

# Amenity Standards, Minimum Room Sizing and Management Standards Document



Standards Applicable to all Licensable Part 2 HMOs – Revised August 2023

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## **1. Introduction**

This document sets out the amenity standards, minimum room sizes and management standards for landlords, licence holders and managers operating licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in North Devon. Please note these are minimum standards, and it is expected that properties will meet or exceed these requirements.

If the standards outlined in this document are not reasonably practicable based on the age and layout of your property, please contact us and we will discuss alternative options with you.

Should your property have more than 20 occupants, please contact us directly so we can discuss this further with you.

### **1.1 What is an HMO?**

The Housing Act 2004 defines a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) as a building or part of a building (e.g. a flat) which:

- Two or more households occupy, and share one or more basic amenities (toilet, bathroom, cooking facilities).
- Is a converted building not entirely comprising of self-contained flats.
- Is converted into self-contained flats, but the conversion does not comply with the Building Regulations 1991, and less than 2/3 of the flats are owner occupied.

An HMO could be, but is not restricted to:

- A house split into separate bedsits,
- A shared house or flat, where the sharers are not members of the same family,
- A hostel,
- A bed-and-breakfast hotel that is used not just for holidays, or,
- Shared accommodation for students.

### **1.2 What is a household defined as?**

A household refers to a person living alone or persons who are all members of the same family that are related to one another as a couple (married or not and including same-sex couples), or related to one another as a parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece or cousin (stepchildren, half blood relatives and foster children are also included).

### **1.3 Mandatory licensing of HMOs**

From April 2018, all HMOs with five or more occupants from two or more separate households, who share a bathroom, toilet or kitchen are required to be licenced by law. The introduction of this legislation removed the three-

storey rule, meaning all properties which are less than three-storeys, and meet the above criteria, are now required to be licensed as Part 2 HMOs by the Council.

The new legislation also includes the implementation of national minimum sleeping room sizes and waste disposal provision requirements.

A Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) assessment will be carried out by an officer at the Council within 5 years of a property obtaining a HMO licence. The assessment highlights any deficiencies or hazards in a property and scores them according to their likelihood of risk. If a deficiency corresponds to a Category 1 or 2 hazard, action will be required to remove the risk.

#### 1.4 Exemptions to HMO licensing

- A property with 2 persons forming 2 households,
- An owner occupied property with 2 lodgers,
- Buildings controlled by:
  - Public bodies,
  - Registered social landlords,
  - Educational establishments,
  - Religious establishments, and
  - Buildings provided for specific use and covered by defined legislation (e.g. prisons, children's homes, immigration centres etc.).

#### 1.5 Planning permission

If you have any queries relating to planning permission or building classifications please contact the [planning department](#) who will assist you with your queries.

#### 1.6 Further information

Further information relating to HMOs, including information pertaining to landlords of HMOs and tenants living in HMOs can be found on our [website](#).

Please note, we do not permit rooms within licensed properties to be rented out on a holiday let basis (e.g. via Airbnb, Vrbo etc.). All living accommodation must be occupied by persons as their only or main residence or by persons who are to be treated as so occupying it (e.g. on a permanent basis or in line with Section 259 of the Housing Act 2004).

**Commented [TR1]:** Amendment to policy to include new information regarding mixed use HMOs and holiday lets

## **2. Heating requirements**

The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006.

Applies to bedrooms and bedsits, and bathrooms.

### Prescribed standards:

- Each unit of living accommodation in a HMO must be equipped with adequate means of space heating, and kept in proper working order.

### Locally agreed standards:

- The heating is capable of maintaining an internal temperature of 21°C when the outside temperature is -1°C;
- The heating is capable of being controlled by the occupier;
- Heating should be suitable and permanently fixed;
- Each shower room or bathroom should have a heating appliance.

### Justification:

- Adverse health impacts are known to begin after the internal temperature of the house falls below 19°C, and a healthy indoor temperature is 21°C. Therefore, it is important that the heating is suitable and occupiers have access to these controls.
- The heating should be fixed to reduce the likelihood of fire.
- Fixed heating also reduces the likelihood of hazards associated with excess cold and excess heat, as it reduces the likelihood of areas of extreme temperature in the property. This also reduces hazards associated with damp and mould by reducing the incidence of condensation and the prevalence of cold surfaces.

