

## RENT IT RIGHT

### General Property Standards for Property Licensing

These standards are provided to give more information and guidance as to how rented properties within the London Borough of Bexley should be maintained and managed. The Council will have regard to this document when assessing compliance with licence conditions.

#### Part I – All property

##### 1. General

- 1.1. Gas and electric meters, fuse boards, gas and water stop taps should be accessible to all occupants at all times without having to pass through other accommodation or through commercial premises. Where this is not possible due to security problems, tenants must be able to shut off gas and electrics from within the accommodation.
- 1.2. Appliance operating instructions are required for all cookers, boilers, electric heating systems and fridges, freezers and washing machines supplied with a new tenancy and upon request.
- 1.3. The hot water system of the property must provide a constant controllable supply of hot water to each bath, sink, shower and wash hand basin. Cold water must be available to these facilities and to each water closet. Instructions on how to use the system must be provided to all tenants at the beginning of their tenancy including how to shut them off in an emergency.
- 1.4. Information on emergencies and contact numbers for gas leaks and repairs must be provided to all tenants in writing at the beginning of their tenancy.

##### 2. Electrical Safety

A competent person is defined by the HSE as “a person trained and experienced so as to be able to properly examine, test and undertake any remedial action and to present the information in a report”. In this context the competent person shall be a suitably qualified electrical engineer, for example:

- A member of the Electrical Contractors Association (ECA).
- A member of the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC).
- A member of the National Association of Professional Inspectors and Testers (NAPIT).

##### 3. Fire Precautions

- 3.1. A record must be kept with full details of all faults, repairs, servicing, tests and alterations to both the fire alarm and emergency lighting systems, including details of who carried out the work. The log book must be made available for inspection by the Council, on request.
- 3.2. At the start of each tenancy, occupants must be given appropriate fire safety advice regarding the means of escape in case of fire and other fire precautions. In particular, the importance of keeping fire doors closed and keeping the escape route clear, plus how to use the fire alarm system, and fire blankets.
- 3.3. The means of escape should not take the occupants through a room containing kitchen facilities. Where this does happen, the licence holder should contact the council for advice.

3.4. There must be no polystyrene, such as ceiling or wall tiles in any common parts.

#### **4. Repairs**

- 4.1. Reasonable efforts must be made to agree times with tenants to carry out repairs.
- 4.2. Tenants should be told how long repairs are likely going to take and any disruption or inconvenience that may be caused.
- 4.3. Repairs should be completed in a considerate way that minimises disruption to tenants
- 4.4. All contractors and tradespersons must carry identification to show to tenants on request and can be checked. The tenants should also be notified who will be coming and when.
- 4.5. Repairs must be carried out by competent contractors with the necessary skills and qualifications to comply with the legal requirements relating to their trade. Any waste arising from work must be removed from the property and lawfully disposed of. It shall not be left for the tenants to manage.
- 4.6. Repairs and defects must be diagnosed and rectified in a reasonable time scale having regard to impact on tenants, the licensed property and neighbouring property and the extent of work.
- 4.7. Emergency Repairs should be carried out within 24 hours. These are defined as repairs endangering the safety, health or security of the residents or the structure of the building e.g. gas leaks, major electrical faults, blocked or a complete breakdown of the heating/ hot water systems.

*This should include a response to burglary damage boarding/ repair of any insecure door or window within 12 hours.*

#### **5. Waste Management**

- 5.1. Tenants must be provided with details of the closest civic amenity site so they can properly dispose of refuse that will not be collected by the Council.

#### **6. Licence Holder Responsibilities**

- 6.1. Where previous tenants have not surrendered keys, the licence holder will arrange for a lock change to be undertaken prior to new tenants moving in.
- 6.2. The decoration of the interior and exterior of the property must be kept clean and sound at the commencement of the tenancy, with appropriate cleanable paintwork to the walls of the bathrooms and kitchens.
- 6.3. Gardens and yards must be clean, tidy and secure, free from rubbish and safe at the commencement of the tenancy.
- 6.4. The property shall have no category one or significant category two hazards as assessed under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. The landlord should pay attention to the following:
  - 6.4.1. Safety catches will reduce the likelihood of children being able to open a window unsupervised. Catches which restrict the distance a window can be opened to 100mm shall be fitted to windows above ground floor level to reduce the possibility of an accident involving a child. Any opening limiter shall be capable of being over-ridden by an adult in the event of fire.
  - 6.4.2. Access steps, handrails, pathways, sheds, fences and gates must be maintained in good order.

