



THE LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY

Adopted Standards Houses in Multiple Occupation

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
HOUSING ACT 2004	2
WHAT IS A HOUSE IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION	2
LICENSING OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION.....	2
WHY HMOS HAVE THEIR OWN STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS.....	3
HMO TYPE.....	3
ROOM SIZES FOR BEDSITS AND SHARED HOUSES.....	4
ROOM SIZES FOR HOSTELS.....	5
KITCHEN FACILITIES	5
BATHROOM FACILITIES.....	6
MEASUREMENT CONSIDERATIONS	7
INSULATION AND HEATING	8
LIGHTING AND VENTILATION	8
ELECTRICS	9
GAS	10
FIRE PRECAUTIONS.....	10
SECURITY	11
WASTE MANAGEMENT.....	11
MANAGEMENT OF HMO	12
HOUSING ACT 2004 PART 1 - HOUSING CONDITIONS.....	13
PLANNING PERMISSION, THE BUILDING REGULATIONS AND COUNCIL TAX	13
ENERGY PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES.....	14
CERTAIN BUILDINGS CONVERTED INTO SELF CONTAINED FLATS	14

INTRODUCTION

These standards apply to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) located within the London Borough of Bromley and provide guidance in determining whether a property is: -

- (i) Suitable for the current/proposed number of occupiers, or
- (ii) Overcrowded, through excessive numbers of persons being accommodated or likely to be accommodated having regard to the sizes and number of rooms and amenities available.
- (iii) Satisfactory to the requirements set out within 'The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006' and other relevant legislation and guidance.

Some HMO standards are prescribed in the Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006. These standards include the provision of basic amenities in accordance with national standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation, in addition to other issues regarding room sizes, overcrowding, fire safety and health and safety hazards in accordance with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System and/or as locally adopted.

HOUSING ACT 2004

The local housing authority cannot be satisfied that the house is reasonably suitable for occupation by a particular maximum number of households or persons if they consider that it fails to meet prescribed standards for occupation by that number of households or persons.

The nationally prescribed standards are stated in Schedule 3 of the Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations 2006 ¹ (1 Statutory instrument 2006 No. 373). This document is the locally adopted standard derived from the nationally prescribed standards and gives additional detail to assist owners and officers to determine whether the standards are/will be met.

WHAT IS A HOUSE IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

A house in multiple occupation (HMO) is a house or flat that is occupied by three or more persons in two or more households where one or more amenity, for example the bathroom, is shared.

A household can be an individual, couple or family.

An example of an HMO is a house occupied by three unrelated individuals who each have their own bedroom or bedsit whilst sharing the kitchen and/or bathroom facilities within the house.

A house or flat occupied by a resident landlord and their family and three or more lodgers or tenants will also be an HMO.

LICENSING OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

Under Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004 all local authorities are required to operate the mandatory HMO licensing scheme. The London Borough of Bromley currently only operates the mandatory HMO licensing scheme. Unless exempt, HMOs with five or more residents require an HMO licence from the local authority.

To apply for an HMO licence, you should complete an HMO licence application form, which can be found, along with guidance notes, on the local authority's website.

WHY HMOS HAVE THEIR OWN STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

HMOs are not typical family homes, which is why they have their own standards and regulations that are intended to protect the health and safety of the residents and any visitors.

HMOs need to be properly managed, The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations identifies specific duties and responsibilities of the manager of an HMO as well as those of the residents.

HMOs which do not comply with standards and regulations are more at risk from overcrowding, being poorly managed and maintained and suffering from unhygienic conditions in their kitchens and bathrooms.

The following standards have been adopted by the London Borough of Bromley for houses and flats in multiple occupation (HMOs) and for certain buildings that have been converted into self-contained flats, to protect the health and safety of residents.

HMO TYPE

There are four main types of HMO - bedsit accommodation, shared houses, temporary accommodation (hostels, guesthouse and bed and breakfast), and certain buildings converted into self-contained flats.

Bedsit Accommodation

These HMOs contain bedsit accommodation where the tenants rent a room or rooms for their exclusive use whilst sharing one or more amenities with the other tenants.

