

HMO Standards

For houses and flats with shared facilities

(Section 254 Houses in Multiple Occupation)



Housing Act 2004
Effective 8 December 2020



These are the standards that the London Borough of Camden will apply to houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) defined by section 254 (of the Housing Act 2004). All section 254 HMOs in Camden should comply with these standards although each property will be assessed on a case by case basis.

A section 254 HMO is a house or flat occupied by 3 or more people who are not all part of the same family where any kitchen and bathroom facilities are shared or outside the dwelling.

These standards are used by the council to determine the maximum number of occupiers and households for an HMO requiring a licence.

These standards do NOT apply to self-contained flats and studios in single occupation within a house in multiple occupation (HMO). There are separate standards for these types of property.

Planning policy: The council is committed to the preservation of HMOs within the borough. The self-containment of shared accommodation may need planning permission and therefore you should always contact the Council's planning department if you propose to install kitchen or bathroom facilities within bedrooms or bedsits of HMOs.



Fitness For Human Habitation

The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 has clarified the responsibilities of landlords to ensure that their property, including any common parts of the building, is fit for human habitation at the beginning of the tenancy and throughout. The Council will therefore expect all HMOs to be fit for human habitation – the definition of fitness is contained in the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985. A property may be unfit if:

- the building has been neglected and is in a bad condition
- the building is unstable
- there is a serious problem with damp
- it has an unsafe layout
- there is not enough natural light
- there is not enough ventilation
- there is a problem with the supply of hot and cold water
- there are problems with the drainage or the lavatories
- it is difficult to prepare and cook food or wash up
- there is a category 1 or 2 hazard under the housing health and safety rating System (HHSRS)

Note: Some of these issues are already addressed by the minimum standards detailed below. Others may be better addressed by the housing, health and safety rating system (HHSRS) in which case a referral may be made to the private sector housing enforcement team to take action under part 1 of the Housing Act 2004.

Room sizes

The Government introduced national minimum room sizes in The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Mandatory Conditions of Licences) (England) Regulations 2018. However, the Government emphasised these are a statutory minimum and are not intended to be the optimal room size. They stated “local housing authorities will continue to have discretion to require higher standards within licence conditions, but must not set lower

standards”. The minimum room sizes below are those the Council has deemed appropriate to apply to HMOs in Camden.

Sleeping rooms

Minimum floor area where kitchen (shared or exclusive use) is provided in a separate room		Minimum floor area where kitchen facilities are located within the room	
Single	Double	Single	Double
9m ²	11m ²	12m ²	14m ²

Minimum floor area for rooms in HMOs with a shared kitchen and a shared living room of at least 10m ² and where there is cohesive living		
Single (where no WHB is installed)	Single with WHB (where a WHB is installed)	Double (with or without WHB)
7.1m ²	7.3m ²	10.2m ²

- Where the ceiling height is less than 1.5m the floor area beneath is not counted.
- If any personal washing facilities are included within the room, the area required for any facility as detailed in personal hygiene facilities (see page 7), must be excluded when calculating the overall room sizes.
- Floor area that cannot be used because of its shape or location must not be included when calculating room sizes.
- A child will be treated as a separate person/occupant.
- No more than two persons may occupy any room regardless of the size.
- A double room shall be occupied by one household only.

Heating

- Fixed space heating to be provided in every bedroom, living room, bathroom and kitchen diner. Space heating must be capable of maintaining a constant temperature of at least 21°C in sleeping rooms



and bathrooms and at least 18°C in all other rooms.

- All heating sources must be provided with adequate controls to allow the occupants to programme and regulate the temperature within their unit of accommodation (e.g. provision of thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs), thermostat to electric heaters). As from 1st January 2018, all new heating sources must be Lot 20 compliant.
- Where there is a centralised heating system, heating should be available to individual tenants at all times.

Power sockets

- At least four (4) suitably located double sockets (or equivalent) must be provided to each sleeping room. This is in addition to those sockets provided in kitchen areas (where kitchen facilities are provided within a bedsitting room). Conventional electric sockets with additional but USB ports are acceptable but generally will not reduce the number of sockets required.

