



Houses in Multiple Occupation – An Information Pack for Landlords of Non-Licensable HMOs

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**Environmental Health and Licensing
South Cambridgeshire District Council
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(Please note this document is for HMOs which fall outside of the licensable requirements under the Housing Act 2004. Any property which is 3 or more storeys with 5 or more occupants you should contact our department to discuss the licensing process.)



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1. What is a House in Multiple Occupation HMO – An Overview

1.1 How is a House in Multiple Occupation defined?

You can find the definition of a “House in Multiple Occupation” (HMO) within section 254 and 257 of the Housing Act 2004. In summary a HMO is a house, or flat if:

- 3 or more tenants are occupying the property who form 2 or more households and who share one of the basic amenities such as cooking facilities a bathroom or a w/c.
- The property is occupied by more than 3 tenants forming 2 or more households” of which the building has been converted but is not entirely self-contained flats (whether or not some of the amenities are shared).
- The building is converted into self-contained flats, but does not comply with the requirements of the 1991 Building Regulations and at least a third of the flats are occupied under short tenancies.

In addition to the above it must be “occupied” by more than one household in one of the following scenarios:

- It must be their only or main residence: or
- As a refuge by people escaping domestic violence; or
- During term time by students: or
- For any other purpose that is prescribed in regulations.

1.2 What defines a “household”?

Essentially a household is defined as a family (this includes single persons and couples) and their relatives, foster children and any associated domestic staff. It does not include a group of friends who are house sharing, in that scenario the property will be classed as a HMO.



1.3 What are the various types of HMO?

1. Bedsits of accommodation comprising separate lettings.

Houses which are occupied as individual rooms where there is some exclusive occupation and some sharing of a shared kitchen or bathroom and also a communal living room may be provided for people who have no alternate permanent place of residence and each occupant of the household lives independently of all the other occupants.

2. Shared houses

A shared house will normally be occupied by members of a defined social group, e.g. students or a group of adult friends. In this scenario the occupiers will each have their own bedroom

3. Student halls of residence or similar establishments

There will be some degree of shared facilities where occupation would normally be by people whose accommodation is ancillary to their employment or education and where it is made available through their employer or in connection with their educational provider.

4. Hostels, guesthouses and bed and breakfast

These are normally occupied by people with no other permanent place of residence as opposed to hotels which provide temporary accommodation. This type of HMO would include premises used by the Local Authorities for temporary accommodation for example housing people who would otherwise be homeless. It would also include hotels used for similar purposes and even a mixture of homeless households and visitors.

5. Residential care homes and similar establishments

These premises are subject to regulation and inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection and in consultation with the fire authority and the Local Authority in regard to fire safety precautions. Where no "personal care" is provided the requirements will be similar to a bedsit HMO.

6. Self contained flats

These are houses or other buildings which either by erection or conversion comprise dwellings which are self-contained and where access is through a single front door from a common area. There is no sharing of facilities.



Space and layout of self-contained flats should be addressed via the Planning and Building Control process, however many houses in this category will be occupied by long-term leaseholders and it is not intended to enforce discretionary standards in this scenario. There is only one exception and this is to ensure means of escape is adequate in case of fire as all occupiers must ensure they do not jeopardise the safety of their neighbours.

1.4 HMOs and the planning and building control process.

There is now a definition of a HMO which was introduced in 2010 under the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). The definition was introduced in order to reflect the Housing Act 2004 HMO definition. The result is that a material change of use from a dwelling house which falls within use class C3, to a new class for HMOs (C4) requires planning permissions.

Any property which is intended to be occupied by 7 or more people as an HMO will require a change of use.

If you are intending to provide accommodation as a large HMO, you are encouraged to consult with the Planning and Building Control departments as soon as possible to seek advice.

The Environmental Health Team should also be consulted to ensure they are happy that the property is suitable to be occupied as an HMO and to advise on all requirements.

If you do not have the required permissions in place, the Council's Planning Enforcement section may take action against you and can require you to return the property back to a single occupancy house.

2. What are the amenity requirements in a HMO?

If you wish to let your property as an HMO you will need to comply with the Council's amenity and space standards. These requirements are in place to ensure HMOs do not become overcrowded and to ensure the facilities available are suitable for the number of occupants. These amenity provisions are the recommended minimum requirement for all Houses in Multiple Occupation, whether the building requires a mandatory licence or not. The level of amenity provision depends on the number of occupiers sharing the accommodation and the type of accommodation e.g shared house or bedsit accommodation. The facilities should be located not more than one floor distant from the people who use them, (unless there is a shared or common dining area available) and they should be in a convenient position to enable occupiers to use them comfortably.