- 6.4.3. Stair cases are to be well lit to allow their safe use. Light switches must be in a suitable location. Lighting to staircases and rooms entered by more than one door shall be two-way/three-way as appropriate.
- 6.4.4. All windows must be sound and well fitted, and opening lights must be able to be readily opened and securely closed. Windows must not be louver windows.
- 6.4.5. All windows with glass within 800mm of the floor will require safety glass to BS 6206 or the whole pane of glass coated with proprietary safety film.
- 6.4.6. There must be a mechanical extractor fan in each bathroom and also in any kitchen's with no openable windows. The unit must be capable of minimum extract capacity of 15 litres per second and extract direct to the external air or through ducting as necessary. It is recommended that fans operate with low noise levels and are controlled by a humidistat with a manual over-ride. In kitchens, a cooker hood that extracts to the outside will be sufficient.

## 7. Heating

- 7.1. Ensure that the property has a form of fixed space heating. Heating should be controllable by the tenants for example by incorporating a timer, suitably positioned room thermostat or TRVs. The heating should be capable of providing the following temperatures in each room:

Living rooms, dining room and bedroom	21°C
Bathroom	22°C
Elsewhere	18°C

- 7.2. The system shall be capable of maintaining the above temperatures when the external temperature is  $-1^{\circ}\text{C}$  or less.
- 7.3. Portable electrical heaters are not acceptable, unless being used as temporary heaters in the case of a boiler breakdown.
- 7.4. Where storage heaters are provided there must be an off peak electrical meter at the commencement of any tenancy.

## 8. Kitchen and bathrooms

- 8.1. The walls, floors, ceilings, work tops and cupboards of the kitchen must be sound, clean and, as appropriate, well decorated at the commencement of any tenancy. The kitchen must be laid out in such an arrangement as to allow its safe use and be easy to keep clean and hygienic by the tenant.
- 8.2. Bathrooms and water closets (WC's) must have adequate space to ensure their safe use. Any alterations to the bathroom and water closet need to comply with Building Regulation standards.
- 8.3. A shower and or a bath, and wash hand basin are required each with a tiled, or equivalent, splash back area.
- 8.4. Bathrooms and kitchens require impervious flooring with laminate, vinyl or tiled floor coverings, the edges must be sealed to minimise water ingress.

## 9. Security

- 9.1. Where burglar alarms are provided, they must be fitted with an automatic cut out device that prevents the alarm for ringing for more than twenty minutes. Full operating instructions must be given and the contact details of the service engineers. The equipment must be serviced annually and if unreliable.

## Part 2 – Additional Standards for HMO Property

### 10. Room sizes for sleeping and living accommodation in all HMOs

	Bedsit containing kitchen facilities	Bedsit where shared kitchen facilities are provided in a separate room	Rooms in shared houses and rooms where exclusive use kitchen facilities are in a separate room
Single Room	12m <sup>2</sup>	9m <sup>2</sup>	6.52m <sup>2</sup>
Double Room	15m <sup>2</sup>	12m <sup>2</sup>	10.23m <sup>2</sup>

A shared house is defined as per the LACORS Guidance on Fire Safety as

*HMOs where the whole property has been rented out by an identifiable group of sharers such as students, work colleagues or friends as joint tenants.*

*Each occupant normally has their own bedroom but they share the kitchen, dining facilities, bathroom, WC, living room and all other parts of the house. All the tenants will have exclusive legal possession and control of all parts of the house, including all the bedrooms. There is normally a significant degree of social interaction between the occupants and they will, in the main, have rented out the house as one group.*

*There is a single joint tenancy agreement. In summary, the group will possess many of the characteristics of a single family household, although the property is still technically an HMO as the occupants are not all related.*

- 10.1. No more than two people can share a room. Shared sleeping accommodation is only considered suitable for adults who are married, cohabitees, consenting friends or relatives.
- 10.2. No two persons over the age of twelve, of opposite sex, can sleep in the same room, unless they are married or cohabitees.
- 10.3. Floor to ceiling height to be a minimum of 2.14m (7ft) over 85% floor area. Any floor area where ceiling height is less than 1.53m (5ft) shall be disregarded. Where bunk beds are used, there shall be a minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.5m (8'2").

### 11. Kitchens in all HMOs

Unless kitchens contain a suitable dining area, they must be positioned within 1 floor of any bedroom or unit of accommodation and must be directly accessible from the communal areas. The kitchen size and layout must enable the occupants to safely use the kitchen and to store, prepare and cook food in a safe and hygienic way.

