

Wrexham County Borough Council

Housing Standards – Guidelines for Private Rented Properties

FACTSHEET 2

Houses in Multiple Occupation - Shared Houses

e.g. 3 or more persons sharing facilities, but living together as a single family household



Important Note – These guidelines have been developed to assist landlords in the private rented sector meet their legal obligations with regards to housing standards. They may not be appropriate or sufficient in every case.

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is a risk assessment tool used to assess 29 different hazards in residential premises. The principle of HHSRS is that 'Any residential premises should provide a safe and healthy environment for any potential occupier or visitor'. Further information can be found at www.communities.gov.uk/hhsrs

Before the start of the tenancy, carry out an inspection of your property and look for any obvious hazards. The following guidelines may be helpful:

Fire

IMPORTANT - *If the dwelling has 3 or more storeys, additional fire precautions to those listed below will be required. Contact the team for further information*

The dwelling design, construction and condition should limit the chances of a fire, limit the spread of fire, and provide safe and ready means of escape in the event of fire. The guidelines below are based on a normal level of risk:-

- The escape route and general fire separation must be of sound, conventional construction.
- Doors must be sound, close fitting and well constructed. The door between the kitchen and escape route should be a 30 minute fire door.
- Sleeping rooms should not pass through another room before reaching escape route.
- Automatic window locks should not be fitted.

- A mains-wired Category LD3 Grade D fire alarm system, as described in BS 5839: Part 6 must be installed. This system covers the main escape route and the kitchen, lounge and cellar.
- A fire blanket in the kitchen.
- A simple multi purpose fire extinguisher in the escape route is recommended.
- Information on fire prevention should be given to each occupier

Electrical installations and appliances

- Electrical lighting and power installations must be checked and certified safe by an appropriately qualified person at least every **5 years** as a minimum.
- Under provision of power sockets will lead to dangerous overloading.

Recommended sockets numbers are:-

Location	Number of double power sockets
Living rooms	4
Double bedroom	3
Single bedroom	2

- Electrical appliances should be inspected when first supplied, annually and at beginning of each new tenancy.

Heating installations and appliances

- All heating installations and appliances (gas, solid fuel or oil) **must** be checked and certified safe by an appropriately qualified person at least **annually** and as required by law.
- The installations and appliances must be serviced and have a current safety inspection certificate issued by an appropriately qualified person. (e.g. for gas installations, a Gas Safe Register engineer (www.gassaferegister.co.uk or 0800 408 5500)

Waste Disposal

- There is an ongoing duty on HMO managers to ensure that sufficient bins are provided for the number of occupants. Where necessary, additional arrangements must be made to ensure appropriate waste disposal facilities are available.
- This duty extends to occupiers and requires them to store and dispose of litter in accordance with the arrangements that have been made.

Management Regulations

There are many duties placed on HMO managers including:-

- To provide information to occupiers;
- To take safety measures;
- To maintain water supply and drainage;

- To supply and maintain gas and electricity;
- To maintain common parts, fixtures, fittings and appliances;
- To maintain living accommodation;
- To provide waste disposal facilities.

Details can be found in the Management of HMOs (Wales) Regulations 2006

Licensing of HMOs

- If the premises has 3 or more storeys and is occupied by 5 or more persons a HMO licence is likely to be required. Contact the team to confirm. Failure to obtain a licence may result in a fine of up to £20,000.

Security

- The dwelling must have a reasonable level of physical security. Where it is necessary to replace doors, a door set, windows or fencing, the replacements should comply with the Police Force's 'Secured by Design' Specification. Details can be found at www.securedbydesign.com/standards/doorslocks

Adequately heated, fuel efficient and well insulated

- Heating systems should be reasonably economical to run (programmable and of suitable size for dwelling) and capable of heating whole of the dwelling.
- Heating should be controllable by the occupants
- External doors and windows must be sufficiently well fitting so that they do not cause severe draughts without reducing background ventilation.
- The hot water tank must be effectively insulated with jacket at least 75mm thick.
- Kitchens and bathrooms should have adequate mechanical ventilation.
- At least 250mm of loft insulation should be provided.