Kitchen or kitchen diner facilities must be positioned so as to ensure they can be safely used. For example the cooker must not be located adjacent to or behind the kitchen door, the work surface must not be chipped or pitted and the floor must be laid and maintained to prevent slips, trips and falls. Guidance for landlords and property related professionals has been published and is available via the web link on the Housing Health & Safety Rating



System page on the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health website
http://www.cieh.org/policy/housing_HS_rating.html

Cooking facilities

The level of cooking facility largely depends on whether the occupiers have exclusive or shared use of facilities. No shared kitchen may have any more than 2 sets of facilities to be shared by a maximum of 10 sharers

Shared cooking facilities

Where shared kitchens are provided, the following facilities can be used by up to 5 people:

- A four ring gas or electric hob plus oven and grill (positioned so that the hobs are at worktop level).
- A sink and integrated drainer with a tiled splashback and a constant supply of hot and cold running water for food preparation.
- Adequate worktop with a minimum of 2000mm of linear useable worktop and the standard depth of generally 600mm. **NOTE:** Please ignore 300mm on each side of the cooker and any inaccessible corners as useable food preparation space.
- A food storage unit of standard depth (300mm) and height (720mm) x 400mm width, or base unit (not a sink unit) of equivalent volume (0.08m³) for each person.
- At least 4 double plug socket outlets in addition to those servicing major appliances. (e.g. microwave oven, refrigerator, washing machine etc)
- Standard sized refrigerator providing sufficient space for the equivalent of approximately one shelf per occupier (approximate volume 155 litres/ 0.15m³) Note: a mini fridge is not acceptable to share.
- A standard sized lidded bin.

Between 6-8 occupiers the following must be provided.

- Two cookers each with a four ring gas or electric hob plus oven and grill **or** a single 4 ring hob with an oven and grill, plus a combination microwave oven (positioned so that the hobs are at worktop level.)
- Two sinks with integrated drainers with a tiled splashback and a constant supply of hot and cold running water for food preparation, **or** a single sink and a dishwasher.
- An extra 500mm of worktop per occupier to a maximum of 3000mm.
- A food storage unit of standard depth (300mm) and height (720mm) x 400mm width, or base unit (not a sink unit) of equivalent volume (0.08m³) for each person.
- At least 6 double plug socket outlets in addition to those servicing major appliances.
- A large refrigerator or a standard sized fridge freezer.
- A standard sized swing bin.



9-10 occupiers.

- Two cookers each with a four ring gas or electric hob plus oven and grill. (positioned so that the hobs are at worktop level.)
- Two sinks and intergrated drainer with a tiled splashback provided and a constant supply of hot and cold running water for food preparation **or** one sink and a dishwasher.
- Adequate worktop with a minimum of 3000mm long and the standard depth of generally 600mm. (You must ignore 300mm on each side of the cooker as food preparation space this is too close to the cooker to be used safely.)
- A food storage unit of standard depth (300mm) and height (720mm) x 400mm width, or base unit (not a sink unit) of equivalent volume (0.08m³) for each person.
- At least 6 double plug socket outlets in addition to those servicing major appliances.
- Two standard sized refrigerators providing sufficient space for the equivalent of approximately one shelf per occupier (approximate volume 155 litres/ 0.15m³) Note: Mini fridges are not acceptable to share.
- Two standard sized lidded bins.

Exclusive cooking facilities

Where a tenant has integral cooking facilities in their own bedsit they must be provided with at least.

- A two ring gas or electric hob plus and oven and grill (ideally positioned so that the hobs are at worktop level.)
- A sink and integrated drainer with a tiled splashback provided and a constant supply of hot and cold running water for food preparation.
- Adequate worktop with a minimum of 1000mm long and the standard depth of generally 600mm.
- A single food storage unit of standard depth (300mm) and height (720mm) x 400mm width, or base unit (not a sink unit) of equivalent volume.
- Standard refrigerator, there is no requirement for a freezer to be provided.
- Adequate internal lidded rubbish bin
- At least 4 plug socket outlets in addition to those servicing major appliances.

Shared toilet and bathroom facilities.