## **3. Personal washing facilities and WC's**

The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007.

Applies to wash hand basins, baths, showers and WC's.

### Prescribed standards:

- Where all or some of the units of living accommodation in an HMO do not contain bathing and toilet facilities for the exclusive use of each individual household there must be an adequate number of bathrooms, toilets and wash-hand basins suitable for personal washing for the number of persons sharing those facilities; and where reasonably practicable there must be a wash hand basin with appropriate splash back in each unit, having regard to the age and character of the HMO, the size and layout of each flat and its existing provision for wash-hand basins, toilets and bathrooms;
- All baths, showers and wash hand basins in an HMO must be equipped with taps providing an adequate supply of cold and constant hot water;
- All bathrooms in an HMO must be suitably and adequately heated and ventilated;
- All bathrooms and toilets in an HMO must be of an adequate size and layout;
- All baths, showers, toilets and wash hand basins in an HMO must be fit for the purpose;
- All bathrooms and toilets in an HMO must be suitably located in or in relation to the living accommodation in the HMO.

Locally adopted standards:

- Bathrooms should not be more than two-storeys away from any bedroom and should be accessible from communal areas;
- Bathrooms must have mechanical ventilation to the outside air in addition to any window(s);
- Ventilation should not be obstructed;
- Bathrooms and toilets must have a layout satisfactory to the Council;
- Bathrooms must have a sufficient fixed heating source.

Locally adopted standards table:

<b>Number of occupiers sharing facilities</b>	<b>Number of bathrooms and WCs required</b>
1-4	1 x bathroom containing a fixed bath/shower; and 1 X WC (this may be contained in the bathroom, or in a separate compartment with its own wash hand basin)

Number of occupiers sharing facilities	Number of bathrooms and WCs required
5	1 x bathroom containing a fixed bath/shower; and 1 x separate WC in a room containing a wash hand basin  <b>Or</b> , 2 complete bathrooms* are accepted.
6-10	2 x bathrooms containing fixed baths/showers; and 2 x WCs in rooms containing wash hand basins (one of the WCs may be contained within one of the bathrooms)  <b>Or</b> , 3 complete bathrooms* are accepted.
11-15	3 x bathrooms containing fixed baths/showers; and 3 x WCs in rooms containing wash hand basins (two of these WCs may be contained within two of the bathrooms)  <b>Or</b> , 4 complete bathrooms* are accepted.
16+	4 x bathrooms containing fixed baths/showers; and 4 x WCs in rooms containing wash hand basins (three of these WCs may be contained within three of the bathrooms)  <b>Or</b> , 5 complete bathrooms* are accepted.

\*Please note, a complete bathroom is defined for the purposes of this document as a bathroom with a WC, wash hand basin and a fixed shower/bath.

Any tenants who have exclusive use of en suite facilities are excluded from the total number of occupiers sharing bathroom facilities.

If reasonably practicable, wash hand basins are to be provided in each individual unit of accommodation. It is up to the landlord to demonstrate it is not reasonably practicable in every room. As an alternative, a wash hand basin must be provided within each shared bathroom and separate compartment containing a WC.

All rooms containing a toilet must also contain a wash hand basin.

Justification:

- A sufficient number of amenities reduces the number of hazards associated with sanitary and personal hygiene.

- Ventilation extracts and reduces moisture-laden air contributing to damp and mould.
- Excess cold is reduced by ensuring bathrooms are sufficiently heated.
- An appropriate bathroom layout reduces hazards associated with the position and operability of amenities etc.

#### **4. Facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food (shared facilities)**

The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

Applies to shared kitchens.

##### Prescribed standards:

Where all or some of the units of accommodation within the HMO do not contain any facilities for the cooking of food:

- There must be a kitchen, suitably located in relation to the living accommodation, and of such layout and size and equipped with such facilities so as to adequately enable those sharing the facilities to store, prepare and cook food.
- The kitchen must be equipped with the following equipment, which must be fit for the purpose and supplied in a sufficient quantity for the number of those sharing the facilities:
  - Sinks with draining boards;
  - An adequate supply of cold and constant hot water to each sink supplied;
  - Installations or equipment for the cooking of food;
  - Sufficient number of electrical sockets;
  - Worktops for the preparation of food;
  - Cupboards for the storage of food or kitchen and cooking utensils;
  - Refrigerators with an adequate freezer compartment (or, where the freezer compartment is not adequate, adequate separate freezers);
  - Appropriate refuse disposal facilities;
  - Appropriate extractor fans, fire blankets and fire doors.

