms, self-contained flats (all basic amenities provided for exclusive use of that household).
Hostel/Hotel	Where board is provided as part of the occupation, and it constitutes a person's only or main place of residence. Hostel includes bed and breakfast and hotel accommodation used by persons, as their only and main residence which is a house in multiple occupation.

List of Amendments

28 September 2026 – Version 2.0. Clarification added confirming that existing Grade D2 fire detection and alarm systems will not normally require upgrading solely because they are Grade D2, provided they comply with the relevant requirements, remain suitable for the property and are appropriately maintained. New or substantially replaced systems must comply with the current standards.

28 August 2026 – Version 1.0. Complete review and republication of the HMO Licensing Standards. New provisions added in relation to fire safety, kitchen facilities, means of escape, emergency lighting, inner room arrangements, purpose-built flats and other licensing standards.

January 2019 – for 1 and 2 storey HMOs occupied by 5 or more occupants with window escapes to all bedrooms, other than bedsit accommodation, a sound, well-constructed, close fitting conventional door is also acceptable.

March 2019 – Fire doors and the frames to have a fire resistance of at least 30 minutes and provided with flexible smoke and heat seals. A self-closer must be fitted to the door. The door must be rendered and maintained self-closing, self-latching and close fitting onto 12.5mm door stops. The hinges and locks must not melt below 800°C. In addition, where doors have been upgraded, an additional hinge may be required to support the heavier door.

September 2019 – HMOs situated above restaurants and lacking kitchen facilities must provide basic amenities within the HMO to ensure occupants do not use commercial kitchens for preparing or storing food or drinks when not working. Bedroom doors must be well-constructed, solid, of conventional design, and in sound condition.

Important information

Fire doors should be installed and maintained in accordance with BS 8214: current edition and BS EN 1634-1: current edition. Please note upgrading doors to fire doors, walls to fire walls, or adding new fire doors can affect the safe operation of gas and other fuel burning appliances contained within those areas. Ventilation grills may be required to such fire doors/fire walls by the gas or other regulations. These must be intumescent/smoke control grills to ensure that the integrity of the fire doors/fire walls is maintained. You are strongly advised to get a Gas Safe registered engineer (or appropriate qualified person for other fuels) to check the safety of any fuel burning appliances where upgrading has taken place.

Lower risk HMOs

Non-fire-resisting glazed doors, doors of flimsy construction or hollow infill-type doors (commonly known as 'egg box') should not be accepted.

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