



Housing Act 2004

Property and Management Standards Applicable to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

General Specifications – All HMOs

General Specification Applicable to all Categories of HMO

Kitchens

The room

All kitchens, whether for exclusive or shared use must have floor coverings which are impervious, reasonably smooth and easily cleansable. Ideally floor coverings should be slip resistant. Walls and ceilings must also be reasonably smooth such that they can be kept clean and easily redecorated.

Ventilation

Kitchens for exclusive use may also need to be provided with mechanical extract ventilation where there is inadequate natural ventilation or where a gas cooker is provided and opening a window would lead to excessive draughts that might extinguish the burner flames. Required extract rates are 30 litres per second where the extraction is immediately above the cooker, or 60 litres per second elsewhere.

Lighting

Adequate ceiling mounted electric lighting must be provided to the working area of the kitchen.

Layout

Kitchens must be arranged such that hot food can be prepared and handled safely. In particular cookers must be located away from any door, which might open on to and collide with a person standing in front of the cooker.

There must be adequate space in front of any cooker for persons to retrieve hot food from the oven.

There should be fixed work surfaces either side of any cooker to shield any overhanging panhandles and so that hot foods and utensils can be placed down quickly and safely.

Sinks

Must be stainless steel or have a comparable impermeable, easily cleansable surface. They must be provided with a drainer, overflow, supplies of constantly available hot and cold water and all requisite drainage. The sink top (or surface into which it is inset) must be a minimum 900mm x 500mm. Sinks must have a tiled or similar waterproof splash back (where the sink abuts a window reveal, the sill of the window must be clad in waterproof tiles or similar) extending to a minimum height of 150mm above the sink top. There must be a flexible waterproof joint between the sink and the splash back.

Food Preparation Surfaces

Must be of impermeable, heat resistant, durable and easily cleansable materials. Where these are fixed, the joint between the food preparation surface and any abutting units or the wall must be watertight and a tiled splash back as detailed above for sinks must be provided.

Food Storage Cupboards

The internal and external surfaces must be of durable and easily cleansable materials and, where wall mounted, must be fixed securely to take the considerable weight of stored tinned/bottled foods. Food storage underneath a sink is not acceptable.

Cooking Appliances

Must be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions and in particular, electric cookers must be connected via an appropriately rated switch and fuse. Gas cookers must be fitted with a safety restraint to prevent them tipping over.

Compact Domestic Kitchens

Compact domestic kitchens in a modular layout are becoming increasingly available from various manufacturers.

Provided such kitchen facilities are installed in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations and give an equivalent level of provision to that specified above, then their use may be acceptable rather than installing individual pieces of equipment. It is advisable to obtain prior approval of the Housing Standards Team before installing this type of kitchen.

Bathrooms (Includes Shower Rooms)

The Room

Bathrooms must be of adequate size to enable users to dry themselves and get dressed without undue restriction. Showers fitted in to small restricted spaces such as under stairs cupboards may therefore not be regarded as being adequate.

Floors to bathrooms must be impervious, reasonably smooth and easily cleanable. Ideally floor coverings should be slip-resistant. Walls and ceilings must also be reasonably smooth such that they can be kept clean and easily redecorated.

Obscured glazing must be provided to bathroom windows and doors as appropriate and all shared bathrooms to be fitted with a privacy lock/bolt.

Ventilation

All bathrooms must be adequately ventilated. Mechanical extract ventilation giving an extract rate of at least 15 litres per second must be fitted where there is no openable window to provide natural ventilation.

Any extractor fan installed in a bath or shower room must be provided with an "overrun" device which is connected to the artificial lighting circuit in the room and

ensures that the fan continues to operate for 20 minutes (or at least one air change) after the artificial room lighting is switched off. This helps to remove moisture from the room, which might otherwise lead to condensation and black mould growth. Alternatively a humidistat controlled extractor may be provided.

Baths and Showers

Baths should be a minimum 1.67 meters in length and be provided with a tiled splash back to a height of at least 150mm where they abut walls. A waterproof seal between the bath must be provided using a flexible silicon mastic sealant or a sealant gasket with a similar degree (high) elasticity.

Where showers are provided they must be either purpose designed waterproof shower cubicles or formed from a proper shower base with waterproof wall tiling and associated waterproof screen/doors. Seals between the shower base and walls must be provided with elastic mastic sealant as specified for baths. Shower trays should be minimum 800 mm x 800 mm

Showers which rely on a curtain to contain the water spray are not permitted above the ground floor.