Locally adopted standards:

**Shared Kitchen Facilities**

<b>Numbers of occupants sharing</b>	<b>Cooking appliances</b>	<b>Sinks and drainers</b>	<b>Fridge freezers</b>
1-5	1 x oven with grill 1 x 4 ring hob 1 x microwave	1 x sink with drainer and tiled splashback, with constant hot and cold water	1 x 150L refrigerator and, 1 x 150L freezer <b>or</b> , 1 x combined fridge-freezer
6-10	2 x ovens with grills 2 x 4 ring hob 1 x microwave	2 x sinks with drainers and tiled splashback, with constant hot and cold water <b>or</b> , 1 x sink and, 1 x dishwasher	2 x 150L refrigerators and, 2 x 150L freezers <b>or</b> , 2 x combined fridge-freezers
11-15	3 x ovens with grills 3 x 4 ring hob 1 x microwave <b>or</b> , 2 x ovens with grills, 3 x 4 ring hob and, 2 x microwaves with grills	3 x sinks with drainer and tiled splashback, with constant hot and cold water <b>or</b> , 2 x sinks and, 1 x dishwasher	3 x 150L refrigerators and, 3 x 150L freezers <b>or</b> , 3 x combined fridge-freezers
16+	4 x ovens with grills 4 x 4 ring hob 2 x microwave <b>or</b> , 3 x ovens with grills, 4 x 4 ring hob 3 x microwaves with grills	4 x sinks with drainers and tiled splashback, with constant hot and cold water <b>or</b> , 3 x sinks and, 1 x dishwasher	4 x 150L refrigerators and, 4 x 150L freezers <b>or</b> , 4 x combined fridge-freezers

Layout

- Ovens should not be located under windows or next to doors or thoroughfares.



- No living accommodation should be more than two-storeys away from the shared kitchen.

#### Worktops

- Fixed worktops with a smooth impervious surface for food preparation, minimum size 500mm x 2000mm per every 5 occupiers.

#### Electrical sockets

- There should be an adequate number of electrical sockets to allow for every main appliance (e.g. oven, fridge/freezer, microwave, washing machine etc.), plus 1 socket for every occupant.

#### Food storage unit

- Each occupant should have access to a double food storage cupboard (minimum capacity 0.16m<sup>3</sup>) and drawer space.

#### Ventilation

- Each kitchen should have a mechanical extractor fan in addition to an openable window.

#### Waste storage

- Waste storage facilities must comply with the requirements below.

#### Fire blankets and fire doors

- Each kitchen must be provided with 1 fire blanket.
- Kitchens should have fire doors with 30/60 minute fire resistance.

Please note, if hostels provide all main meals, the kitchen facilities are to be provided for every 10 occupants and the ovens can be replaced with microwaves.

Tenants are encouraged to fully load dishwashers and use energy efficient/economy settings where possible to reduce energy and water use.

### **5. Facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food (individual use facilities)**

The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007.

Applies to individual use kitchens.

Prescribed standards:

- Where a unit of living accommodation contains kitchen facilities for the exclusive use of the individual household, and there are no other kitchen facilities available for that household, that unit must be provided with:
  - Adequate appliances and equipment for the cooking of food;
  - A sink with an adequate supply of cold and constant hot water;
  - A work top for the preparation of food;
  - Sufficient electrical sockets;
  - A cupboard for the storage of kitchen utensils and crockery;
  - A refrigerator.
  
- The standards referred to shall not apply in relation to a unit of accommodation where:
  - The landlord is not contractually bound to provide such appliances or equipment;
  - The occupier of the unit of accommodation is entitled to remove such appliances or equipment from the HMO; or
  - The appliances or equipment are otherwise outside the control of the landlord.