- Pipes and tanks in the roof space should be lagged with 20-25mm of pipe insulation.
- The thermal performance of external walls should be improved wherever possible e.g. cavity wall insulation
- Best practice information and information on the Landlord Energy Saving Allowance can be found at www.energysavingtrust.org.uk
- Energy performance certificates are now required for most new tenancies. Further advice can be found at www.direct.gov.uk/epc

Kitchens

- Suitably located, sensibly and logically laid out and of adequate size to allow the safe and hygienic preparation and cooking of food
- Equipped with equipment fit for purpose and supplied in sufficient quantity for number of occupants
- Sinks with draining boards and adequate supply of cold and constant hot water
- Have a well organised working area with adequate work surfaces that are permanent and impervious.
- Have sufficient storage for food, crockery and pots and pans.
- Adequate lighting and ventilation including mechanical extractor fan.
- At least 2 double power sockets conveniently close to main food preparation area.
- Have safe and suitable flooring that is even and easily cleanable and provides adequate slip resistance.

Number of occupants	Minimum size and facilities
Up to 5	7m² Gas/electric cooker with 4 burners/hobs and oven and grill. Fridge/freezer with shelf per person
6	10m² and separate dining area As above (up for 5)

	+ additional cooker (which can be a microwave oven of 20 litre capacity if space is limited)
7-10	10m² and separate dining area As above (up to 5) + additional cooker, and sink/dishwasher

Bathrooms

- Must be adequately heated and ventilated.
- The hot water temperature should be checked routinely.
- Must be fit for purpose, suitably located, and of adequate size and layout.
- Wall, ceiling and floor surfaces must be cleanable.
- Slipping risks associated with wet floors should be reduced.
- All baths, showers and wash hand basins must provide an adequate supply of cold and constant hot water
- The washbasin should be located in or near the room containing the WC.

Number of occupants	Minimum Facilities
Up to 4	1 full bathroom (bath or shower; WC and wash hand basin)
Up to 5	1 separate WC with wash hand basin <u>and</u> 1 bathroom (which may contain a WC) with a bath or shower
6-10	2 full bathrooms (one WC and wash hand basin must be in separate compartment)

- Bathrooms or separate WC compartments should be provided with a lockable door.

- The bathroom or WC compartment should not open directly and immediately onto a space intended for storage or preparation of food.
- Light fittings should be fitted with a pull cord if operated from within the bathroom

Space Standards

- Rooms should provide sufficient space for appropriate furniture and still allow space for movement. The floor area must be considered usable to be included in measurement.

Bedrooms

Number of occupants	Minimum size of bedroom
1	10m ² (if a separate living room is provided this can be reduced to 6.5m ²)
2	15m ² (if a separate living room is provided this can be reduced to 11m ²)

Living Rooms / Dining Rooms

Number of occupants	Minimum size of living/dining room
Up to 5	11m ²
6-10	16.5m ²

In a good state of repair

- The dwelling must be structurally stable and free from damp and disrepair.
- External walls, roof structure and coverings, external windows and doors, and chimneys must be in a good condition.

Stairs

- Stairs must be made as safe as possible. They must have at least one handrail that is easy to grasp and extends the full length of the flight. Good lighting must be provided on staircases.

Floors

- Floor surfaces (including paths and yards) should be properly constructed avoiding excessive slopes and uneven surfaces.
- Floors should provide adequate slip resistance especially in bathrooms and kitchens. Drainage should be effective to remove surface water from paths and yards.

Advice

- The Housing Standards Team can provide advice and guidance. Contact details are:

Tel: 01978 315300

Email: housing@wrexham.gov.uk
(mark for attention of housing standards team)

Landlord Associations

- Being a landlord is a huge responsibility and you will need expert advice. A wealth of information is available through landlord associations such as the National Landlords Association (www.landlords.gov.uk), the Residential Landlords Association (www.rla.org.uk) and the British Property Federation (www.bpf.org.uk).

Accreditation

- The Council strongly supports the Landlord Accreditation Wales scheme (www.welshlandlords.org.uk). The scheme seeks to assist landlords to operate a successful business.