



## **ACCREDITED PROPERTY SCHEME**

### **ACCOMMODATION STANDARDS**

#### **CATEGORY B PROPERTIES – Houses in Multiple Occupation: Shared Accommodation**

Properties occupied on a shared basis. This type is found most commonly amongst students, but is increasingly formed by groups of people coming together in the house who share certain amenities as they wish but can have individual facilities, such as a bedroom.

#### **Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO).**

HMOs that have three or more storeys and are occupied by five or more tenants living as more than one household (unless they are a family) must have a licence from the Local Authority to operate. Further details on licensing are available from Strategic Housing Services or at [www.lancaster.gov.uk](http://www.lancaster.gov.uk). Minimum amenity standards apply to licensable HMOs, which are detailed later in this document.

Owners/managers of HMOs should have regard to the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 available from [www.lancaster.gov.uk](http://www.lancaster.gov.uk).

#### **General**

Any dwelling (including the structure, associated outbuildings, gardens, yards, amenity space and means of access) should provide a safe and healthy environment for any potential occupier or visitor.

This is assessed using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, that does not set out minimum standards but is concerned with avoiding, or at the very least, minimising potential hazards. This means that landlords should review conditions regularly to try to see where and how their properties can be improved and made safer. More details on this can be found in the document: Housing Health and Safety Rating System, Guidance for Landlords and Property Related Professionals available from the Department for Communities and Local Government on [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk).

**The exterior and structural elements of the dwelling should be in a reasonable state of physical and decorative repair.**

**All water, gas and electricity installations within the dwelling should be safe, in a proper working order and tested in accordance with regulation.**

#### **Natural and Artificial Lighting**

All habitable rooms, including kitchens with dining/living space, shall have an adequate level of natural lighting. This will be provided via a clear glazed window(s) and/or door(s). Normally the glazed area to be equivalent to at least one-tenth of the floor area.

Additional requirements may apply to basement rooms (please consult).

All working kitchens, bathrooms and WC's are to be provided, where practicable, with a window. Windows to bathrooms and WC's are to be glazed with obscure glass.

Adequate electric lighting is to be provided to all habitable rooms, staircases, landings, passages, kitchens, bathrooms and WC's. On stairways, landings, corridors or passageways two-way switches should be provided where necessary to illuminate the direction of travel.

Lighting to staircases, landings and passages may be controlled by time switches or other devices having a similar effect but these must be set to allow adequate time for traversing.

## **Ventilation**

All habitable rooms, kitchens, bathrooms and WC's need to have a minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.3m (7'6"). For rooms with a sloping ceiling (such as attics) there must be a minimum height of 2.3m over at least half the floor area.

All habitable rooms, including kitchens with dining/living space, need to be adequately ventilated. This is to be done directly to the outside by a window(s). The window(s) must be capable of being opened to an adequate extent (normally defined as being an open area equivalent to one twentieth the floor area). Some part of the opening also needs to be at least 1.75m (5'9") above the floor level.

Working kitchens, bathrooms and WC's should comply with the above, or be fitted with mechanical ventilation providing a minimum of three air changes per hour operated from the lighting circuit of the room and having a 15 minute overrun.

Additional requirements may apply to underground rooms (please consult).

*Note:* Suitable and sufficient permanent ventilation must always be provided and maintained in any room in which there is a gas heating appliance.

## **Space Heating**

Each habitable room shall be provided with a fixed heating appliance (capable of heating the room to a temperature of 18 degrees centigrade when the outside temperature is 1 degree centigrade) under the direct control of the occupants. This provision should be efficient, safely designed and be so sited and guarded as to minimise the risks to health and safety.

## **Energy Performance**

All properties must submit a valid EPC at the time of application which is rated E or above.

Storage tanks and pipework together with hot water cylinders should be insulated.

A minimum of 250mm loft insulation should be fitted to accessible loft spaces.

Where practicable, attic rooms should be fitted with ceiling insulation.