Fire safety

- The HMO design, construction and condition should limit the spread of fire and smoke. In addition, there should be adequate fire protection to the means of escape and between each unit of accommodation. The HMO should also be provided with appropriate detection and alarm systems and, as appropriate, emergency lighting and firefighting equipment. All works to be carried out in accordance with LACORS national guidance on fire safety and the latest edition of BS5839:Part 6 (these provide more detailed information on how to assess and control risks in various types of HMO).

This note is not part of the standard but it is a legal requirement:

The common areas of blocks of flats, maisonettes and HMOs are subject to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and must have a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) carried out by a responsible person. In practice the responsible person will usually be the licence holder, but could be the manager or managing agent.

Carbon monoxide

A BS EN 50291 kitemarked carbon monoxide alarm (mains or battery powered) should be fitted in any room where any fuel burning appliance is fitted, including those that burn gas, oil, coal and wood. This includes any room that has a flue running through it. If there is an enclosed boiler, it should be fitted just outside the enclosure. Alarms should be fitted in accordance with the British standard.

Kitchen facilities

Shared kitchens

Minimum floor area for shared use kitchens			
3 - 4 persons cohesive living (1-set of kitchen facilities)	5 persons (1-set of kitchen facilities)	6 - 10 persons (2-sets of kitchen facilities)	11 – 15 persons (3-sets of kitchen facilities)
4.8m ²	6m ²	11m ²	16m ²

Shared kitchen diners

Minimum floor area for shared use kitchen diners			
3 - 4 persons (1-set of kitchen facilities)	5 persons (1-set of kitchen facilities)	6 - 10 persons (2-sets of kitchen facilities)	11 – 15 persons (3-sets of kitchen facilities)
8m ²	8m ²	15m ²	22m ²

Exclusive use kitchens

Minimum floor area for separate exclusive use kitchen	
1 person	2 or more persons
4m ²	4.5m ²

Number of occupants sharing

- Five persons can share one full set of kitchen facilities. More than five persons will require an additional set of kitchen facilities. For example:

Minimum number of sets of kitchen facilities	Number of individuals sharing kitchen
1 set	Up to 5 persons
2 sets	6 - 10 persons
3 sets	11 - 15 persons

- Kitchen facilities must be in a properly designed room or area, laid out so as to allow for the safe and hygienic preparation and cooking of food.
- Where the bedrooms are more than one floor away from the kitchen, the kitchen must be provided with facilities to eat meals within the kitchen, for example a kitchen-diner or a separate dining room adjacent to the kitchen.
- A kitchen diner must be provided with an adequately sized table and number of chairs for the number of users.
- One full set of kitchen facilities will include the following:
 - kitchen sink
 - cooking facilities
 - kitchen worktop
 - food storage (dry goods cupboards and fridge/freezers)
 - kitchen cupboards
 - power sockets
 - refuse storage
- A fire blanket (to comply with the current British Standard) must be provided in each kitchen within the HMO. Fire blankets should be suitably located in a conspicuous position and generally nearer to the kitchen door than to the cooker.

Kitchen sink

- Integral sink and drainer of a suitable and practical size on a base unit, properly connected to the drainage system, and provided with an adequate and constant supply of drinking water and an adequate and constant supply of hot water, without fluctuation in temperature.

Cooking facilities

- Any cooker must be located remote from exit doors and away from windows.
- Exclusive use kitchens or kitchens within bedsitting rooms** - a minimum of two rings, conventional oven and grill. If a 'portable'



cooker is provided it must be installed so that the cooking rings are level with the adjacent work surfaces and properly secured, and have the capability to operate all rings and oven simultaneously. A standard microwave is not acceptable as a replacement for a conventional oven. However, a combination oven/grill/microwave is acceptable in an exclusive use kitchen as long as an additional worktop area/secure shelf at eye level is provided to accommodate the appliance.

- **Shared kitchens** - a full sized cooker with a minimum of four rings, conventional oven and grill, to be stable and securely fitted.