Shared Houses

Occupiers of a shared house or flat will have their own bedroom and a shared kitchen and common room(s). Bathrooms may also be shared.

Hostels, Guesthouses and Bed and Breakfast

Accommodation that is provided on a non- fixed term basis for people who have no other permanent place of residence, as distinct from hotels which provide accommodation for temporary visitors to an area.

Where a hotel is being used to provide temporary accommodation, the rooms being used as temporary accommodation fall into this category for HMO standards.

Certain Buildings converted into self-contained flats - Section 257 HMOs

Under section 257 of the Housing Act 2004, buildings which have been converted into self-contained flats, either before 1991 or after 1991 without building control approval, where less than 2/3rds of the flats in the converted building are owner- occupied are HMOs.

ROOM SIZES FOR BEDSITS AND BEDROOMS IN SHARED HOUSES

Bedsit and Bedroom sizes:

Internal layouts and the provision of private and shared facilities in an HMO vary. Some will have shared common rooms and some will have bedsits with their own private living rooms.

Minimum bedroom and bedsit room sizes (m²) are shown below in Table 1. Only useable floor space (m²) is included when calculating a room's floor area. The minimum floor area will vary depending on whether or not the bedroom or bedsit has private or shared kitchen facilities and whether or not the bedroom or bedsit shares a common room.

Table 1. Minimum room sizes for bedrooms or bedsits with adequately sized shared kitchens and common rooms

1 person	7
2 persons	11

Where private cooking/kitchen facilities are provided within a bedroom or bedsit, the minimum room size shall increase by 5m². Cooking/kitchen facilities provided in a bedroom or bedsit should be located away from the entrance to the bedroom or bedsit.

Where an HMO has no shared common room the bedroom or bedsit size shall increase by a further 4m².

Examples:

A bedroom or bedsit within an HMO occupied by 1 person where there is an adequately sized shared kitchen and an adequately sized shared common room shall be a minimum of 7m².
For 2 persons sharing a bedroom or bedsit = 11m²

A bedroom or bedsit within an HMO occupied by 1 person where the kitchen facilities are in the bedroom or bedsit and there is no shared common room shall be a minimum of 7m² + 5m² + 4m² = 16m². For 2 persons sharing a bedroom or bedsit = 20m².

A bedroom or bedsit within an HMO occupied by 1 person where the kitchen facilities are in the bedroom or bedsit and there is an adequately sized shared common room, shall be a minimum of 7m² + 5m² = 12m². For 2 persons sharing a bedroom or bedsit = 16m².

Shared Kitchen Sizes:

Kitchens in a shared house with up to 5 people shall be a minimum of 7m². For each additional person, a further 1.5m² of usable floor area is required.

The criteria for kitchen facilities are detailed in Table 2: Minimum requirements for kitchen facilities.

Shared Common Rooms:

Common Rooms shall be a minimum of 11m² for up to 5 people. For each additional person a further 1m² shall be added. Where the kitchen and common room are combined, for example a kitchen-diner or open plan kitchen/living, the minimum useable floor area shall be 18m², of which the above minimum space requirements for kitchens and common rooms will apply.

A minimum of 3 double sockets must be provided in shared common rooms.

ROOM SIZES FOR HOSTELS

The minimum bedroom sizes in Table 1 apply, for each additional person sharing a bedroom a further 4m² shall be added. Shared Kitchen and common room sizes as above apply.

Where cooking facilities are provided in the room, for up to 3 persons a further 5m² shall be added, for each additional person a further 1m² shall be added.

Example:

A bedroom within a hostel occupied by 1 person where there is a shared kitchen and shared common room shall be a minimum of 7m². For 2 persons = 11m². For 3 persons, 7m² + 8m² (4m² per additional person) = 15m²

A bedroom within a hostel occupied by 1 person where the kitchen facilities are in the bedroom and there is a shared common room, the minimum bedroom size shall be 7m² + 5m² = 12m². For 2 persons in 1 bedroom = 7m² + 5m² + 4m² = 16m². For 3 persons, 7m² + 5m² + 8m² (4m² per additional person) = 20m².