Amenity standards (bathrooms and WCs and wash hand basins) – lettings within houses in multiple occupations should include either:

- exclusive use of individual bath/shower room and WC facilities as set out in the general standard for rented accommodation; or
- where amenities are shared, the following ratios of amenities to occupiers are considered suitable for the purposes of providing an adequate number of bathrooms, toilets and wash-hand basins (suitable for personal washing) for the number of persons sharing those facilities:-



Up to 4 persons sharing: One bathroom, containing a bath or shower, wash basin and WC, with all hot and cold water supplies and drainage.

5 persons sharing: One bathroom and, in addition, a separate WC and wash basin must be provided in the house in a separately accessible compartment. The bathroom might contain just a bath/shower and wash basin.

6 - 8 persons sharing: two bathrooms, containing a bath or shower, wash basin and WC, with all hot and cold water supplies and drainage.

9 - 10 persons sharing: Two complete bath/shower rooms, at least one of which must have a WC fitted. In addition, a separate WC with basin in a separate compartment must be provided.

11 - 15 persons sharing: Three complete bath/shower rooms, at least two of which must have a WC fitted. In addition, a separate WC with basin in a separate compartment must be provided.

16 - 20 persons sharing: Four complete bath/shower rooms, at least three of which must have a WC fitted. In addition, a separate WC with basin in a separate compartment must be provided.

General rule: for five or more sharing occupiers there should be fitted bath/shower rooms in the ratio 1:5 (baths:occupiers). There should be WCs fitted, in the ratio 1:5 (WCs:occupiers) but at least one WC with wash basin must be sited in a separately accessible compartment.

All bathrooms and WCs to be supplied with hot and cold water as applicable and waste drainage. Tiled splashbacks to be provided for areas adjacent to baths, to areas above wash basins and to the walls of shower enclosures. Washable, impervious floor coverings to be fitted in all bath/shower rooms and WC compartments.

External WCs do not count towards the minimum requirement above.

Wash hand basins – Where 5 or more persons occupy an HMO, a wash hand basin with hot and cold water and a tiled splash back should be provided, where reasonably practicable, within each letting (unless a sink is already provided) of sufficient size to allow personal washing. This benefits occupiers by allowing personal washing within rooms.

The most appropriate installations would be in rooms with -

- adequate space for siting such a facility;
- access to existing waste drainage;
- sufficient falls within the drainage system to ensure waste water is properly disposed of.

3. Crowding and Space in a HMO



3.1 Crowding and space within bedsits and shared houses

The minimum standards for overcrowding apply to HMOs but in addition there are considerations such as the floor space taken up by kitchens in rooms and whether or not there are communal lounges or dining rooms within the house, in which case the bedroom size can be reduced because the occupants have access to a living space in the house. If no communal space is provided, an allowance must be made in the bedsitting room for seating/TV etc. In general, the following minimum space standards apply:

One person unit with communal space	Floor area
One person unit no kitchen	6.5m ² or 70ft ²
One person unit with kitchen	9.5m ² or 105ft ²
One person unit - no communal space	
One person unit no kitchen	8m ² or 85ft ²
One person unit with kitchen	11m ² or 120ft ²

Two person unit with communal space	Floor area
Two person unit no kitchen	10.5m ² or 110ft ²
Two person unit with kitchen	13.5 m ² or 145ft ²
Two person unit - no communal space	
Two person unit no kitchen	13m ² or 140ft ²
Two person unit with kitchen	16m ² or 175ft ²

The Council uses both the 1985 Housing Act and the Housing Act 2004 to determine if a property is overcrowded.

Under the Housing Act 2004 one of the hazards which is assessed is Crowding and Space under the Health and Housing Safety Rating System (HHSRS). If space is limited and occupants are living in overcrowded conditions their mental and physical health can suffer as a result. Crowding can also give rise hygiene risks, accidents and possible spread of contagious disease.

The Housing Act 1985 is still used to assess overcrowding in single and multi-occupied dwellings.

There are essentially two standards, the room standard (section 325) and the space standard (section 326). The council will consider if either of these standards are contravened, this is called 'statutory overcrowding'. The Council may then serve a notice which would require the numbers in the property to be reduced.



3.2 The Room Standard – This is where the number of rooms which can be used as sleeping accommodation in the property results in two persons of the opposite sex who are not living as partners sleeping in the same room. If this is the case this will be considered as statutory overcrowding. Children under 10 years old are not included. Sleeping room is any room that can be used for sleeping, i.e. bedroom and living room.