Locally adopted standards:

**Individual Kitchen Facilities**

<b>Numbers of occupants (bedsit)</b>	<b>Cooking appliances</b>	<b>Sinks and drainers</b>	<b>Fridge freezers</b>
1 person bedsit	1 x oven and grill 1 x 2 ring hob	1 x sink with drainer and tiled splashback with constant hot and cold water	1 x 150L refrigerator with a freezer compartment
2 person bedsit	1 x oven and grill 1 x 4 ring hob	1 x sink with drainer and tiled splashback with constant hot and cold water	1 x 150L refrigerator with a freezer compartment

Worktops

- Fixed worktops with a smooth impervious surface for food preparation, minimum size 500mm x 1000mm.

### Electrical sockets

- There should be an adequate number of electrical sockets to allow for every main appliance (e.g. oven, fridge/freezer, microwave, washing machine etc.), plus 1 socket for every occupant.

### Food storage unit

- Each occupant should have access to a double food storage cupboard (minimum capacity 0.16m<sup>3</sup>) and drawer space.

### Justification:

- An appropriate layout ensures users can safely move around the area and prepare food sufficiently. Additionally, it reduces hazards associated with the position and operability of amenities etc.
- The sufficient location of appliances (ovens especially) reduces the incidence of hazards associated with fire, carbon monoxide, and flames and hot surfaces etc.
- An adequate number of appliances ensures users can prepare and cook food, and it also reduces the likelihood of food safety related hazards.
- A satisfactory number of electrical sockets reduces the likelihood of sockets being overloaded, reducing the likelihood of electrical hazards and fire.
- Waste storage facilities mitigate hazards relating to domestic hygiene, pests and refuse.

## **6. Mandatory requirements in HMOs**

### **6.1 Space standards**

The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Mandatory Conditions of Licences) (England) Regulations 2018.

Applies to sleeping accommodation and shared kitchens.

#### Prescribed standards:

- 6.51m<sup>2</sup> for one person over 10 years of age.
- 10.22m<sup>2</sup> for two persons over 10 years of age.

- 4.64m<sup>2</sup> for one child under the age of 10 years.
- Where any room in the HMO is used as sleeping accommodation by persons aged over 10 years only, it is not used as such by more than the maximum number of persons aged over 10 years specified in the licence;
- Where any room in the HMO is used as sleeping accommodation by persons aged under 10 years only, it is not used as such by more than the maximum number of persons aged under 10 years specified in the licence;
- Where any room in the HMO is used as sleeping accommodation by persons aged over 10 years and persons aged under 10 years, it is not used as such by more than the maximum number of persons aged over 10 years specified in the licence and the maximum number of persons aged under 10 years so specified;
- The licence holder must notify the local housing authority of any room in the HMO with a floor area of less than 4.64 square metres;
- Any room in the HMO with a floor area less than 4.64 square metres must not be used as sleeping accommodation;
- A reference to a number of persons using a room in an HMO as sleeping accommodation does not include a person doing so as a visitor of an occupier of the HMO.
- A room is used as sleeping accommodation if it is normally used as a bedroom, whether or not it is also used for other purposes;
- Any part of the floor area of a room in relation to which the height of the ceiling is less than 1.5 metres is not to be taken into account in determining the floor area of that room for the purposes of this paragraph;
- Space standards do not apply to an HMO which is managed by a charity registered under the Charities Act 2011 and which:
  - a) Is a night shelter, or
  - b) Consists of temporary accommodation for persons suffering or recovering from drug or alcohol abuse or a mental disorder.

Locally adopted standards:

### Shared house type HMO

Commonly occupiers in shared house type HMOs share facilities and there is an element of communal occupancy as they tend not to live completely independent of one another. Occupiers will often share bathroom, WC and cooking facilities and there will often be a communal living room. Each occupier may have a separate tenancy agreement, or they may have a joint contract as a group of students or young professionals.

Numbers of occupants	Minimum room size
1 person over 10 years	6.51m <sup>2</sup>
2 people over 10yrs	10.22m <sup>2</sup>
1 child under 10yrs	4.64m <sup>2</sup>

#### Shared kitchen

- The kitchen must adequately fit the number of appliances/facilities required per occupant as stated above, there must also be room for occupants to sufficiently move around the kitchen to prepare food.
- Where practicable an area for dining should also be provided within the kitchen.