A bedroom within a hostel occupied by 1 person where the kitchen facilities are in the bedsit and there is no shared common room shall be a minimum of 7m² + 5m² + 4m² = 16m². For 2 persons = 7m² + 5m² + 4m² + 4m² = 20m². For 3 Persons = 7m² + 5m² + 4m² + 8m² (4m² per additional person) = 24m².

KITCHEN FACILITIES

Table 2 below details the minimum requirements for kitchen facilities.

No. of Occupants	All Shared Kitchens					Facility in the room
	3	Up to 5	6	7	Up to 10	1 or 2
Kitchen area (sqm)	7	7	8.5	10	14 (7 x 2)	5
Work surface (m) ^{* 1}	1	2	2.5	3	4	1
Power sockets above worktop	3	3 double	4 double	4 double	5 double	2 double
Hob rings	4	4	5	5	8	2
Ovens	1	1	2	2	2	1 ^{*2}
Grills	1	1	2	2	2	1 ^{*2}
Sinks/ drainers with hot and cold (drinking) water	1	1	2	2	2	1

Table 2: minimum requirements for kitchen facilities

^{*1} (600mm standard depth)

^{*2} or a safely located combination microwave/oven/grill

The layout of a kitchen shall provide adequate circulation space for the safe use of the kitchen and its appliances. Walls, floors and ceilings should be non-porous and reasonably smooth so that they can be cleaned effectively. Floors should be slip resistant.

All units of accommodation must be located within one floor distance of their kitchen unless the unit of accommodation has access to a kitchen-dining room with a dining area of at least 9m² in addition to the kitchen area, or the unit of accommodation has access to a shared dining room of at least 9m² located within one floor distance of their kitchen.

Where the requirement is for a minimum space of 14m² it is acceptable to achieve this by providing 2 rooms each of 7m².

Where 6 occupants share a kitchen a safely located combination microwave oven/grill is acceptable in place of an additional conventional oven and grill. A dishwasher is acceptable in place of an additional sink/drainage.

Gas and electrical cooking appliances should be properly fitted, in good working order and subject to regular safety checks in accordance with the relevant regulations.

A suitably located fire blanket in accordance with the current BS EN or equivalent standard shall be available.

There shall be a minimum of 1 x 500mm base unit or 1 x 1000 wall unit per an occupant for dry food storage. 1 good sized refrigerator shelf and 1 good sized freezer shelf per an occupant.

Electrical power outlet sockets shall be provided in an accessible and safe position for equipment such as refrigerators and washing machines in addition to those required in Table 2.

Recommendation - In HMOs let under separate tenancies secure storage of dry, fresh, and frozen food is desirable, either in lockable cupboards, fridge and freezer compartments or suitably stored in bedrooms.

Kitchen Facilities in hostels

In addition to the above, kitchens used for the preparation, cooking and serving of food by the owner and or manager shall comply with Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs.

BATHROOM FACILITIES

Table 3 below provides the minimum requirements for bathrooms/shower rooms and WCs.

Occupants sharing	Bathrooms*	Separate WC compartment with wash hand basin with H & C
Up to 5	1	0
6 - 10	2	1
Ensuite for 1 or 2	1	0

Table 3: Minimum requirements for bathrooms/shower rooms and WCs

* Comprising 1 Bath/Shower Unit (With Hot and Cold Water) and may contain a WC

All bathroom and toilet facilities shall be heated as appropriate, lit and ventilated. They should also be located in hygienically designed and constructed rooms, which are adequate in size and layout and are provided with appropriate wall and floor surface finishes.

Each unit of accommodation shall be located within one floor distance of a bathroom or shower room, a wash hand basin and a toilet.

Adequate size and layout – minimum floor area for bathrooms

Bath* ¹ only	2.3m ²
Bath & WHB* ²	2.5m ²
Bath,WC & WHB	2.8m ²
Shower* ³ only	1.7m ²
Shower,WC & WHB	2.5m ²
WC & WHB	1.2m ²

Table 4: Minimum floor area for bathrooms

*¹ Minimum bath size 1700mm x 700mm

*² Minimum WHB size 400mm x 350mm

*³ Minimum shower size 800mm x 800mm

The midpoint of the toilet cistern must be positioned a minimum of 450mm away from walls, and amenities.