3.3 The Space Standard – The number of sleeping rooms available and the floor area of the sleeping rooms in the property determine the maximum number persons that can occupy the property. The two tables below show the permitted number of persons that can live in the property depending on the sleeping rooms available and the floor area. If the permitted number calculated differs between the two methods of calculation, the lower number is the permitted number. If the number or persons occupying the property exceeds this number, the property is statutory overcrowded.

Table 1 – Number of persons permitted based on number of sleeping rooms available in the property.

NUMBER OF ROOMS	PERMITTED NUMBER OF PEOPLE
1	2
2	3
3	5
4	7.5
5 or more	2 per extra room

Table 2 - Permitted number based on floor area of each sleeping room available

NUMBER OF ROOMS	PERMITTED NUMBER OF PERSONS
110 sq. ft or more (10.2m ² or more)	2
90 sq. ft or more but less than 110 sq ft (8.36m ² or more but less than 10.2m ²)	1.5
70 sq.ft or more but not less than 90 sq ft (6.5m ² or more but less than 8.36 m ²)	1
50 sq.ft or more but less than 70 sq.ft (4.6m ² or more but less than 6.5 m ²)	0.5

Children under 1 year = 0 Persons.

Children between 1-10 years old – 0.5 persons

Children over 10 years old = 1 person

Note: When the ceiling height is below 5ft (because of a sloping roof or ceiling) cannot be counted as usable floor area/space. Rooms below 50sq ft cannot be counted.



4. What are the fire safety requirements in an HMO?

The reasons why extra safety precautions are required in HMOs is based around the increased risk of a fire. Factors such as more frequent cooking as a result of independent living, the overloading of electrical sockets, the use of heaters and smoking all contribute to the increased likelihood of a fire in an HMO. Evidence suggests you are six times more likely to die in a fire if you live in an HMO compared with a single house

Fire safety is a hazard which is assessed under the Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 Health and Housing Safety Rating System. Each property is assessed on its merit and will have different risks depending on the general size and layout of the building. The following information can be used as a guide but is important to consult with our department or the fire service before taking any action.

Fire precautions are required to hinder the spread of smoke and fire and to give those in occupation a higher chance of escaping. When assessing fire safety standards we consider the following information.

- (1) The means of escape and whether or not the escape route is protected.
- (2) The fire separation.
- (3) The requirement for fire doors
- (4) The alarm system/automatic fire detection.
- (5) Whether emergency lighting is necessary
- (6) The provision for fire fighting equipment.
- (7) Ensuring all furniture is fire safety compliant.

Under the requirements of the HMO Management Regulations all HMO property managers have a legal duty to ensure escape routes are kept clear from obstruction, smoke alarms are in full working order and that all records are kept of system maintenance and testing.

The next section of this document will focus on the above aspects of fire safety in more detail.

a. What does means of escape and protected escape route mean?

When we consider the protected escape route we are looking at the staircases, landings and hallways that occupiers are likely to have to pass when they are intending to leave the building. The design of the protected escape route is important as it must help restrict the spread of smoke and fire to enable the occupants adequate time to evacuate the building. Damage to the structure of the escape route including damage to walls and ceilings within the protected area will impact on its ability to reduce the spread of smoke and fire.



- All internal and external doors in HMOs must only contain locking mechanisms which are able to be opened from the inside without the use of a key.
- Where an escape route is complex in directional signage may be required.
- All doors, walls, floors and ceilings leading onto an escape route and the underside of staircases on the route must be constructed to resist the passage of fire and smoke for 30 minutes.
- The escape route should be kept clear at all times.
- If there are any cracks or holes in the structure it is important these are filled or repairs to ensure the standard of fire resistance is not compromised.
- Generally all electric or gas meters in the route must be enclosed in half-hour fire resisting construction.
- The following items should not be stored under stairs **Portable or fixed heaters, Cooking appliances, Upholstered furniture, Wardrobe or other storage facilities, Coat racks, storage of any kind (unless there is a cupboard under the stairs that is kept locked).**
- Your gas meter should only be located under the stairs if it is installed in accordance with the appropriate Gas Safety Regulations. All gas pipes will need to be made from a material with a high melting point in order to comply with Gas Safety Regulations.

b. What do I need to know about Fire Separation?

