

HAMBLETON

DISTRICT COUNCIL

Houses in Multiple Occupation

Amenity Standards Explained ***(A Guide for Owners and Managing Agents)***

Environmental Health Services

Hambleton District Council
Civic Centre
Stone Cross
Northallerton
North Yorkshire

Tel: 0845 12 11 555

Type Talk: 18001 0845 12 11 555

Fax: 01609 767248

e-mail: ehealth@hambleton.gov.uk

The aim of this guidance note is to explain in general terms the requirements of the “Amenity Standards” for houses in multiple occupation.

For simplicity, minor details, definitions and legislation references have been omitted.

What is a House in Multiple Occupation?

A House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) is a building occupied by persons who do not live as a single household.

What Amenity Standards are Required?

These are the minimum standards for the kitchens, toilets, washing facilities and water supply.

a) What Facilities are Required for Kitchen Areas?

Kitchen Design, Dimensions and Location

- 1) Kitchens should be of sufficient size to allow safe, hygienic preparation and cooking of food. Kitchens should generally be on minimum area 4.65 square metres (50 square feet).
- 2) Kitchens should be suitably located in relation to the living accommodation.
- 3) Where a shared kitchen arrangement exists, facilities should enable all occupants to prepare and cook food at reasonable times.
- 4) Where meals are prepared by the proprietor, all areas associated with the preparation, cooking and service of food should comply fully with the Food Safety Act, 1990 and any other relevant regulations. Dining areas should be within a reasonable distance of the units of accommodation and be of sufficient size to cater for all residents at normal meal times.

Storage of Food

- 1) Facilities for the storage of food should be provided in each kitchen. There should be a satisfactory food store for dry goods of minimum capacity 0.3 metres squared and a space with a 13 amp power point to accept a refrigerator.
- 2) Where a shared kitchen arrangement exists, facilities for the storage of foods should be provided on an individual basis for each occupancy and should comprise of a satisfactory refrigerator of minimum capacity 0.13 cubic metres (4.59 cubic feet) as well as a satisfactory food store for dry goods of minimum capacity 0.3 cubic metres (10.59 cubic feet). The facilities should be sited either in the unit of accommodation or in the kitchen. If in the kitchen, the facilities should be lockable.

Work Surfaces

- 1) A correctly sited worktop with an easily cleanable surface of at least 0.6 square metres (6.46 square feet) should be provided in each kitchen. The worktop should be of

adequate depth and securely fixed. The surfaces of walls and floors adjacent to work surfaces should be impervious and easily cleanable.

- 2) Where a shared kitchen exists, the cooking appliance should be sufficient to cater satisfactorily for the occupancies served. One full size cooker should be available for every five persons (or part of five).
- 3) Cookers should be sited so as not to create a fire hazard and their location should be safe and allow for safe retrieval of items from the oven.
- 4) Cookers should comply fully with the current safety requirements. The main electric cooker switch must not be above the cooker.

Sinks

- 1) A sink should be provided in each kitchen of suitable material and design for its intended purpose, with an integral draining board. (A wash basin is **not** acceptable!).
- 2) In a shared kitchen, one sink should be provided for each household, however, one sink will suffice for every three one-person households or for a shared house of five or less persons who live mainly as a single household.
- 3) Sinks must be properly plumbed into the foul drainage system.
- 4) The cold water supply to the sink must be the “rising main” and be wholesome drinking water, for details on the hot water supply see “What are the hot water requirements?” on page 9 of this booklet.

Lighting and Ventilation

- 1) Every kitchen should be provided with suitable ventilation to external air, either by natural means consisting of an openable window of size equivalent at least to one-twentieth of the floor area of the room, or by mechanical ventilation achieving an air change rate in the region of ten air changes per hour.
- 2) Every kitchen should be provided with electric lighting

b) What Toilet Facilities are Required?

Toilet Requirements

- 1) Where there are four or fewer occupiers sharing bathing and toilet facilities, there must be at least one bathroom with a fixed bath or shower and a toilet (which may be in the bathroom).
- 2) Where there are 5 or more occupiers sharing the facilities, there must be one separate toilet with wash hand basin for every five sharing occupiers.