Mechanical ventilation is required in all bathrooms and WC compartments which lack natural ventilation via an openable window. It will also be required, in addition to any natural ventilation, where necessary, to mitigate problems of damp and mould.

Recommendation: It is always recommended that where possible, in addition to any natural ventilation, mechanical ventilation is provided in all bathrooms and WC compartments

All baths, showers and wash hand basins must be located for ease of use and securely fitted so they are fixed and do not move. They must be fitted with appropriate taps, an adequate and constant supply of cold and hot water and waste traps and pipes properly connected to the mains drainage system. All toilets are to be fitted with seats and lids.

All wash hand basins and baths must be provided with at least a two-course tiled splash back and shower cubicles fully tiled or be a complete self-standing unit designed for the purpose.

A wash hand basin must be provided in a bathroom or water closet containing a toilet.

Recommendation - Floor and wall coverings around baths and showers should be designed to minimise the risk of leaks. Correctly installed specialist flooring and wallboards can help to reduce this risk. Regular maintenance checks will ensure that facilities are being used correctly and help to identify damage to seals, screens, doors and other fittings.

MEASUREMENT CONSIDERATIONS

All habitable rooms, kitchens, bathrooms, and toilet compartments shall have a minimum floor to ceiling height of 2130mm. In the case of rooms with sloping ceilings, there shall be a minimum height

of 2130mm over half of the floor area of the room. Floor area measurements shall be taken on a plane 1500mm above the floor. Any floor area where the ceiling height is less than 1500mm high shall be disregarded.

The useability of certain space and the suitability for inclusion in measurements will be at the discretion of the Local authority.

With regard to occupancy, children under the age of 1 will be discounted. Room sizes for children under the age of 10 may be smaller than those specified above but shall not be less than 4.64m².

INSULATION AND HEATING

Each unit of living accommodation in an HMO must be equipped with adequate means of space heating.

1. Heating shall be provided in every habitable room, and bathroom capable of maintaining 18°C as an internal temperature when the external temperature is –1°C.
2. The heating provision must be capable of being safely used at any time and be suitably guarded. It must be suitable, affordable to operate, appropriate to the design, layout and construction of the dwelling and be controllable by the occupants.
3. In the case of gas central heating, radiators must be fitted with thermostatic valves and a programmable timer clock fitted.
4. An electrical heating system will be acceptable in the form of a combined storage heater/panel heater that can be run on both off peak and standard day rate electricity tariffs, together with a fixed electric fan heater, located in the bathroom, powered from a fused spur. It must be capable of providing instantaneous energy efficient heating and controllability, on the optimum electricity tariff available.
5. The use of portable paraffin or oil-fired heaters and liquefied petroleum gas heaters (LPG) (bottled gas heaters) are prohibited under any circumstances, whether provided by the landlord or the tenant.

All reasonable steps should be taken to insulate HMO accommodation to improve energy efficiency and reduce condensation risk. Particular attention should be paid to basement and attic rooms and conversions must comply with Building Regulations.

LIGHTING AND VENTILATION

Natural Lighting

Every habitable room shall have adequate natural lighting. The minimum requirement for natural light provided by an unobstructed window or windows is an area of glazing equivalent to at least 1/10th of the floor area of the room.

Bedsit rooms that do not have access to shared communal living space should have some external view/outlook, not just a skylight view.

All glazing to bathrooms and water closets should be obscure.

Artificial Lighting

All habitable rooms, kitchens, bathrooms, water closets, staircases, landings and passages shall be adequately lit. Time switches may be used for landings, staircases and passages but must stay on for an adequate time.

Ventilation

All habitable rooms shall be ventilated directly to the external air by one or more openable window or windows. The minimum requirement for natural ventilation is an area of openable window equivalent to at least 1/20th of the floor area of the room.