All lettings in licensable HMOs are required to be separated from each other and the protected escape route by 30 minutes of fire resistance. Walls, floors and ceilings are included here. In small style HMOs of low risk simply ensuring the structure is free from any disrepair is often sufficient.

c. What do I need to know about Fire Doors?

All fire doors must be 30 minute fire resistant and comply with the British Standard BS476. They must be fitted with locks that do not require a key to be opened from the inside. Overhead self-closing mechanisms are required in most cases. The fire doors must contain at least three hinges each of which must have a melting point in excess of 800°C. Intumescent strips and smoke seals must also be fitted to the top and side edges of the door or in the corresponding position on the door frame. Fire doors must be installed so that the gaps between the doors and frame are no larger than 3mm and no more than 8mm beneath the door. All fire doors should be checked regularly to ensure they are in good repair as any deficiencies



can compromise the doors ability to restrict the spread of fire and smoke. All inspections of fire doors should be kept in a log book with all remedial actions being recorded. Finally all fire doors should be kept closed occupants should be educated on the importance of fire doors to ensure they are not wedged open. All warnings to tenants should be kept on record.

Typically all doors which open onto an escape route shall be fire doors which meet the specification above. It is not necessary to install fire doors to bathrooms unless there is a specific hazard such as a gas boiler in a room. In lower risk properties in some cases close-fitting doors can be accepted.

d. What Fire Alarm Detection System do I need?

The type of alarm system you require will depend on a number of different factors generally, the size of the property and layout. In lower risk properties such as two storey HMOS, smoke detectors/alarms should be provided in the hallways and landings with a heat detector/alarm in the kitchen. The alarm shall be wired to the mains electricity supply with a battery back up. The installation must comply with British Standard BS 5839: Part 6. The actual system required will vary depending on layout but typically an LD3 or LD2, Grade D coverage system will be required.

If the property is a mixed use for example a HMO located above a restaurant a mixed system may be specified.

As an owner or property manager you have a legal obligation under The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 to ensure the fire alarm is in good working order and maintained in accordance with the relevant British Standard. A log book should be kept of any faults and remedial works undertaken and tenants should be given contact details to report any faults as soon as possible.

e. Will I need Emergency Lighting?

Generally speaking all properties of three storeys or more will need to have emergency lighting installed with battery back up. Emergency lighting is required to provide additional illumination along the escape route. For buildings less than three storeys emergency lighting will not need to be installed unless the escape route is particularly complex.

As with the fire alarm system The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 places a duty on you to ensure the emergency lighting is maintained in good working order in accordance with British Standard 5266. You should keep a logbook to record the regular inspections of the system and ensure test procedures are in place. We advise that you strongly consider taking out a maintenance contract with a suitably qualified person to carry out maintenance on your behalf.



f. Under what circumstances do I need to consider installing fire fighting equipment?

As a rule, advice to occupiers should be simply to evacuate the premises as quickly and safely as possible in the event of a fire, however extinguishers are required in some scenarios to ensure small fires may be tackled or to ensure an escape route is made passable. Where extinguishers are provided instructions should be given to tenants on how to use them correctly and safely.

Fire extinguishers should always be hung on brackets approximately 1m from the floor. They should always be installed away from heaters and must not cause an obstruction. They must comply with British Standard BS EN3 and be mounted on the wall, they should be easily accessible and maintained in proper working order. Servicing is required annually.

There are different types of fire extinguishers and it is important you have an understanding of what type of extinguisher can be used when.

Water fire extinguishers should be provided on landings and in hallways on each floor. This type of extinguisher is for use on wood, cloth, paper, plastics etc. It should not be used for electrical appliances or chip pan fires. These extinguishers should have a rating of 13A

Carbon dioxide extinguishers or dry powder extinguishers these types of extinguishers should be provided in a shared kitchen. This type of extinguisher is recommended in a kitchen that is not shared but is within a HMO e.g. a kitchen located in a self-contained flat for example. These extinguishers are only suitable for fires caused by solids and liquids such as electrical equipment, paint and petrol. They should not be used to extinguish chip pan fires. 34B is the required rating.

Fire blankets one of these should be provided in the shared kitchen. All fire blankets must comply with British Standard 6575. The blanket must be wall-mounted in the kitchen 1.5m from floor level and away from the cooker.

g. What about furniture I provide? What are the safety requirements?