Location of Toilets

- 1) Toilets should be sited so that no person should have to travel an unreasonable distance (in excess of 30 metres horizontally) or be required to travel in excess of one floor level up or down to reach the facility.
- 2) Toilets should not be sited so as to necessitate passing through accommodation occupied exclusively by another household.
- 3) Toilets should be located in rooms or spaces, which are fully compartmented. The rooms containing toilets must be of adequate size.
- 4) Toilets should not open directly onto the area of a kitchen immediately adjacent to where food is prepared.

Ventilation and Lighting to Toilets

- 1) Every toilet should be provided with ventilation to external air. Ventilation should be either by an openable window of size equivalent at least to one-twentieth of the floor area of the room with the openable section at the top of the window, or by mechanical ventilation achieving an air change rate in the region of six air changes per hour.
- 2) Mechanical ventilation systems actuated by light switches should incorporate an over run device. The duration of the over run period should be suitable for the size of the room.
- 3) Every toilet compartment should be provided with adequate electric lighting.
- 4) All glazing provided in windows to toilet compartments should be obscure.

General

- 1) Every toilet compartment should have surfaces, which are designed to be capable of being readily, and easily cleaned.
- 2) Every toilet should have a satisfactory flushing system and be properly connected to the foul drainage system.
- 3) The door to all rooms containing toilets should be capable of being locked or bolted to ensure privacy for users.

c) What Washing Facilities are Required?

Scale of Provision

- 1) Baths must be included in the washing facility in houses where the proportion of young children is high.

Location

- 1) Baths or showers should be sited so that no person should have to travel an unreasonable distance (in excess of 30 metres horizontally) or be required to travel in excess of one floor level up or down to reach the facility.
- 2) Baths or showers should not be sited so as to necessitate passing through the accommodation occupied exclusively by another household.
- 3) Baths or showers should be located in rooms and spaces that are fully compartmented. The rooms or spaces containing baths or showers should be of adequate dimensions.
- 4) Bathrooms or shower-rooms should be separated from any space such as a kitchen, which is used for the preparation of food.

Privacy

- 1) The doors to all rooms containing baths or showers should be able to be locked or bolted to ensure privacy.

Ventilation and Lighting

- 1) All bathrooms and shower-rooms should be provided with a means of ventilation to external air. Ventilation should be either by an openable window of size equivalent at least one-twentieth of the floor area of the room or by mechanical ventilation achieving an air change rate in the region of six per hour.
- 2) All bathrooms and shower-rooms should be provided with adequate means of artificial lighting.
- 3) All washbasins should be located in rooms and spaces which have adequate artificial lighting and are either naturally or mechanically ventilated in a proper manner.
- 4) All glazing provided in windows to bathrooms and shower-rooms should be obscure.

Water Supplies

- 1) Baths, showers and wash hand basins should be provided with a suitable and adequate supply of hot and cold water. The means for provision of hot water to showers should be capable of convenient and effective heat control.
- 2) The arrangements for the distribution and payment of hot water should be such as to give fair allocation to users, fair apportionment of costs and availability at all reasonable times that hot water is required.
- 3) All electrical and gas instalments associated with hot water fitments should comply with all the safety requirements.

General

- 1) Every bathroom or shower-room should have surfaces which are designed to be capable of being readily cleaned.
- 2) Baths, showers and washbasins should be properly plumbed in to an effective drainage system.

d) What are Hot Water Requirements?

Hot Water Supply to Sinks and Wash-Basins

An adequate supply of hot water should provide:

- 1) Water for hand washing at a temperature of 40°C or above.
- 2) Water for dishwashing at a temperature of 60°C or above.

Instantaneous water heater with flow rate 2.5 litres/minute are acceptable for wash hand basins and instantaneous water heaters for sinks must have a flow rate in excess of 6 litres per minute.

Central Heating and Immersion Heaters

- 1) Each unit of living accommodation in an HMO must be equipped with adequate means of space heating.
- 2) Hot water is to be available when the heating is off and to be available at all times it is likely to be required.

Note - The Creda Corvette heater (basic or '2000 model) is unacceptable, as are similar appliances, which require manual filling with water.