#### Shared living room (only required if there is insufficient space for dining in the kitchen)

- 2m<sup>2</sup> per every occupant (up to 6 occupants)
- 1m<sup>2</sup> per every additional occupant (7 occupiers or more) (e.g. 8 occupants would require 14m<sup>2</sup> living space)

### Bedsit type HMOs

Occupiers in bedsit type HMOs tend to live completely independently of each other. Commonly these HMOs comprise of units of living accommodation that are rented out as individual lettings with exclusive use of certain rooms. Occupiers may share some amenities, but they do not usually have a communal living or dining room.

Type of room/ unit of accommodation	Numbers of occupants	Minimum room size
Bedsit and living room with separate kitchen	1	9m <sup>2</sup>

<b>Type of room/ unit of accommodation</b>	<b>Numbers of occupants</b>	<b>Minimum room size</b>
Bedsit and living room with separate kitchen	2	14m <sup>2</sup>
Separate kitchen	1 or 2	The kitchen must adequately fit the number of appliances/facilities required per occupant as stated above

<b>Type of room/ unit of accommodation</b>	<b>Numbers of occupants</b>	<b>Minimum room size</b>
Bedsit room with exclusive kitchen and living space	1	14m <sup>2</sup>
Bedsit room with exclusive kitchen and living space	2	19m <sup>2</sup>

Any separate bedrooms must comply with the minimum room sizes above for shared accommodation.

Additional information:

No more than one household shall occupy any room used for sleeping accommodation, unless the individuals concerned are known to each other and consent to share the room. No more than two persons may occupy a room regardless of size under any circumstances.

A household refers to a person living alone or persons who are all members of the same family that are related to one another as a couple (married or not and including same-sex couples), or related to one another as a parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece or cousin (stepchildren, half blood relatives and foster children are also included).

Please note, where showers are installed within bedrooms (excluding en suite bathrooms) an assessment will be made on a case by case basis to determine whether this arrangement utilises space from the minimum size of the sleeping accommodation required.

Justification:

- A sufficient room size and layout encourages occupants to eat and store food in the kitchen and dining areas, reducing the likelihood of hazards relating to pest infestations in individual rooms.
- A sufficient layout and size also reduces the number of hazards associated with the position and operability of amenities etc., flames and hot surfaces, falls on the stairs, and falls between levels (as occupants are less likely to carry hot food through the house).
- Larger rooms allow for more space and privacy, and for the storage of clothes and other items. Additionally, more people may now be working from home so may require additional space for office equipment.

## **6.2 Waste disposal**

The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Mandatory Conditions of Licences) (England) Regulations 2018.

Applies to waste provisions.

Prescribed standards:

- The licence holder must comply with any scheme provided by the local housing authority to the licence holder and which relates to the storage and disposal of household waste at the HMO.

Locally adopted standards:

### **Recycling**

- Indoor food caddy 1 x 7 litre per every 5 occupants
- Food recycling bin 1 x 23 litre per every 5 occupants
- Green or black recycling box 1 x 55 litre per every 5 occupants
- Blue recycling box 1 x 55 litre per every 5 occupants
- Brown bag 1 x every 5 occupants
- Green bag 1 x every 5 occupants

### **Refuse**

- Wheeled bin or equivalent 1 x 240 litre per every 5 occupants

Please note: Adequate internal (*in a non-habitable room*) or external storage must be provided to ensure waste for recycling can be stored for 7 days, and waste for landfill/incineration, can be stored for up to 14 days.

An optional chargeable garden waste collection service is also available.

Justification:

- Encourages recycling, which reduces the pollution caused by waste, and promotes sustainable consumption.
- Enables the disposal of waste to reduce the likelihood of hazards relating to domestic hygiene, pests and refuse.

## **7. HMO management**

The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006. For section 257 HMOs, similar duties are set out in the Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007.

Applies to managers of HMOs.