Mechanical Extract Ventilation

All kitchens, bathrooms and toilet compartments shall be provided with natural means of ventilation, as above, but, where impracticable, mechanical ventilation will be acceptable. Mechanical ventilation must operate on suitable systems to remove moist air with minimal noise disturbance. Mechanical ventilation must comply with the Building Regulations that are current at the time of application. Any installation shall be fitted with an overrun device usually connected to the lighting circuit of the room unless the fan is humidity controlled, where this may not be possible. All rooms must have controllable trickle vents and/or windows that can be securely locked in the night-latch position to provide background ventilation without losing too much heat.

Recommendation - Positive pressure whole house ventilation systems are becoming increasingly popular with HMO landlords as a way of managing indoor air quality and reducing the risk of condensation and mould growth. All such systems must be installed and serviced in accordance with manufacturers recommendations and have room by room control.

HMOs located where air pollution levels are likely to be particularly high should be designed with air intakes that minimise pollution ingress into the building, having regard to the design principles contained in Appendix D of Building Regulation Approved Document F.

ELECTRICS

HMOs must be designed with adequate electrical power output for their expected loading. Conversion of buildings to large HMOs will require an increased electrical supply, over and above a standard domestic supply.

Electrical sockets must be adequate in number and suitably located to minimise the need for use of adaptors and trailing leads which introduce additional hazards

The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020

All privately rented accommodation, including HMOs, are required to have a current (no older than five years) satisfactory Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) or an Electrical Installation Certificate (for totally new or totally rewired properties) from an approved electrical engineer.

An approved electrical engineer will be registered with NAPIT, NICEIC or ELECSA. Alternatively, electrical engineers have the option to certify their competence by providing the local authority with an appropriate summary of their experience, insurance and qualifications covering the current Regulations and the periodic inspection, testing and certification of electrical installation.

GAS

Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (as amended)

All rented accommodation with one or more gas appliances or services must have a current (no older than one year) satisfactory Landlords Gas Safety Record from a Gas Safe registered gas engineer.

FIRE PRECAUTIONS

All premises in multiple occupation must be provided with suitable means of escape from fire and adequate other fire precautions, in accordance with the LACORS Fire Safety Guide.

Fire Detection and Alarm Systems

A mains operated or automatic fire detection and alarm system shall be provided to ensure early warning in the event of a fire

Most of these systems will have interlinked smoke and or heat detector/alarms. Some systems will also have sounders, manual call points and control panels.

Standalone non-interlinked mains powered smoke and or heat detector/alarms may also be required.

AFD systems must comply with BS 5839 and should be tested by a competent fire specialist or electrician at least once a year.

Means of Escape from the building in the event of a Fire

In most residential properties the entrance hall/staircase enclosure provide the main escape route from the building. In an HMO the escape route may need to have at least 30 minutes fire protection.

Most internal walls, ceilings and floors in a house or flat will provide 30 minutes fire protection unless they are damaged/holed. Central heating pipework often runs through walls, floors and ceilings.

Bedsits, Bedrooms, Common Rooms and Kitchens

Internal doors opening on to a protected route from risk rooms must be fire doors which are rated with at least 30 minutes fire protection, hung on 3 hinges and fitted with a suitable self-closer. They may also require intumescent strips/cold smoke seals.

Where a fire door is between an escape route and a commercial premise the fire door must be rated at least 60 minutes fire protection, hung on 3 hinges and fitted with a suitable self-closer. They may also require combined intumescent strips/cold smoke seals.

Cupboards under Stairs and on the Escape Route

Where an HMO has a 30-minute fire protected escape route, any cupboards located on the escape route or under stairs or the escape route must also be 30 minutes fire protected.

In some cases, the cupboard may be emptied and locked with the key under the manager's control.

Emergency Lighting

An HMO may require an emergency lighting system to illuminate the communal halls, landings and stairs in the event of failure of the main lighting.

Emergency lighting systems must comply with BS 5266 and should be tested by a competent fire specialist or electrician at least once a year.

Electrical supplies to AFD and emergency lighting systems should be from a separate landlord's supply.