Trading Standards enforce the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Amendment Regulations 1993, all furniture which includes any upholstered furniture such as chairs, sofas, children's furniture, bed, headboards, and mattresses must comply with these regulations.

For further advice you should contact Trading Standards on 0345 045 5206.



h. What do I need to know about Fire Safety Risk Assessment?

The fire service enforce the requirements of The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The common parts of a HMO including kitchens, hallways, landings and bathrooms are covered under this legislation and therefore you are legally required to ensure a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is carried out in these areas.

A risk assessment should typically follow the following steps

- (1) Look for the hazards.
- (2) Decide who may be harmed and how
- (3) Evaluate the risk arising from the hazards and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done.
- (4) Record your findings
- (5) Review your assessment from time to time and revise it as necessary.

For the risk assessment to be considered suitable and sufficient it should be completed by a competent person and with reference to current guidance and standards. The depth required in the risk assessment will be dependent on the size and complexity of the premises therefore you may need to seek specialist advice.

For further advice on Fire Safety Risk Assessment contact Cambridge Fire and Rescue Services.

5. Electrical and Gas Safety

5.1 What do I need to know about electrical safety?

Landlords have a legal duty to ensure the electrical installation is safe. In the event of an injury or death the landlord may be liable to pay damages to a tenant or resident for any personal injury or death that was caused because the property was in an unsafe condition.

The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 places a legal duty to ensure all fixed electrical installations in HMO's must be inspected and tested at least every 5 years by a qualified electrician.

You should obtain an Electrical Condition Inspection Report which should be made available to an officer from the Council upon request.

The Council will accept the Electrical Condition Report providing it is "satisfactory" and free of any Code 1 or Code 2 issues.



You should ensure the person you appoint is a member of the Electrical Contractors Association (ECA), National Inspection Council for Electrical Installations Contracting (NICEIC) or the local Electricity Board.

In some cases electrical work which is which are not undertaken by a competent electrician may require Building Control approval under Part P. You should consult with your contractor on this prior to instructing them to carry out any works.

5.2 If I provide electrical appliances what do I need to know?

There is a legal duty on landlords and letting agents to ensure that any electrical equipment provided is maintained in a safe condition. This is a requirement under the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994. Items which may be included are Washing machines, kettles, toasters, fridges and freezers, ovens, microwaves, televisions, vacuum cleaners and any other smaller appliances.

All items above should be PAT tested (Portable Appliances Testing) in order to demonstrate that all reasonable measures have been taken to comply with the legislation. PAT testing should take place annually and at a change of tenancy by a competent electrician. A record of these safety checks should then be kept. Good practice is to ensure all tested items are labelled. In the event of a fault being identified during testing action should be taken by removing the item or repairing it immediately. You should keep a full inventory of the appliances provided with the date of the last test.

5.3 Gas Safety, what do I need to know?

The Gas Safety (installation and Use) Regulations 1998 place a legal duty on all landlords to ensure all gas installations are safe. Every year as with any tenanted property a safety check by a Gas Safe registered engineer must be carried out.

A Carbon Monoxide Alarm should also be fitted in the property in close proximity to the boiler and also in any room which contains an open fire place or wood burner.

Failing to ensure a gas safety check is carried out would also constitute a breach of the Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 if a certificate is not provided on request.

5.4 Access to Gas and Electricity and Heating controls

Within HMOs the electric meter (consumer unit/fuse board) and the Gas Meter must be located in the common parts of the house to ensure all tenants have access in the event of an emergency. Where this can no be achieved an alternative arrangement will need to be agreed to ensure reasonable access in the even of an emergency. A constant supply of gas and electricity to the property must always be provided. It is possible in circumstances where top up meters are provided and tenants do not co-operate with each other that services may be lost. It is therefore advised that where possible each



letting should be provided with a separate meter, this will of course depend on the type of HMO in question.

The controls for space heating and hot water should always be accessible to your tenants. If it is not possible you should engage with your tenants to agree the time frequencies on which the heating and water will come on.

6 Other Management Responsibilities

6.1 How often should I inspect my HMO?

This is essentially down to you, but you must make sure that you do not unduly interfere with your tenant's use of the property and you should reach an agreement from your tenants if you wish to inspect individual rooms or lettings. As an absolute minimum you should carry out an inspection of a letting at the end of a tenancy and ensure any problems are addressed before it is re-let. For the common areas, inspections are recommended every 6 months, this is necessary to ensure compliance with all the relevant legislation discussed earlier.

