

# Houses in Multiple Occupation Standards

## Housing Act 2004

### Self contained flats in converted buildings

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#### **Self contained flats in converted buildings (S257 HMOs):**

Houses which have been converted to self-contained flats, where the conversion did not comply with the 1991 building regulations and less than two thirds of the flats are owner occupied, each flat having a number of rooms for exclusive occupation, including a kitchen and bathroom/WC, behind one door. If such dwellings did not contain all the standard amenities there would nevertheless be no sharing of amenities with the occupiers of other dwellings in the house. In such a house there would be communal access areas, e.g. halls, landings and stairways.

The standards of space and layout are not enforced against long-leaseholders who own their own accommodation. The only exception to this in the case of means of escape from fire and other fire precautions as no flat-dweller can be permitted to jeopardise the safety of their neighbours.

October 2015

## A. SPACE STANDARDS

- All space standards apply irrespective of the age of the occupants.
- Habitable rooms must be laid out in a functional and appropriate way. Bedrooms which have been partitioned with the sole intention of gaining 10m<sup>2</sup> of floor space will not be accepted if their shape or layout is not practical.
- All habitable rooms, bathrooms and WCs shall have a minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.3m, except in the case of existing attic rooms, which shall have a minimum height of 2.14m over not less than 75% of the room area. Any floor area where the ceiling height is less than 1.53m shall be disregarded.

1. 1 Person, 4 room flat:

Bedroom	7m <sup>2</sup>
Living room	11m <sup>2</sup>
Kitchen	5.5m <sup>2</sup>

2. 1 Person flatlet with separate kitchen:

Bed/living room	14m <sup>2</sup>
Kitchen	5.5m <sup>2</sup>

3. 1 Person flatlet with separate bedroom:

Bedroom	7m <sup>2</sup>
Kitchen/living room	14m <sup>2</sup>

4. 2 Person, 1 bedroom flat:

Bedroom	11m <sup>2</sup>
Living room	11m <sup>2</sup>
Kitchen	5.5m <sup>2</sup>

5. 3 Person, 2 bedroom flat:

Bedroom (2 persons)	11m <sup>2</sup>
Bedroom (1 person)	7m <sup>2</sup>
Living room	14m <sup>2</sup>
Kitchen	5.5m <sup>2</sup>

6. 4 Person, 3 bedroom flat:

Bedroom (2 persons)	11m <sup>2</sup>
Bedroom (1 person)	7m <sup>2</sup>
Bedroom (1 person)	7m <sup>2</sup>
Living room	14m <sup>2</sup>
Kitchen	5.5m <sup>2</sup>

All bedrooms, living rooms and bathrooms to be directly accessible from a common lobby or hallway and not from another room.

## **B. NATURAL LIGHTING**

- All habitable rooms shall be provided with an area of clear glazing situated in either a window and/or a door, opening to the external air, equivalent in total area to at least 1/10 of the floor area of the room.
- Basement rooms used for human habitation should, in addition, have sufficient natural lighting for their purpose.
- All kitchens, bathrooms and WCs should comply with 1 above. Where this is not practicable, adequate artificial lighting shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of section C (below).
- All glazing to windows in bathrooms and WCs shall be obscure.
- All staircases, landings and hallways shall be provided with an area of clear glazing in a window. Where this is not practicable, adequate artificial lighting shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of section C (below).

## **C. ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING**

- All habitable rooms, kitchens, bathrooms, WCs, staircases, landings and hallways shall be adequately lit. Time switches are only allowed to common landings, hallways and staircases and should stay on for an adequate time to allow a person to climb stairs etc and enter a room.
- There should be sufficient switches to operate the artificial lighting on each landing, hallway and stairs and each switch should allow hallways, landings and stairs to be lit at the same time. All lighting to common parts to be provided, maintained and paid for by the landlord or their agent.

## **D. VENTILATION**

- All habitable rooms shall be ventilated directly to the external air by a window, the openable area of which shall be equivalent to at least 1/20 of the floor area of the room. In addition, where a basement room is used as a habitable room there should normally be an unobstructed space immediately outside the window opening which extends the entire width of the window or more and has a depth of not less than 0.6m measured from the external wall or not less than 0.3m in the case of a bay window with side lights.
- All kitchens, bathrooms and WCs should comply with 2 above but if this is not practicable, mechanical ventilation, providing a minimum of 3 air changes per hour, shall be provided. This shall be fitted with an overrun device for a minimum of 20 minutes and be connected to the lighting circuit of the room.
- Suitable and sufficient permanent ventilation shall be provided and maintained in all kitchens, dining/kitchens, bathrooms, WCs and other rooms containing cooking or washing facilities.
- Suitable and sufficient permanent ventilation shall be provided and maintained in any room in which there is a gas appliance.