SECURITY

External Doors

The main entrance doors to an HMO should be fitted with a surface or flush mounted night latch lock release mechanism (e.g. Yale lock) or a high standard electro-magnetic lock.

The landlord or manager must ensure the locks are maintained in good repair and working order at all times.

Windows and glazed door panels situated close to the entrance door locking mechanism should be Georgian wired, toughened or laminated glass. All other external doors and frames should be secure, fitted with a secure locking system, maintained in good repair and working order at all times.

All entrances to the property should be well lit, especially ground floor/basement rooms and external staircases.

Key operated window locks are required to all accessible windows (ground floor, basement and adjacent to external structures such as fire escapes and flat rooves). Where the window is an escape window that is an integral part of the means of escape from fire then a suitable alternative security feature will be required.

Internal Doors to Bedrooms and Bedsits

In all circumstances other than HMOs which are occupied by a stable, cohesive group of sharers, individual letting rooms must be securely designed. Bedsits and bedrooms with lockable doors should have a surface or flush mounted night latch lock release mechanism (e.g. Yale lock) which can be opened from the outside using a key and locked on the inside without a key.

Thumb-turn internal locks are recommended.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Adequate and hygienic waste disposal arrangements must be in place within the HMO. In practice this means the provision of suitable bins/receptacles and on-site waste management arrangements having regard to:

- The number of occupants
- The type and size of HMO accommodation
- The waste collection and recycling arrangements available either through the local council domestic collection service or a commercial waste contract
- There should be one or more clearly defined external refuse storage areas for refuse containers. These should be in the open air and away from windows and ventilators.

All HMOs requiring a licence must comply with the local authority storage and waste disposal scheme.

The adequacy of waste disposal arrangements will also be subject to compliance checks under the HMO management regulations.

MANAGEMENT OF HMO

In many cases the residents of an HMO will be unknown to each other which can present problems associated with access to and the use of shared amenities and common rooms. In addition, residents often share responsibility for cleaning and maintaining shared amenities and common rooms, which may become a problem if this process is not carefully managed.

Clear guidelines for tenants as to their responsibilities and those of the management can help avoid many of the problems mentioned.

The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006

The manager must ensure his name, address and any telephone contact number are made available to each household in the HMO and such details are clearly displayed in a prominent position in the HMO.

All means of escape from fire in the HMO must be kept free from obstruction and maintained in good order and repair.

Where appropriate, measures should be taken to protect residents from injury having regard to the design of the HMO, the structural conditions in the HMO and the number of occupiers in the HMO.

Attention should be given in relation to any roof or balcony that is unsafe. The manager must either ensure that it is made safe or take all reasonable measures to prevent access to it for so long as it remains unsafe.

Any windowsills at or near floor level should have bars or other such safeguards as may be necessary to protect the occupiers against the danger of accidents.

The water supply and drainage system serving the HMO must be maintained in a good, clean and working condition, including any tank, cistern or similar receptacle used for the storage of water for drinking or other domestic purpose. A cover must be provided to keep the water in a clean and proper condition and any water fitting which is liable to damage by frost must be protected.

The manager must not unreasonably cause or permit the water or drainage supply that is used by any occupier at the HMO to be interrupted.

The manager must ensure gas supplies and appliances in the HMO are properly serviced, maintained, and tested annually by a recognised gas safe registered engineer.

The manager must supply to the local housing authority, within 7 days of receiving a request in writing, the latest gas appliance test certificate of any gas appliance at the HMO issued by a recognised gas safe registered engineer.

The manager must not unreasonably cause the gas or electricity supply that is used by any occupier within the HMO to be interrupted. The tenants should be in control of the heating, which should not be restricted to certain times.

All common parts of the HMO must be maintained in good and clean decorative repair, in a safe and working condition and kept reasonably clear from obstruction.

All handrails and banisters must be kept in good repair and, where appropriate, additional handrails or banisters, as are necessary, must be provided for the safety of the residents.

Stair coverings must be safely fixed and kept in good repair and all windows and other means of ventilation within the common parts kept in good repair.

The common parts must be fitted with adequate light fittings that are available for use at all times by every occupier of the HMO.