Prescribed standards:

### **7.1 Manager duties**

- Duty of manager to provide information to occupier.
  - Name, address and any telephone contact numbers are made available to each household in the HMO;
  - Such details are clearly displayed in a prominent position in the HMO.
- Duty of manager to take safety measures.
  - All means of escape from fire are maintained and kept free from obstruction, and maintained in good order and repair;
  - Firefighting equipment and fire alarms are kept in good repair;
  - All fire escape notices are clearly visible to occupiers;
  - All such measures must be taken to protect occupants from injury.
- Duty of the manager to maintain water supply and drainage.
  - Water supply and drainage must be maintained in a good, clean and working condition;
  - Any tank cistern or similar receptacle used for the storage of water used for drinking or other domestic purposes should be suitably covered, and maintained in a clean and working condition;
  - Water fittings must be protected from frost damage;
  - The water supply must not be interrupted at any time.



- Duty of manager to supply and maintain gas and electricity.
  - Updated gas certificates to be provided to the council within 7 days of a request. Gas safety inspections must be carried out by a recognised engineer;
  - Periodic electrical inspections carried out to statutory requirements by a competent person every 5 years;
  - Updated electrical safety certificates specifying the results of the test must be provided to the council within 7 days;
  - The gas and electricity supply must not be interrupted at any time.
  
- Duty of the manager to maintain common parts, fixtures, fittings and appliances.
  - All common parts must be maintained in a good decorative repair, in a safe and working condition and be kept clear from obstruction;
  - Handrails and banisters are supplied and kept in good repair;
  - Stair coverings are safely fixed and kept in good repair;
  - All windows and ventilation is kept in good repair;
  - Common parts must be fitted with adequate light fittings, fixtures and appliances, and kept in good repair and in working order;
  - Outbuildings, yards and forecourts must be maintained and in good condition and order;
  - Gardens are kept in a safe and tidy condition;
  - Boundary walls, fences and railings are kept in safe repair;
  - Any such part of the HMO not in use is kept clean and free from refuse and litter.
  
- Duty of the manager to maintain living accommodation.
  - Living accommodation and furniture supplied are in a clean condition and kept in good repair;
  - Internal structures are kept in good repair;
  - Any fixtures, fittings or appliances are kept in good repair and working order;
  - Every window and means of ventilation are kept in good repair.
  
- Waste storage facilities are provided.
  - Sufficient bins or suitable receptacles are provided that are adequate for the requirements of each household;
  - Waste disposal must be in accordance with the Council's policy.

Please note, the manager of the property must be fully conversant with the above legislation.

## **7.2 Tenant duties**

Every occupier of the HMO must:

- Conduct themselves in a way that does not hinder or frustrate the manager in the performance of his duties;
- Allow the manager, for any purpose connected with the carrying out of any duty imposed on him by these Regulations, at all reasonable times to enter any living accommodation or other place occupied by that person;
- Provide the manager, at his request, with any such information as he may reasonably require for the purpose of carrying out any such duty;
- Take reasonable care to avoid causing damage to anything which the manager is under a duty to supply, maintain or repair under these Regulations;
- Store and dispose of litter in accordance with the arrangements made by the manager; and
- Comply with the reasonable instructions of the manager in respect of any means of escape from fire, the prevention of fire and the use of fire equipment.

The manager of the HMO should advise tenants of their duties outlined above.

## **8. Miscellaneous recommendations**

The following recommendations are not prescribed in statute or locally set. They are standards landlords are recommended to look at implementing for best practice, in order to improve the property for both themselves and their tenants. The miscellaneous recommendations will not routinely form a part of the licence conditions.

### **8.1 Recommended minimum bedroom sizes**

Whilst there are prescribed standards set by The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Mandatory Conditions of Licences) (England) Regulations 2018, the Council recommends landlords work towards providing accommodation that fits the recommended minimum room sizes set out below:

### Shared house type HMO

Numbers of occupants	Minimum room size
1 person over 10 years	7.5m <sup>2</sup>
2 people over 10yrs	11.5m <sup>2</sup>
1 child under 10yrs	6.0m <sup>2</sup>

These room sizes have been developed in accordance with the minimum technical housing standards for affordable accommodation.

There is evidence to suggest there is an association between space and wellbeing, and thus it is proposed that landlords work towards these standards as best practice to promote positive tenant mental health and wellbeing.

### 8.2 Energy efficiency

Since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018, there has been a legal requirement that all properties let on new tenancies (including renewals) must hold an EPC Band E. Moreover, this has been a requirement since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 on all privately rented properties (even where there has been no change in tenancy).