## **Carbon Monoxide**

All properties with gas or solid fuel appliances must have carbon monoxide alarms fitted in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

## **Power Supply**

Each habitable room and kitchen should be provided with an electrical power supply. Normally each living and dining room and bedrooms should have at least two double 13-amp sockets, kitchens four double sockets (six when kitchen/dining room). One socket should also be provided on each stair-landing level.

## **Water Supply**

Each separate occupancy should have an adequate piped supply of wholesome water. Cold water should normally be supplied direct from the rising main.

## **Facilities for the Storage, Preparation and Cooking of Food**

Where all or some of the units of accommodation within an HMO do not contain any cooking facilities, a suitably located kitchen must be provided of such layout and size and equipped with such facilities as to adequately enable those sharing the facilities to store, prepare and cook food. One set of kitchen facilities must be available for every 5 occupants.

Shared kitchens must be provided with the following, which must be supplied in sufficient quantity for the number of people sharing the facilities:

- A sink comprising at least a single fixed impervious bowl with a drainer, properly located within a base unit and provided with an adequate supply of hot and cold running water. Immediately adjacent surfaces to be non-porous and reasonably smooth to facilitate cleaning. The provision of a second sink in larger HMOs may not be necessary if a dishwasher is provided.
- A cooker with an oven, a grill and four rings. Microwave ovens may be satisfactory as supplementary cooking appliances.
- Electrical sockets.
- Fixed work surface for the preparation of food which is readily cleansable (As a guide, 1000 x 500mm for the first person plus 500mm per additional person)
- Adequate food stores or cupboards
- A refrigerator with adequate freezer compartment (or separate freezer)
- Cupboard/drawer space for crockery, pots and pans
- Appropriate extractor fans.

No shared kitchen facility should be more than one floor distant from the users of that facility. This will not apply if dining facilities are provided on the same or not more than one floor distance from the kitchen.

## **Washing and Toilet Facilities.**

All bathrooms should be suitably located and WC's provided at the rate of one separate WC for every five persons, and situated not more than one floor distant from any of its users. Each bathroom and WC compartment must be capable of providing privacy and where shared by two or more households it must be accessed from a common area.

- All bathrooms and WCs must be adequately heated and ventilated
- A wash hand basin must be provided for each WC.
- All baths, showers and wash hand basins must be equipped with taps providing a constant and adequate supply of hot and cold water.
- The wash hand basins should be of adequate size for normal personal hygiene purposes including personal washing, cleaning of teeth and shaving, unless in a WC separate from a bathroom then a small hand rinse basin will suffice.

There are minimum standards applicable to licensable HMOs relating to the number of bathrooms, toilets and wash hand basins. These are detailed below. In non-licensable HMOs, the same standards are desirable for accreditation purposes, although more flexibility can be applied to smaller HMOs.

## SCHEDULE OF AMENITY PROVISIONS IN RELATION TO NUMBER OF PERSONS

1-4 Persons	<b>No requirement for wash hand basins (whb's) in sleeping rooms</b>  <b>At least 1 bathroom and 1 WC (the bathroom and WC may be combined)</b>  <b>WHB not required in bedrooms</b>
5 persons	<b>Where reasonably practicable, 1 WHB required in each sleeping room, plus:</b>  <b>1 bathroom, AND</b>  <b>1 separate WC with WHB (but the WC can be contained within a second bathroom)</b>
6-10 persons	<b>Where reasonably practicable, 1 WHB required in each sleeping room, plus:</b>  <b>2 bathrooms, AND</b>  <b>2 separate WCs with WHBs (but the one of the WCs can be contained within one of the bathrooms)</b>
11-15 persons	<b>Where reasonably practicable, 1 WHB required in each sleeping room plus:</b>  <b>3 bathrooms AND</b>  <b>3 separate WCs with WHBs (but the WHBs can be contained in 2 of the bathrooms)</b>

### Drainage

The house shall be provided with an effective system, both above and below ground for the drainage of foul, waste and surface water.