## **E. WATER SUPPLY**

- Each separate flat shall be provided with an adequate supply of cold running water suitable for drinking purposes directly off the rising main.
- A turn off valve should be provided on the mains supply to each flat.
- Any down service pipe from any water storage tank in an upper storey or roof space should be provided with an accessible stopcock.
- The water supply shall be protected where necessary from frost damage.

## **F. PERSONAL WASHING FACILITIES**

- Each flat shall be provided with a wash hand basin together with adequate supplies of hot and cold water and waste drainage. Where practicable a 2 course tiled splashback should be provided. An 'en-suite' wash hand basin shall be acceptable as the sole provision for any flat only where that flat is of the 'studio' variety. In all other cases the basin should be situated in the bath/shower room.
- Each flat shall be provided with a bath or shower in a separate room. Where practicable, a 2 course tiled splashback should be provided to the bath. Any shower cubicles provided should have fully tiled walls or have a complete self standing cubicle. An 'en-suite' bath or shower shall be acceptable as the sole provision for any accommodation only where that accommodation is of the 'studio' variety.

## **G. DRAINAGE AND SANITARY CONVENIENCES**

- Each flat shall be provided with a WC. Each water closet shall be in a separate room and shall not be entered from another room except in respect of an 'en-suite' arrangement. An 'en-suite' WC shall be acceptable as the sole provision for any accommodation only where that accommodation is of the 'studio' variety.
- Each WC should be provided with a suitable wash hand basin, either within the compartment or in an adjacent bath/shower room.
- The property shall be provided with an effective system, both above and below ground, for the drainage of foul, waste and surface water.

## **H. FACILITIES FOR THE STORAGE, PREPARATION AND COOKING OF FOOD AND FOR THE DISPOSAL OF WASTE WATER**

- Each flat shall be provided with facilities comprising:
  - (a) a gas or electric cooker with 4 burners, oven and grill,
  - (b) a proper food store of minimum capacity of 0.16 m<sup>3</sup> and a refrigerator of minimum capacity of 0.15m<sup>3</sup> (it will be necessary to provide additional cupboard space and a larger refrigerator for 4 or more persons),
  - (c) a worktop of smooth and impervious material of minimum size of 0.6m<sup>2</sup>,
  - (d) 2 twin electric sockets in addition to any serving major appliances set at a convenient height and in a safe position,

- (e) a metal or ceramic sink and drainer in good condition and of minimum dimensions 500 x 600 mm set on a stable base with an adequate supply of hot water and cold water suitable for drinking and food preparation purposes. Where practicable, a 2 course tiled splashback should be provided. The sink shall be connected to the drainage system by a suitable trap.

#### **I. SPACE HEATING**

- All bedrooms, living rooms, bathrooms and communal areas of the house shall be provided with a suitable appliance properly maintained and capable of giving a temperature of 19°C in when the outside temperature is -1°C. Appliance means:
  1. A fixed gas fire with an adequate flue; or
  2. A fixed electric heater; i.e. the wiring to be spurred into the main electrical supply; or
  3. An efficient central heating system.
- All forms of heating must be controllable by the occupant and portable oil or gas heaters shall be not used in any part of the property. The appliance must be serviced and maintained by a competent person on a regular basis.

#### **J. REFUSE STORAGE AND DISPOSAL**

- Refuse storage containers shall be provided sufficient for the needs of the property (usually 1 per flat) and placed in such a manner as to prevent nuisances (smells, obstruction etc).

#### **K. MEANS OF ESCAPE FROM FIRE AND OTHER FIRE PRECAUTIONS**

- Adequate means of escape from fire and adequate other fire precautions shall be provided and maintained. See Notes on Standards of Fire Resistance – Houses in Multiple Occupation (GN.H75).

#### **L. MANAGEMENT**

- A proper standard of management should be observed in the house, in particular to ensure the repair, maintenance, cleansing and good order of –
  - (a) all means of water supply and drainage in the property,
  - (b) all means of escape from fire and all apparatus, systems and other things provided by way of fire precautions,
  - (c) common staircases, corridors and passage ways, and
  - (d) outbuildings, yards and gardens in common use,
- and to make satisfactory arrangements for the disposal of refuse and litter from the property and to ensure that all means of escape from fire are kept clear from obstructions.