We recommend licence holders take reasonable steps in improving the energy efficiency of their properties, and work towards improving the EPC towards Band C where practicable. This can be beneficial for both landlords and their tenants as:

- Properties cost less to heat, making them more attractive to potential tenants and cheaper for landlords who include bills as part of their tenancy agreement.
- The property is less likely to have deficiencies contributing towards Category 1 and 2 hazards under the HHSRS. For example, less condensation is likely to occur if the property can be kept warm, meaning a reduction in redecoration and maintenance costs.
- Property value can increase with a higher EPC Band by as much as 14%.
- Reduces fuel poverty, and ensures homes meet the Fuel Poverty (England) Regulations 2014 requirement of a Band C rating by 2030.

Additionally, in line with meeting the government target to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, sustainable measures should be encouraged (e.g. water saving initiatives, upgrading appliances, lagging of pipework, efficient fabrication of buildings, LED lighting replacements, recycling facilities etc.).

More information on the financial and environmental impacts of sustainable homes can be found in this report by the [Environment Agency](#).

### 8.3 Lead in drinking water

Exposure to lead in drinking water is one of the 29 HHSRS hazards and can be harmful to health, especially for babies and young children. Therefore, it is recommended that the licence holder or manager checks the water pipes in the property to ensure that there are no lead pipes or fittings present. The licence holder or manager should refer to the table below created by South West Water to check for lead pipework. The best places to check are under the stairs, behind the kitchen cupboards and in basements.

If you come across lead piping this should be changed. In the short term, you should encourage tenants to run the tap for approximately two minutes every morning, or after periods when the property has been left vacant. To ensure water isn't wasted, this water could be collected and used for other purposes (e.g. water plants or washing cars).

Material	Appearance	Suitable
Lead	Dull grey on the outside Easily scratched to reveal shiny silver underneath Dull sound when tapped	No
Copper	Dull brown on the outside Hard Bright copper when scratched Ringing sound when tapped with a coin	Yes
Iron	Dark grey or brown or rusty Very hard and not easily scratched Ringing sound when tapped with a coin	Yes
Plastic	Grey, blue or black	Yes

More information pertaining to lead in drinking water can be found on the [South West Water](#) website.

### 8.4 Radon Levels

High levels of radon can cause lung cancer, especially for smokers or ex-smokers. Radon produces radioactive particles that are breathed in overtime and can damage lung tissue. As such, it is noted as one of the 29 hazards assessed by the HHSRS.

Certain geological conditions can lead to above average levels of radon, including those found in parts of North Devon. Public Health England have designated certain areas of the country as radon prone areas. These are 1km<sup>2</sup> areas with properties which have a 1% chance or more of having a radon concentration at or above 200 Bq m<sup>-3</sup>. It is recommended radon levels should be reduced in homes where the annual average is more than 200 Bq m<sup>-3</sup>.

As best practice, we recommend licence holders check whether their property is located in a radon prone area using the interactive map on the Public Health England website, and advise tenants of the risks from radon.

Properties most at risk include those with subterranean storeys. If your property has a subterranean storey utilised for living accommodation, and is in a radon prone area; we recommend you order a [radon report](#) for your property, and carry out the necessary mitigation and remediation actions.

More information about radon and how to mitigate the impacts of radon in your property can be found by visiting the [Public Health England](#) website.

### **8.5 Washing and drying facilities**

Drying clothes inside the home can raise moisture levels by up to 30%, thus increasing the likelihood of mould and condensation within a property. This can pose a health risk to those prone to respiratory illnesses and allergies.

Personal Hygiene, Sanitation and Drainage is listed as one of the 29 hazards assessed by the HHSRS. In the HHSRS Operating Guidance it is recommended there should be space for a washing machine, and access to clothes drying facilities within the home. Therefore, it is recommended that landlords provide provisions for both the washing and drying of clothes (e.g. a washing machine, tumble dryer, clothes drier with a connection to an external vent, or washing line) where practicable.

The availability of clothes washing and drying facilities reduces hazards associated with damp and mould by reducing the incidence of condensation, and it can also result in a reduction in redecoration and maintenance costs associated with high moisture levels.