### Refuse Storage

Refuse storage containers shall be provided sufficient for the needs of the house, located on a hard standing with suitable access. Normally one standard dustbin or equivalent should be provided for each household.

### Security

All external doors and frames shall be secure and fitted with five-lever mortise deadlocks and provided with a door chain or viewer. All locks on final exit doors should be openable from the inside without the use of a key. All accessible windows shall be secure and fitted with window locks.

## Means of Escape and Other Fire Precautions

The property shall be provided with an adequate means of escape from fire, together with other fire precautions including a detection and an early warning system. A protected escape route should be provided, not through a risk room (kitchen or living room).

The kitchen/s shall be provided with a fire blanket affording a coverage of at least 1 m2. The blankets are to be securely fixed to a wall and located so as to be accessible at all times (they must not be sited above cookers/ovens or behind doors).

Because each property is different a firm fire safety solution cannot be provided here, so please consult for further individual guidance, or refer to the document "Housing – Fire Safety, Guidance on fire safety provisions for certain types of existing housing" available on the Council's website.

## Furnishings and Fittings

Where furnishings and fittings are provided they should be of reasonable standard and comply with current legislation.

The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire)(Safety) Regulations 1988 apply to the provision in rented properties of upholstered furniture and cover such items of furniture as headboards, settees, chairs, sofa-beds, pillows, cushions, mattresses, bedbases or upholstered nursery goods. Essentially the regulations require that filling materials meet relevant ignitability tests and that covering material meets the match and cigarette resistance tests. In practice landlords need to ensure that all upholstered furniture they supply has a sewn-in label with a summary of the measures taken to ensure compliance with the regulations. It will help landlords if they keep records and receipts for any furniture they buy for tenants and can clearly identify which is their own and which is their tenant's furniture.

The following is suggested:-

<u>Living Room</u>	<u>Bedroom :</u>
3 piece suite or easy chairs for the number of occupants Curtains Carpet Small table/coffee table Dining table and chairs (unless provided elsewhere)	Double or single bed with mattress Wardrobe Dressing table/chest of drawers Curtains Carpet

## Space Standards

The following are minimum space standards based on optimum shape and layout. In practice it may be necessary to have more generous space to fit in all the facilities/furnishings required and to provide a circulation area which permits safe use.

Each bedroom/study shall be for occupation by one person.

### Bedroom / Study

At least 10 m2 (108 sq. ft.) except where a separate living room is provided which is not a kitchen or a kitchen dining room, in which case the bedroom shall be at least 6.5 m2 (70 sq.ft.)

## Common Rooms

There shall be provided in accordance with the following minimum floor areas :-  
*either:-*

- |      |                                     |   |
|------|-------------------------------------|---|
| i)   | Kitchen(s)<br>and<br>Dining room(s) | 1.4 m2 (15 sq.ft.) per person<br><br>1.4 m2 (15 sq.ft.) per person  |
|      |                                     | <i>or</i>   |
| ii)  | Combined kitchen/dining room(s)     | 2.3 m2 (25 sq.ft.) per person                                       |
|      |                                     | and where necessary   |
| iii) | Living room(s)                      | 1.9 m2 (20 sq.ft.) per person<br>[minimum area 9.3 m2 (100 sq.ft.)] |
|      |                                     | <i>or</i>   |
| iv)  | Combined living/dining room(s)      | 2.3 m2 (20 sq.ft.) per person                                       |

## **Basement/Underground Rooms**

All basement rooms should comply with Lancaster City Council's standards for this type of accommodation (details available from Private Housing Services).

All rooms should:

- Have sufficient natural light during daylight hours to enable normal domestic tasks such as reading or cooking to be carried out without eyestrain.
- Have sufficient open space outside the window to both allow for adequate light penetration and reasonable outlook
- Have a floor to ceiling height of at least 2.1m

## **External Areas**

All external areas within the curtilage of the property shall be kept in a neat and tidy condition at all times. Planting and fences at entrances to the property will be kept low to prevent screening from view.