Baths or showers shall not be provided in kitchens.

All baths and showers must be provided with an adequate supply of constantly available hot and cold water and adequate drainage. Hot water to showers must be capable of being delivered at a thermostatically controlled temperature.

Wash Hand Basins

All wash hand basins must be provided with supplies of constantly available hot and cold water plus adequate drainage. Washbasins must be firmly and securely anchored to the wall which they abut or surface in which they are inset.

Unless there are severe space constraints the minimum dimension of wash-basins shall be 500mm x 400mm. All washbasins must be provided with an overflow and splash back with a minimum height of 150mm where they abut a wall and be sealed to the splash back using a flexible silicon mastic sealant.

Water Closets

Every separate room or compartment containing a WC must have: -

- An easily cleansable impervious floor covering
- Reasonably smooth wall and ceiling surfaces which can be easily cleaned and redecorated
- Adequate natural or mechanical extract ventilation supplemented by permanent background ventilation in the form of an air brick or trickle vent.
- Obscured glazing to windows and doors as appropriate

- A privacy lock fitted to the door
- WC pedestals must be securely fixed to the floor and properly connected to the drainage system in accordance with current Building Regulations
- Be provided with a high or low level cistern fitted with an efficient flushing mechanism.
- WCs accessed from outside do not count towards the overall number of WCs available for use in a property.

Cold Water Supplies

All HMOs must be provided with an adequate water supply via a proper service connection from the public supply provided by the statutory undertaker (in Stoke-on-Trent this would be Severn Trent Water).

The supply of water for drinking purposes (ie at the sink) must be taken from the rising main. Where there is any doubt as to whether a supply point is suitable for drinking water it shall be conspicuously marked accordingly.

In the rare event that a public water supply is not available the landlord must demonstrate that an adequate supply is available and that arrangements are in place to ensure that the supply is safe for drinking both from a chemical and bacteriological point of view. The Council will insist on seeing that periodical chemical and bacteriological tests are carried out to verify its wholesomeness.

All water supply pipes and any water control valves, apparatus and fittings connected with a supply of water must be protected from frost where they are vulnerable to freezing. This will generally be in any unheated common areas, but landlords should consider insulating all water pipes where central heating is not employed in the house or where the house is not likely to be heated for several days, for example, over the Christmas period.

The water supply must be capable of being turned off in case of emergency or to enable repair works to be carried out – stop valves should therefore be provided to isolate individual units of accommodation or each floor within the HMO as appropriate.

Hot Water Supplies

All systems supplying hot water must be designed and installed so that hot water is available at wash-basins, sinks, baths or showers at all reasonable times. “Creda Corvette” type batch boiling appliances are not acceptable as a means of heating water. Electric instantaneous type heaters are only acceptable for sinks if they are rated at 5 Kilowatts or above and are fitted with a proper hot water delivery arm.

The cost of supplying hot water to wash-basins, sinks, baths or showers which are exclusive to particular lets may be met out of general rental charges or may be charged for by meter so long as the occupier of the let has total and exclusive control over the use of that hot water.

Any hot water storage tank must be provided with an accessible stop cock to the down service pipe, and be adequately insulated.

Hot water to showers must be capable of being delivered at a thermostatically controlled temperature.

Disposal of Waste Water And Drainage

All waste pipes serving sinks, wash hand basins, baths and showers must be of the appropriate diameter and fitted with a trap. Waste pipes must be adequately supported along their entire length to prevent sagging and to maintain proper drainage falls. Waste water must be discharged in to the correct drainage system in accordance with current Building Regulations and Water Authority Bye-Laws.

Electrical Safety and Sockets.

A suitable number of appropriately sited electrical sockets must be provided throughout the property. For example in a single bedroom there must be a minimum of 2 sockets, in a double bedroom a minimum of 3 sockets, and in a bedroom used as a study between 4 and six sockets depending upon size of room. Living rooms must have a minimum of 4 sockets. Kitchen requirements will vary according to the size and layout of the kitchen, but will commonly require a minimum of 12 or more sockets, several below work surfaces for appliances such as fridges, freezers, washing machines and dishwashers.

Electrical installations should be checked by a qualified electrician every five years unless a shorter interval is advised. It is also recommended that the installation is checked every time the tenancy changes, with a visual inspection every year for tenancies lasting longer than 12 months. Any electrical appliances supplied should be P.A.T. checked every two years.