6.2 Repairs and Maintenance what do I need to do?

You should encourage your tenants to report defects or problems as soon as possible. You should provide contact details in a prominent place within the property for ease of access in the event of a problem.

6.3 What do I need to know about Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour is defined as behaviour that has the potential to cause damage, disturbance, distress, harm or fear and it may impact significantly on peoples' lifestyles, routines or their environment. When judging when someone's behaviour could be defined as anti-social the following factors are considered.

- Rude or abusive comments
- Loud noise and parties at unsociable hours
- Threatening behaviour
- Damage to other peoples property
- Alcohol related unreasonable behaviour

HMOs are sometimes the subject of noise complaints, more so than properties occupied by single families. Those HMOs which are often the subject of noise complaints are those which are occupied as student houses. In the event of your tenants or your visitors causing noise or other anti-social behaviour problems, you must remind your tenants that they may be in breach of their tenancy agreement. As the property



manager/owner you must act promptly to ensure that anti-social behaviour does not impact negatively on the lives of others. If the behaviour persists and is severe enough in its nature you should consider taking possession proceedings.

In order to assist with dealing with anti-social you may also wish to consult with Cambridgeshire Police. Partnership working with other organisations is often the most effective way to combat anti-social behaviour.

If your tenants are suffering problems with anti-social behaviour, you should suggest that they contact the Council or the Police and to keep an accurate record of all incidents. If the problem is sporadic and unpredictable, it is best to call the police in the first instance. If the problem is solely related to noise our Environmental Health Team should be contacted to investigate the complaint.

6.4 Ensuring Home Security

If a property has good security features it is often easier to let as it demonstrates a safe environment for potential tenants. Home security is considered under the Health and Housing Safety Rating System (HHSRS) as “Entry by Intruders”. To avoid the presence of this hazard you should take the steps outlined below.

- Consider improving the security of any garden areas by capping fences with trellis and ensuring gates are kept locked. If a garden gate forms part of an escape route from fire it must be openable without the use of a key.
- Ensure all good quality external doors are installed where possible, using security glass on all openings.
- All windows should be lockable. This is particularly important for windows on the ground floor and others that are easily accessible.
- Locks should be manufactured to a British Standard, i.e. Kite marked.
- Other additional steps which can be taken include using an ultra violet security pen or etching or engraving on expensive items in the house. You may also wish to consider installing an intruder alarm, although in some cases this may not be practical.

If you are intending to improve the security features on your property, you should do so whilst considering the impact on any means of escape in the event of a fire. You should also take in to consideration the needs and wishes of the occupiers.



6.5 Waste Disposal

As the property manager you should ensure that there are sufficient facilities provided to dispose of waste from the property. Landlords must supply an adequate number of bins for landfill waste and you should also encourage your tenants to use the recycling facilities provided.

Waste management can often be a problem in HMOs, often the volume of waste produced is much greater than a typical family occupied dwelling therefore further capacity may be required. Another common problem in HMOs is the tenants failing to put their bins out on time, this in turn can lead to an accumulation of waste in the garden areas and the tenants placing side waste out for collection.

Our refuse crews will not collect side waste and all waste must be presented for collection inside the container with the lid closed.

You should ensure your tenants are made aware of their collection day and that it is their responsibility to ensure the bin is placed out on time and that the Council's rules on refuse disposal are complied with.

Should you wish to discuss arrangements for further bin capacity please contact our Customer Services Team.

6.6 Pest Control

It is important you take action by contacting a competent pest controller. To reduce the likelihood of a pest infestation all gardens and outbuildings should be kept free of rubbish. Bin lids should always be kept closed shut as food waste can provide a food source for pests.

You should check the condition of the outside of premises during inspection to ensure that there are no openings through which pests can pass. You should pay particular attention to roof verges and eaves and openings around waste pipes.

If you notice a pest problem at you will need to contact a local pest control company to eradicate the problem. Failing to address a pest problem on your property can result in Environmental Health serving a Notice on you which would legally require you to arrange treatment.

6.7 What happens once my property is brought up to standard?

Once the Council is satisfied your property has been brought up to standard it will be allocated a risk rating based on factors such as property size, number of occupants and confidence in management. This risk rating will then determine the frequency of future inspections which is likely to be between 3 and 5 years. In the event of a complaint the Council will be required to investigate and may contact you to carry out an inspection.