Kitchen worktop

- A usable, properly secured, readily cleansable work surface must be provided in a suitable position adjacent to the cooker in every kitchen or kitchen area. Worktop to be at the same height as the cooker rings.
- Exclusive use kitchens - minimum dimensions 600mm deep x 800mm wide for one household.
- Shared kitchens - a further 500mm (linear width) per additional person/ household sharing e.g. minimum provision for five people is 2.8 linear metres of worktop.

Food storage - dry goods

- One cupboard for the storage of dry goods per person, with a minimum storage capacity of 0.08 cubic metres. The recommended minimum dimensions to meet this requirement are:

Width: 30cm	Depth: 38cm	Height: 70cm
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- The cupboard space in the unit below the sink is not suitable for dry goods storage.
- Where more than five persons share a kitchen, each person's dry goods cupboard must be suitably secure.

Food storage - fridge/freezer

- A refrigerator with a freezer compartment, with a minimum capacity 140 litres for one to two persons.
- Kitchens shared by more than two people to have a separate refrigerator and a separate freezer. Each tenant must be provided with a shelf or area, of adequate size, within the refrigerator and freezer appliances for their sole use. The minimum capacity for each appliance is:

3 to 4 persons - 160 litres	5 persons - 200 litres
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- Where more than five persons share a kitchen, each person must either be provided with individual refrigerator & freezer space or a separate refrigerator/freezer within their unit of accommodation.

Kitchen cupboards

- Sufficient cupboards for the storage of kitchen utensils and crockery in shared kitchens must be provided.

Power sockets

- **Exclusive use kitchens** - the requirement is for three double electrical sockets or equivalent. Two of these double sockets are to be suitably located above worktop level.
- **Shared kitchens** - there must be a minimum of five double electrical sockets or equivalent (at least three of these double sockets to be suitably located above worktop level) per full set of kitchen facilities. Therefore, two sets of kitchen facilities require a total of ten double sockets, six of which are to be above worktop level.
- In all cases, electrical sockets must be located at least 300mm horizontally from a sink, draining board or hob.

Refuse storage

- Provide impervious refuse storage containers within the kitchen with suitable close fitting lids.



Kitchen ventilation

- Mechanical extraction capable of extracting to the external air at a rate of not less than 60 litres/second must be provided. Or if a cooker hood is fitted, the extraction rate to the external air can be reduced to 30 litres/second. This should be operable by the tenant and the controls suitably located.
- In internal rooms the mechanical extractor fan shall be controlled by the operation of the main room light switch and have a 15 minute overrun.

Kitchen lighting

- Kitchens must have adequate artificial lighting. Artificial lighting must be positioned to provide sufficient light to enable domestic and recreational activities to be carried out without eyestrain.
- Kitchen-diners must have sufficient natural lighting and adequate artificial lighting to enable domestic and recreational activities to be carried out without eyestrain. Windows must be of adequate size and of appropriate shape and position to allow for reasonable daylight penetration into rooms.

Kitchen floors

- Suitable non-slip, impervious and readily cleansable floor covering must be provided in separate kitchens and the kitchen areas of bedsitting rooms.

Kitchen walls/ceilings

- Walls and ceilings to be readily cleansable and those directly adjacent to cookers, sinks and food preparation areas must be provided with impervious and readily cleansable splash backs.

Household waste

Adequate provision for refuse storage and recycling should be provided in accordance with Camden's collection service requirements.

Personal hygiene facilities

Ratios of bathing, wash hand basin and WC facilities:

4 or fewer occupants	Where there are 5 persons sharing facilities	Where there are 6 or more persons sharing facilities
At least one bathroom with a fixed bath/shower, wash hand basin and a WC (which may be situated in the bathroom).	a) Two bathrooms each containing a bath/shower, WC and a wash hand basin. OR b) A bathroom containing a bath/shower/WHB and a WC/WHB in a separate compartment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 - 10 persons Two full sets of facilities (bath/shower/WC/WHB) • 11 - 15 persons Three full sets of facilities (bath/shower/WC/WHB) • 16 - 20 persons Four full sets of facilities (bath/shower/WC/WHB) etc. <p>Note: At least one of the WC/WHB's must be in a separate compartment.</p>

Note: See below for additional requirements for wash hand basins in bedsits or non-cohesive lettings ('room by room' lettings).