All fixtures, fittings or appliances provided with the accommodation and used in common by two or more households within the HMO must be maintained in good and safe repair and in clean working order.

Outbuildings, yards and forecourts which are used in common by two or more households living within the HMO must be maintained and kept in a clean condition and good order.

Any garden belonging to the HMO must be kept in a safe and tidy condition and boundary walls, fences and railings (including any basement area railings) which belong to the HMO must be kept and maintained in good and safe repair.

Living accommodation within the HMO and any furniture supplied with it must be in a safe and clean condition at the beginning of an occupation.

The internal structure and any fixtures, fittings or appliances within the accommodation must be maintained in good repair and every window and other means of ventilation kept in good repair.

HOUSING ACT 2004 PART 1 - HOUSING CONDITIONS

Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

This applies to all residential accommodation and relates to housing conditions.

Where a property has a defect or inadequacy the local authority uses the rating scheme to risk assess the defect or inadequacy (referred to as the hazard) to decide how serious the hazard is.

PLANNING PERMISSION, THE BUILDING REGULATIONS AND COUNCIL TAX

Planning

Owners should also check whether planning permission is required prior to using a house as an HMO. Planning officers consider additional matters such as off-street parking, over intensity of conversions, sound insulation, type of property e.g. terraced/ detached etc.

Owners /managers should also ensure they have planning permission if they subdivide a house into self-contained units or change the use of a house from a single dwelling to an HMO with 7 or more occupiers or where an Article 4 direction applies.

Applying for an HMO Licence does not negate the need for planning permission. If planning permission is not applied for or refused you will be committing an offence and the planning department may take enforcement action regardless of the Licence.

Contact Planning: Email: planning@bromley.gov.uk

Tel: 020 8313 4956

Building Control

The provision of additional facilities, structural and or other alterations may require Building Control approval.

Approval under the Building Regulations is likely to be required for a range of HMO conversion works including:

- Installation of additional kitchen or bathroom facilities that require waste connections
- Changes in layout including adding or removing walls and or doors and windows

Compliance with Building Regulations is regulated by Local Authority Building Control or alternative providers.

Contact Building Control: Email: buildingcontrol@bromley.gov.uk

Tel: 020 8313 4313

Council Tax

HMOs are not exempt from council tax unless entirely occupied by full time students, subject to evidence of such.

Council tax fraud is an offence please check council tax liability with the Council Tax department, for details see the London Borough of Bromley's website.

ENERGY PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES

Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015

An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) sets out the energy efficiency of a property on a traffic light system of A to G, A being the most efficient.

An EPC provides an indication of how much it will cost to heat and power a property. From 1 April 2020 all privately rented residential accommodation is required to have a current (no older than 10 years) EPC with a minimum level "E".

An EPC is not required for an individual room or bedsit within an HMO but the building or part of the building which is the HMO will usually require a current EPC with a minimum level "E".

A copy of the EPC for the HMO should be provided to each tenant when they start their tenancy.

A landlord in England cannot serve a section 21 notice if they haven't given the tenant a copy of the property's EPC.

CERTAIN BUILDINGS CONVERTED INTO SELF CONTAINED FLATS

Definition of a Section 257 HMO

Under section 257 of the Housing Act 2004 buildings which have been converted into self-contained flats, either before 1991 or after 1991 without building control approval, where less than 2/3rds of the flats in the converted building are owner-occupied are likely to be HMOs.

Regulation of Section 257 HMOs

Local authorities are responsible for regulating fire precautions within these HMOs.

Section 257 HMOs are subject to the following regulations:

- The Licensing and Management of HMO (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007.
- The HMO (Certain Converted Blocks of Flats) (Modifications to the Housing Act 2004 and the Transitional Provisions for section 257 HMOs) (England) Regulations 2007.

Section 257 HMOs do not require a licence from the local authority under the Mandatory HMO licensing scheme.

Section 257 HMO Housing Standard

A self-contained flat within a section 257 HMO is subject to the same housing standards which apply to all single occupation self-contained houses and flats.

A flat within a section 257 HMO which is not entirely self-contained will be treated as a bedsit type HMO.