Kitchens must be of an adequate size and shape to enable safe use of food preparation by the number of occupiers and the following guidelines for shared kitchens apply:

Number of sharers	Room size
Up to 5	5.5m <sup>2</sup>
6	6.5m <sup>2</sup>
7	7.5m <sup>2</sup>
8	8.5m <sup>2</sup>
9	9.5m <sup>2</sup>

10	10.5m <sup>2</sup>
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Where all or some of the lettings within the HMO do not contain cooking facilities, they must be provided for sharing with other households. There should be one full set of facilities per 5 persons, irrespective of age. Some flexibility may be considered in well-managed properties where there are 6 or 7 persons, subject to a risk assessment carried out by the Council.

Where there are 8 – 10 persons, either an additional full set of cooking facilities must be provided, or additional facilities must be provided in an appropriate number of individual lettings where the room is large enough.

A set of cooking facilities is comprised as follows:

<b>Number of Occupiers</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Specifications</b>
Up to 5	Cooker	Four-ring hob, oven and grill.
6 - 7		Additional four-ring hob, oven and grill in bedsit type HMOs and a combination microwave oven/grill is required in shared house HMOs.
Up to 5	Sink/drainer	1000 mm sink/drainer set on base unit, provided with a constant supply of hot and cold water and properly connected to the drainage system.
6 - 7		A double sink/drainer installed as above or A single sink/drainer plus a dishwasher.
Up to 5	Worktop	A securely fixed worktop of smooth impervious material, minimum size 1000mm X 600mm deep (excluding any area covered by a major appliance)
6 - 7		1000 mm x 600 mm provided and fitted as above, plus additional space for extra appliances.
All	Splashback	300 mm tiled splashback or its equivalent to be provided to the sink/drainer, worktop and any cooker without an integral splashback
All	Electrical Sockets	Two double electrical sockets are required, plus one additional socket for each major appliance (e.g. cooker, refrigerator, freezer, washing machine), for every five occupants (or part thereof) within the property. The two double electrical sockets must be positioned within the food preparation area, at worktop level and in a safe position.
Per Household	Food storage cupboard	A dry goods storage cupboard of minimum capacity 0.15m <sup>3</sup> (500 x 600 x 500mm), finished internally and externally with smooth impervious surfaces. The space in any cupboard below a sink will not be considered acceptable for this purpose.  In relation to shared kitchens, the dry goods storage cupboard can either be positioned within the shared kitchen or a separate cupboard can be placed within each unit of

		accommodation
Up to 5	Refrigerator	Where provided in a shared kitchen, equivalent of 2 worktop height refrigerators both with freezer compartments, or 1 worktop height fridge and 1 worktop height freezer.
6 - 7		Where provided in a shared kitchen, the equivalent of an additional worktop height refrigerator with freezer compartment.

All kitchen areas must be provided with adequate lighting, particularly over the cooking and food preparation areas.

All facilities and equipment must be fit for the purpose.

## 12. Bathrooms in all HMOs

- 12.1. All facilities should be located in enclosed rooms of an adequate size and layout within 1 floor of any bedroom or unit of accommodation and directly accessible from the communal areas unless provided as en-suite facilities for the exclusive use of that occupant. Facilities should be inside the main building.

All bathroom and toilet facilities must be sited in a hygienically designed and constructed room which is provided with appropriate wall and floor surface finishes that are easily cleanable.

All bathrooms and toilets must be suitably heated, lighted and ventilated.

All baths, showers and wash hand basins must be fitted with taps and supplied with a cold and constant supply of hot water and properly connected to the mains drainage system.

All wash hand basins and baths must be provided with a two course tiled splashback and shower cubicles fully tiled or be complete self-standing cubicles.

All baths, toilets and wash hand basins must be fit for the purpose.

- 12.2. Where there are four or fewer occupants sharing bathroom and toilet facilities, there must be at least one fixed bath or shower, and a toilet (which may be situated in the bathroom). A wash hand basin shall be provided in each bathroom or compartment containing a toilet.

- 12.3. Where there are five or more occupants sharing bathroom and toilet facilities, there must be at least one fixed bath or shower for every five occupants (or part thereof) and at least one toilet separate to the bathroom for every five occupants (or part thereof).

A wash hand basin shall be provided in each bathroom or compartment containing a toilet.