Minimum floor areas for sanitary facilities

Sanitary facilities in appropriate room	Minimum floor area*
Bath only	2.3m ²
Bath & WHB	2.5m ²
Bath, WC & WHB	2.8m ²
Shower only	1.7m ²
Shower & WHB	2.0m ²
Shower & WC & WHB	2.2m ²
WC & WHB	1.2m ²

* The minimum floor areas include the required drying and activity space.



Wash hand basins in bedsits or non-cohesive lettings ('room by room' lettings)

- Where reasonably practicable there must be a wash hand basin with splash back in each unit of accommodation where the units in the HMO are let individually (other than a unit containing a kitchen sink).

Note: This requirement is subject to the age, character, size and layout of the HMO/FMO and the existing provision of wash hand basins.

- Any WHB provided in a unit of accommodation must be a minimum size of 550mm x 400mm.

Bathrooms

- Bath/shower must be not more than one floor distant from any one unit of accommodation.
- Baths, WHBs and showers are to be provided with a constant supply of cold and hot water.
- Any WHB provided in a bath/shower room must be of an appropriate size.
- Shared facilities must be in a suitable enclosed and lockable room or compartment, so as to allow adequate privacy when using the facility. Where showers are located within a bedsitting room they should be provided with an enclosed private drying space except where there are sufficient alternative shared facilities available. Any door or window glazing must be obscured.
- Mechanical ventilation must be provided to bath/shower rooms which, operating together with any passive ventilation (openable window, air brick or flue), is capable of extracting to the external air at a rate of not less than four air changes per hour. The extractor fan must be either connected to the light switch and have a minimum 15 minute overrun or controlled by a humidistat set to 65% relative humidity.

WC compartments

- WC compartments must be located within the residential premises, and not more than one floor distant and 30m horizontally from the users.
- Each WC compartment must be provided with a reasonably sized WHB (with a constant supply of cold and hot water).
- WC compartments must be provided with either an openable window or mechanical extraction capable of extracting to the external air at a rate of not less than four air changes per hour. The extractor fan must be connected to the light switch and have a minimum 15 minute overrun.

General

- The arrangements and layout of all rooms and facilities must be fit for purpose; in particular the arrangement must allow unobstructed entry and exit into the room and ease of use of the facilities within.
- Floor and wall surfaces must be in good repair, impervious and readily cleansable. Floor surfaces or coverings must be slip resistant when wet. Walls directly adjacent to WHBs, baths and showers must have impervious splash backs.
- Adequate natural and/or artificial lighting must be provided to the room/ compartment to enable the facilities to be used in a safe manner.



Definitions

Bedsit – a one room unit of accommodation which may contain cooking facilities or bathroom facilities (but not both). Also see definition of non-cohesive living below.

Studio – a self-contained unit of accommodation that consists of one room functioning as bedroom, living room and kitchen with an en-suite bathroom.

Flat – a self-contained unit of accommodation consisting of two or more rooms behind the flat entrance door, one of which is designated as a bedroom, plus a bathroom and kitchen facilities.

Shared house/flat – an HMO which has shared communal space including a living room. The tenants will have typically moved in at the same time and live together as a cohesive group.

Cohesive living - a type of occupation where a group of tenants occupy the accommodation in a manner which is similar to a household or family. A group of tenants moving into accommodation together, under a single contract where there are clear indications of social interaction between the tenants, is an example of cohesive living.

Non-cohesive living – this will often be ‘room by room’ lettings - where bedrooms are let on an individual basis. Each bedsit or letting will be let to separate individuals who will live independently, with little or no communal living between tenants. Each letting will have its own individual tenancy agreement and there will usually be a lock on each individual letting door. There is unlikely to be a communal living or dining room.

Household – a household could be a single person or members of the same family who live together. This includes people who are married or living together, people in same-sex relationships, any member of a family (including aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, grandparents and grandchildren and their partners; step children and foster children).

