

New HMO? What you need to know

This guide has been put together to make you aware of the safety standards in HMOs and what you may need to know when starting off with an HMO.

The definition of an HMO and which ones require a licence can be found here; <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/housing/landlords-and-tenants/additional-licensing-houses-multiple-occupation-hmos/do-i>

In addition to this, we have some checklists that can be used on your routine visits to the property, so you know what to look out for. Licensed HMOs must be inspected by you or a manager quarterly.

During the Council's routine inspections, the Environmental Health Officers will be making the same checks contained in these lists.

N.B. The checklists are not exhaustive and further remedial works may be requested during the routine HMO inspection by the Council.

If you would like any further information, please contact us on 01225 396444 / housing@bathnes.gov.uk

Fire Safety	Yes, No, N/A
<p>Fire alarm system All HMOs will require a mains wired, interlinked fire alarm system. The size of the property will determine what system will be needed. It must meet the LACORS Fire Authority requirements. Please see a link to this document, which provides illustrative examples of properties and what is required on our website https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/housing/houses-multiple-occupation/fire-safety</p>	
<p>Means of escape All hallways and landings must be free from obstruction, trip hazards, sources of ignition or items that aid the spread of fire? Common items to be moved from the means of escape are; shoe racks, shelving units, clothes, internet cables, fridges or freezers. The means of escape include any spaces on hallways and landings, like under the stairs.</p>	
<p>Consumer unit, electric meters and gas meters If an HMO has more than 2 stories and the meters are situated on the means of escape, they must be encapsulated with 30-minute fire resistant material with an access door. No gaps should be present in between the casing and the wall or around the access door.</p>	
<p>Fire blanket A Fire Blanket must be wall mounted in the kitchen. Ideally at 1.5m, away from the cooker next to the exit door.</p>	
<p>Doors Hollow doors are not acceptable due to having poor fire resistance. Doors throughout should be solid to provide at least 20 minutes fire resistance, they should be well-fitting with no gaps between the door or frame. If the HMO has more than 2 stories, self-closers will need to be fitted to all doors opening onto the landings and hallway. Some doors will be required to be a fire-doors, fitted with smoke and heat seals. Please see the following link to the HMO Licensing standard for more information: https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sitedocuments/Housing/Landlords-and-tenants/hmo_licensing_standards_v4.pdf All door props and over the door hangers cannot be used in the property.</p>	
<p>Carbon monoxide alarm A Carbon Monoxide Alarm is required, wall mounted in kitchens with gas appliances, next to the gas boiler, or near to any solid fuel source.</p>	
<p>Fire extinguishers Fire extinguishers are not a requirement, however, where they are provided;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the service date; fire extinguishers must be serviced annually. • All fire extinguishers must be wall mounted. • Ensure any new tenants have been shown how to use them. 	

Heating	Yes, No, N/A
Fixed heating must be provided to all rooms, and access to heating must be provided at all times to be controlled by the occupier.	
If you have a boiler, it must be serviced annually.	
All dials, thermostats and switches need to be in good condition	

Gardens	Yes, No, N/A
The garden should be free from weeds, vegetation, maintained, and managed in line with the Council Guidance ?	
Where fitted, all decking should be slip free and free from rot.	
Where fitted, all fence panels should be in good condition.	
Rainwater goods should be free from vegetation and in good working condition.	
All drain covers should be in place and fitted correctly.	
The grey water system and sewage system should be working correctly.	
Internal and external waste and recycling bins should be provided to the property. Click on this link to order bin or a recycling container.	
The property should be free from structural cracks	

Internal Checks	Yes, No, N/A
The decoration inside the property should be in good condition.	
Where furniture is provided, it must be fire safe, in good, clean condition.	
All white goods should be in good clean condition and plugged into its own dedicated socket.	
All windows need to be in good condition and can be opened and closed freely. Windows with windowsills under 800mm need to be suitably guarded or the windows prevented from opening wider than 100mm - check this is in place. Windowsills under 1100mm will need a restrictor or guarding fitted if children live or visit the property – check this is in place.	
Are light bulbs in communal areas should be working.	
Landing and stairs bannister rails – ensure that all rails are in place and there are no gaps bigger than 100mm. We agreed to look at this case by case, so maybe leave out. Something we would check on inspection – otherwise we will be getting calls and unable to advice over the phone.	
All flights of stairs and external steps must be provided with a secure handrail. They should be secure and not loose.	
Locks – ensure that locks to the inside of the bedroom and the exit door do not have a key to open them. it is recommended that keylocks to the inside of the doors are filled in, covered or removed.	

Notices and documents	Yes, No, N/A
<p>All HMOs The manager must ensure that their name, address and any telephone contact number are clearly displayed in a prominent position in the HMO.</p> <p>Licensed HMOs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Licensing Management Notice should be displayed at the property with the correct name, telephone number & address of the Manager. • The Recycling and Rubbish notice should be displayed at the property with the correct information? <p>The HMO Licence should be available at the property. Read the licence and ensure it matches the property layout, and the conditions are being met.</p>	
Have all tenants signed the Undertaking of Good Practice document?	
Have all tenants signed a tenancy agreement for property? Is the deposit protected under one of the Government Schemes?	
Is there is an EPC dated within the last 10 years for the property? And is this rating E or above?	
Is there is a satisfactory Gas Safety Certificate dated within the last 12 months for the property?	
Is there is a satisfactory Domestic Electrical Installation Condition Report dated within the last 5 years for the property with no C1 or C2 faults?	
Have the electrical appliances provided to the tenants been checked and are safe to use, e.g. PAT testing or visual test which is documented?	
Has the Fire Detection and Alarm system been maintained and tested to BS 5839-6, including a test certificate dated within the last 6 months for the property? (N.B Applicable to Grade A fire alarm systems only) .	
Do you have a logbook available for the inspection and testing of the fire detection and alarm system? Is it up to date?	
Where fitted, have the fire extinguishers been tested within the last year, and is there a record of testing?	
Where fitted, has the Emergency Lighting been maintained and tested to BS5266: Part 1, including a test certificate dated within the last 12 months for the property?	
Is there a logbook available for the inspection and testing of the emergency lighting system?	
Has a Fire Risk Assessment been carried out for the common parts? If yes, has all remedial works stated within the Assessment been carried out?	
There are documents or labels to show all furniture meets the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended) ?	
Where fitted, has the water suppression system been maintained and testing within the last year? and a record of testing kept?	

Further Reading and Guidance

- West Of England Rent with Confidence Standards - <http://www.westofenglandrentalstandard.co.uk/standard/>
- LACoRS Fire Safety Guidance – http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/siteimages/Housing/Landlordsandtenants/lacors_housing_fire_safety_guidance2.pdf
- Template for Fire Risk Assessment - http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sitedocuments/Housing/Landlords-and-tenants/fire_risk_assessment.pdf
- Avon Fire & Rescue Webpage - <https://avonfire.gov.uk/business-safety/fire-safety-for-landlords>
- HHSRS Guidance for landlords - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-health-and-safety-rating-system-guidance-for-landlords-and-property-related-professionals>
- Bath & North East Somerset Council's Fire Safety webpage - <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/housing/houses-multiple-occupation/fire-safety>
- 'How to rent' Government Guidance - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent>