

**BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**



**GUIDE FOR  
STANDARDS IN  
HOUSES IN MULTIPLE  
OCCUPATION (HMOs)**

Adopted by Bedford Borough Council in 2008  
and updated in 2018, the Yellow Guide

Version 8: 2018

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## **Introduction**

Landlords and letting agents have a general duty of care to ensure that the accommodation they offer for rent does not have a detrimental effect on the health, safety and welfare of their tenants. All dwellings should also provide a safe and healthy environment for occupants and visitors. The aim of this document is to help landlords of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) meet these obligations, encourage good practice and to provide a guide to the minimum standards considered acceptable for houses in multiple occupation.

The standards for rented homes and HMOs contained in this guide were originally developed in conjunction with housing authorities in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire and with Bedfordshire and Luton Fire & Rescue Service. They were adopted by Bedford Borough Council after consultation with stakeholders and other interested parties on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2008 and have since been updated. This means that the guide provides the minimum enforceable standards in the HMO rented sector and properties that fall below the standards will be asked to improve. This guide is principally aimed at the private HMO rented sector but is also relevant to the social housing sector.

There is a separate 'good practice guide for Standards in the Private Rented Sector' for other rented accommodation.

## **What are Houses in Multiple Occupation?**

Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) comprise property known as bedsits, lodgings, shared houses and some converted self-contained flats. The main feature is that there is sharing of facilities, kitchens and bathrooms/WCs so that occupiers do not have exclusive use of their own facilities.

The Housing Act 2004 introduced a new definition that also includes pre-1991 Building Regulation buildings converted into self-contained flats providing the conversions have not since been brought up to the Building Regulation standard and more than 1/3rd of the flats are let on short tenancies. These HMOs are called Section 257 HMOs. There are additional management regulations which now apply to these converted blocks of flats. A full definition of HMO is found in Appendix 2.

In summary an HMO is either:

- a house that is occupied by three or more unrelated persons who share amenities such as the bathroom and/or kitchen, or
- A building converted into non-compliant self-contained flats prior to June 1992 (when the Building Regulations 1991 came into force) where more than one-third of the flats are rented.

## **HMO Licensing**

As well as operating the national Mandatory HMO licensing scheme, for the last 5 years the Council have also operated an Additional HMO Licensing scheme for smaller HMOs and for converted buildings. It was decided in January 2018 to extend the HMO Additional Licensing scheme for another 5 years and this will run from the 17 May 2018 to the 16 May 2023. Details of the various schemes are listed below.

1) Mandatory HMO Licensing - The criteria for mandatory HMO licensing are: -

- It is an HMO with 3 or more storeys (changing to 1 or more storeys from

the 1 October 2018); and

- occupied by 5 or more people, in more than one household; and
- all or some of these households share a basic amenity, such as a bathroom or kitchen.

2) Additional HMO Licensing – the criteria for an Additional HMO licence is:-

- It is an HMO with one or two storeys, and is
- occupied by 3 or 4 people, in more than one household, and
- all or some of them share facilities such as a bathroom or kitchen.

Or:

- The property consists of self-contained flats in a building which do not meet the standards of conversion required by the 1991 Building Regulations (which came into force in June 1992) **and** more than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the tenancies are let out on a shorthold tenancy agreement known as s257 HMOs. There do not necessarily have to be common parts in the property, although this will be taken into consideration when assessing the adequacy of the fire separation between the flats.

See our website for further details.

[http://www.bedford.gov.uk/housing/houses\\_in\\_multiple\\_occupation/additional\\_licensing\\_of\\_hmos.aspx](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/housing/houses_in_multiple_occupation/additional_licensing_of_hmos.aspx)

The Housing Act 2004 requires an HMO to have a licence to operate. You will need to apply on-line for the licence via the Council's website. The on-line form will lead you through the application process and direct you to upload the relevant documents and to pay for your licence before it can be submitted. In common with many other bodies the Council is moving to digital systems and there will no longer be an option to apply using a paper application form. You will be able to go through the application form in stages until you are ready to submit your application.

A guide to the licensing of HMOs for landlords and managers is available free of charge from [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

## Section 1

### General Standards for Rented Property and Houses in Multiple Occupation

**The standards are applicable to all rented property and are designed to help meet the requirements of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) under the Housing Act 2004.**

1. **Repair** – An HMO should be maintained in a reasonable state of repair. In practice this means that all the building elements in the property must be functional and perform properly. Some disrepair will have more of an effect on the health and safety of the occupiers than others but even if there are no health effects now, the disrepair will cause the building to deteriorate and eventually cause more serious problems. It is a requirement of the Management Of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations, that an HMO is maintained in reasonable repair. In addition, under the housing, health and safety rating system (HHSRS) under the Housing Act 2004, used to assess hazards, a landlord is liable for any disrepair resulting in a hazard being caused to the occupiers.
2. **Space heating** - There should be space heating appliances provided in every habitable room so that an ambient temperature of 20° C can be obtained inside the room when the outside temperature is -1°C (after one hour of operation). The heating should be fixed, rather than moveable and consideration must be given to the affordability for the occupiers. Provision of adequate thermal insulation is also important. Heating should be controllable by the occupants.

Examples of suitable installations include gas fired central heating, electric storage heating, electric direct radiators, oil fired central heating, warm air systems, modern ecofriendly combined heating systems, underfloor systems or programmable LPG/solid fuel central heating. Gas fires should not be installed in sleeping rooms unless they are fitted with a balanced flue – i.e. NOT traditional gas fires. Portable Paraffin or LPG heaters are NOT permitted in HMOs because of risk from fire and potentially hazardous combustion gases which are produced.

3. **Electrical safety** - The electrical installation must be safe and in good condition. This must be certified by engaging a competent electrical contractor (belonging to an appropriate professional organisation) who is Part P registered (current Building Regulations Part P applies) to report on the condition of the installation and issue a report (which may detail defects to be remedied if necessary) and a certificate (on completion of those works). Test certificates usually last for 5 years. It is mandatory for landlords of HMOs to maintain electrical safety certificates and if requested make them available for inspection (by the Council).
4. **Electrical installation** - There must be suitably positioned and sufficient numbers of lighting points and power socket outlets.

In general this would mean at least two double sockets in bedrooms, three double sockets in living rooms and six double sockets in kitchens with a minimum of four sockets at working height. Additional sockets may be required for bedsitting rooms or study bedrooms as there is likely to be more personal electrical equipment used by the occupant. Landlords must manage the use of extension leads/socket outlets/adaptors to ensure installations are not overloaded and that such leads/extensions are separately fused.

- 5. Portable electrical appliances** - Portable and movable electrical appliances supplied by the landlord should be maintained and examined on a regular basis and should be checked for safety by a competent person and PAT tested.
- 6. Fire resisting furniture** - All furniture and furnishings must meet current Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1998 standards. Labels confirming conformity should be clearly identifiable.
- 7. Fire safety** - See Appendix 1 for requirements dependent on the number of storeys and letting arrangement.
- 8. Natural lighting and ventilation** - There should be suitable and sufficient means of natural lighting and ventilation from openable windows to all habitable rooms (usually living rooms and bedrooms). Natural lighting should be at least 1/10<sup>th</sup> of floor area and natural ventilation should be 1/20<sup>th</sup> of the floor area. Bathrooms and kitchens should have suitable mechanical extract ventilation to reduce condensation, mould growth and odours. Extract ventilation should be connected to the light switch and equipped with an overrun facility.

Where applicable, openable windows to inner rooms (see appendix 1, paragraph 1.7) should be of the escape type (see appendix 1, paragraph 1.8) but in all cases where the inner sill height is less than 1,100 mm above floor level, the opening window should be fitted with child proof opening limiters preventing the window from being opened more than 100mm, except in emergency.

- 9. Refuse storage and disposal** - Appropriate refuse storage facilities should be provided within the HMO with suitable access to disposal facilities. Refuse containers to be located away from habitable rooms. Where dwellings do not have a yard or garden to store refuse bins, suitable bins should be provided to permit storage without causing odours or attracting vermin or pests. Landlords should encourage residents to recycle refuse as part of the Council's kerb side collection.
- 10. Entry by intruders** -The dwelling and individual bedrooms should be capable of being secured against unauthorised entry without compromising the means of escape in the case of fire. Security locks should be provided with a thumb turn on the inside of the door so that occupiers do not need a key to exit the premises and their rooms to a place of safety. Glazing in entrance doors and surrounds should be security glazing. Shared entry doors, such as of blocks of flats, should be fitted with door entry systems and entrance/exit doors should be self-closing to avoid unauthorised access. Arson reduction is also an important element of entry by intruders, see Appendix 1 paragraph 1.9 on fire safety.

**11. Thermal insulation** - Structural thermal insulation should be provided to minimise heat loss. Insulation measures appropriate to the construction of the property should be installed. For example, loft insulation to all loft spaces to be a minimum 270 mm thickness. Landlords should aim for this standard of loft insulation, particularly if existing loft insulation is absent or less than 50mm which is the "trigger level" in the Decent Homes standard. Increasing insulation benefits tenants and landlords. Warm homes can prevent damage by dampness and mould growth. Tenants can benefit from reduced fuel costs. Cavity wall insulation should be considered (if there are cavity walls that can be insulated effectively). Include for provision of insulation to hot water cylinders, draught proofing of doors and windows, while maintaining adequate ventilation (windows should not be sealed shut).

**12. What happens if a landlord fails to obtain an HMO licence or meet the standards set out in this document?**

This will depend on the seriousness and the effects of the failure. All HMOs require a licence and failure to apply for a licence or comply with licence conditions without reasonable excuse is an offence for which there are unlimited fines.

The Council will seek to establish the reasons for the failure and give advice but will not hesitate to take formal action if the advice is ignored or the safety of residents is put at serious risk.

If there are hazards in the HMO (see appendix 3), informal action may be taken in the first instance in accordance with the Council's enforcement policy – we offer help, advice and guidance to encourage high standards.

Where minimum legal requirements are not met our enforcement policy emphasizes that formal action will be taken if informal action does not resolve the matter within a specified timescale. Landlords receive an informal notice which has full details of the works and with category 1 and 2 hazards clearly set out. The expected completion dates will also be given. However, where there is a category 1 hazard which causes an imminent risk of serious harm to the health and safety of the occupier, formal action will be taken immediately.

Formal action means:

- For less serious hazards, Hazard Awareness Notices may be appropriate to bring to the attention of the landlord and tenant any defects and hazards that need to be addressed, together with recommended action.
- For more serious hazards, Improvement Notices with schedules of work to remedy category one and category two hazards may be appropriate. Works must be completed within prescribed timescales and failure to comply can result in prosecution and/or the Council carrying out the works in default.
- Prohibition Orders preventing occupation of all or part of a building may be appropriate where, for example, there is serious overcrowding or other serious category one hazards exist.

- Emergency Prohibition can also be taken by the Council to prevent occupation of part or all of a building where there is imminent risk of serious harm or Emergency Remedial Action can be taken to remove the hazard.

There are rights of appeal to a residential property tribunal against any of the above notices/orders apart from the hazard awareness notice.

There is a charge for taking formal action which rises each year depending on the rate of inflation. It reflects the expenses that the Council incurs in taking formal action and is designed to encourage good practice among landlords and discourage landlords from waiting for the Council to take formal action to carry out essential works.

In addition, if the Council decides to carry out remedial work as a result of an emergency or because the landlord has not complied with the notice, a charge of 20% will be added to reflect the administrative costs.

**All enforcement action** will be carried out having regard to the 7 principles specified in the Statutory Code of Practice for Regulators made under section 23 of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006.

These are:

**Economic Progress** - Regulators should recognise that a key element of their activity will be to allow, or even encourage, economic progress and only to intervene when there is a clear case for protection.

**Risk Assessment** - Regulators, and the Regulatory system as a whole, should use comprehensive risk assessment to concentrate resources in the areas that need them most.

**Advice and Guidance** - Regulators should provide authoritative, accessible advice easily and cheaply.

**Inspections and other visits** - No inspection should take place without a reason.

**Information Requirements** - Businesses should not have to give unnecessary information or give the same piece of information twice.

**Compliance and Enforcement Actions** - The few businesses that persistently break regulations should be identified quickly and face proportionate and meaningful sanctions.

**Accountability** - Regulators should be accountable for the efficiency and effectiveness of their activities, while remaining independent in the decisions they take.

## Section 2

### Specific standards for HMOs

The following specific standards apply to all HMOs

1. Fire Safety;
  2. Amenity standards - kitchen facilities;
  3. Amenity standards - washing/bathroom and WC facilities
  4. Crowding and space – within bedsitting rooms and shared houses;
  5. Management (set out in regulations)
1. **Fire safety measures** – Government research into fire statistics has shown that the risk of dying in a fire increases by up to 6 times for occupiers of HMOs and there is an even greater risk if that HMO is 3-storeys or more. It is this evidence that has informed increased regulation, particularly fire safety requirements, in respect of these properties. It is a requirement of the Fire Safety Regulatory Reform Order that written fire risk assessments are carried out and landlords who own HMOs should carry out their own **fire risk assessments** and seek individual advice on fire safety measures from the Council HMO team for their properties. Advice can also be obtained from the Fire and Rescue Service either directly by contacting them or visiting their website:
- <https://www.bedsfire.com/CommunitySafety/BusinessFireSafety/Pages/FireRiskAss.aspx>
- When an application for an HMO licence is received, if necessary an inspection will be arranged by a member of the Council's HMO team and a detailed schedule of work will be issued giving a reasonable time within which to bring the HMO up to standard. **Appendix 1** details a summary of the current fire safety standards for houses in multiple occupation. Each HMO must be inspected by the HMO team to determine the exact fire safety measures required. More detailed information is available by contacting the HMO team on 01234 718512. There is also more information in Appendix 1 on fire risk assessments.
2. **Amenity standards (kitchens)** – lettings within houses in multiple occupation should include either individual kitchen facilities or access to the shared facilities in the ratios set out below. Alternative facility provision, for example individual cooking facilities, may be considered by the Council. Shared kitchens should be located within a reasonable distance from bedrooms, normally no more than one floor distant. If this is impracticable and there is a dining facility adjacent to the kitchen, consideration can be given to relaxing this requirement.
- Shared kitchens-** Where shared kitchens are provided for use by the occupiers, a set of kitchen facilities should be provided on a ratio of **one set per five occupiers** or part thereof. A kitchen set should include the following minimum requirements:
- 1 1/2 bowl sink/drainers with mixer tap and adequate supply of hot and cold water;
  - A cooker, minimum 4 rings plus oven and grill, a microwave oven may also be included;

- Food preparation area minimum 1500mm length of work surface. NOTE ignore 300mm on each side of the cooker and any inaccessible corners as useable food preparation space.;
- A minimum of 6 double electrical socket outlets at working height;
- A food storage lockable unit of standard depth (300mm) and height (720mm) x 400mm width, or base unit (not a sink unit) of equivalent volume (0.08m<sup>3</sup>) for each person, which should be lockable;
- Suitably sized refrigerator with a freezer compartment.
- Washing machine.

**For 6 occupiers**, the following relaxed standard can apply:

- 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.
- Adequate worktop with a minimum of 2500mm of linear useable worktop and the standard depth of generally 600mm. NOTE: ignore 300mm on each side of the cooker and any inaccessible corners as useable food preparation space.
- A food storage lockable unit of standard depth (300mm) and height (720mm) x 400mm width, or base unit (not a sink unit) of equivalent volume (0.08m<sup>3</sup>) for each person.
- At least 6 double plug socket outlets in addition to those servicing major appliances.
- A large refrigerator sized fridge freezer.
- Washing machine
- A standard sized swing bin

Layout is very important to ensure the kitchen can be used safely without hazards from scalding, hot surfaces and fire. Cookers should not be sited close to doorways and should have work surface fitted on either side. A practical alternative for food storage is to provide either a base unit with worktop over within each individual letting, or a refrigerator within each letting, so tenants can store food individually. Tiled splashbacks should be provided for areas adjacent to working areas of the kitchen. Additional socket outlets should be provided for fridges, freezers and washing machines. Washable, impervious floor coverings should be fitted in all kitchens.

**Individual kitchens in bedsits** - it is recognised that more compact cooking and food preparation facilities may be appropriate so a suitable single kitchen provision would be - minimum of 2 rings and mini oven with sink unit, fridge and work surface and 3 electric socket outlets for kitchen equipment.

The layout and siting must be hygienic and safe to use – and the cooking facilities to be fitted/secured rather than free standing on a surface.

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

- exclusive use of individual bath/shower room and WC facilities such as en-suite facilities; 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 (as above) and, in addition, a separate WC and wash basin must be provided in the house in a separately accessible compartment.

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

**9 - 10 persons sharing:** two complete bathrooms containing a bath or shower, wash basin and WC, with hot and cold water supplies and drainage. In addition, a separate WC with basin in a separate compartment must be provided.

**11 - 15 persons sharing:** three bathrooms, 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 bathrooms, 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 should be supplied with hot and cold water and waste drainage. Tiled splashbacks should be provided for areas adjacent to baths, above wash basins and to the walls of shower enclosures. Washable, impervious floor coverings should 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, it is a Regulatory requirement that a wash hand basin with hot and cold water and a tiled splash back should generally be provided, where reasonably practicable, within each letting (unless a sink is already

provided) of sufficient size to allow personal washing. 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.

4. **Crowding and space within bedsits and shared houses** – the minimum standards for overcrowding in single family dwellings 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. Overcrowding in HMOs is dealt with using enforceable parts of the Housing Act 2004, so keeping to the space limits is vital, to avoid notices. For licensed HMOs a mandatory maximum number will be included in the licence.

#### **Minimum Unit Size**

<b>Unit with communal space available in the house *</b>	<b>Minimum floor area – one person.</b>	<b>Minimum floor area – two persons.</b>
Unit with no kitchen	6.51m <sup>2</sup> or 70ft <sup>2</sup>	10.5m <sup>2</sup> or 110ft <sup>2</sup>
Unit with kitchen	9.5m <sup>2</sup> or 105ft <sup>2</sup>	13.5 m <sup>2</sup> or 145ft <sup>2</sup>
<b>Unit - no communal space in the house</b>		
Unit with no kitchen	8m <sup>2</sup> or 85ft <sup>2</sup>	13m <sup>2</sup> or 140ft <sup>2</sup>
Unit with kitchen	11m <sup>2</sup> or 120ft <sup>2</sup>	16m <sup>2</sup> or 175ft <sup>2</sup>

\* Exclude space with headroom under 1.524m (5ft) e.g. sloping ceilings.

Communal space means a furnished lounge area or dining room sufficient for residents to sit down and relax or enjoy a meal.

## **5. Amenity Standards in Self-contained Flats.**

**5.1 Washing and toilet facilities** - Suitable and sufficient washing and toilet facilities should be provided within a suitable room. All baths, showers and wash hand basins must be capable of providing a constant supply of hot and cold water. Tiled splashbacks should be provided for areas adjacent to baths, above wash basins and to the walls of shower enclosures. Washable, impervious floor coverings should also be fitted in all bath/shower rooms and WC compartments.

For unfurnished accommodation, the provision of floor coverings is not applicable. Mechanical extract ventilation is required to reduce condensation, mould growth and odours.

Washing and toilet facilities are assessed under the HHSRS personal hygiene and sanitation hazards.

**5.2 Kitchen facilities** - A kitchen of suitable design and size should be provided and equipped with reasonably modern facilities to enable occupants to safely store, cook and prepare food. The minimum requirements are:

- Sink/drainage with adequate supply of hot and cold water
- A cooker, with 4 rings plus oven and grill.
- Food preparation area minimum 1000mm work surface.
- At least 4 double sockets with a minimum of 4 electrical socket outlets at working height.
- 1000mm base/wall unit for equipment and dry goods.
- Suitably sized refrigerator with a freezer compartment.
- Plumbing, power supply and space for a washing machine (see item 5).

Tiled splashbacks should be provided for areas adjacent to working areas of the kitchen. Washable, impervious floor coverings should be fitted in all kitchens (except for unfurnished lettings). Additional socket outlets should be provided for washing machines, fridges and freezers. Layout is very important to ensure the kitchen can be used safely without hazards from scalding, hot surfaces and fire. Cookers should not be sited close to doorways and should have work surfaces fitted on either side. Kitchen facilities are assessed under the HHSRS food safety hazard and flames and hot surfaces.

**5.3 Clothes washing and drying facilities** - There should be space and plumbing for the occupiers to site a washing machine with an appropriate power socket adjacent. There should be somewhere to dry clothes, preferably both outside and inside, but this is a practical consideration. As airing cupboards are designed to air clothes after drying and are not suitable for drying damp clothes, it is important to consider how clothes will be dried inside to minimize condensation - drying clothes internally without adequate ventilation is to be discouraged.

Assessed under the HHSRS domestic hygiene hazard.

6 **Management of HMOs - All HMOs must comply with the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006\*. The Regulations state that it shall be the responsibility of the Manager of the HMO to ensure the following (additional comments in italics):**

**(i) Safety measures** - All means of escape from fire are to be kept free from obstruction and maintained in good order and repair. Fire fighting equipment and fire alarms must be maintained in good working order. All notices indicating the means of escape must be displayed so that they are clearly visible to the occupiers.

**(ii) Fire safety measures must be provided in accordance with appendix 1 of this guide.**

The manager must take all measures to protect the occupiers from injury, having regard to the design, structural conditions and numbers of occupants, especially in relation to roofs and balconies, and any windows that have sills at or near to floor level. If young children are likely to visit, window limiters should be fitted restricting the opening to 100mm but allow emergency exit.

**(iii) Water supply and drainage** - All means of water supply and drainage in the house are to be maintained, repaired, kept clean and be protected against frost damage. Tanks and cisterns must be clean and covered. The manager shall not unreasonably cause the supply of water to be interrupted.

**(iv) Gas and electricity** - The manager shall not unreasonably cause the supply of gas or electricity to be interrupted. The manager must supply a copy of the latest Gas Appliance Test Certificate within 7 days of a request from the local authority. The manager must ensure that every fixed electrical installation is inspected and tested by a suitably qualified person at intervals not exceeding 5 years, obtain a test certificate and supply a copy to the local authority within 7 days of receiving a request from the local authority.

*It is a requirement of the Gas Safety and Use Regulations 1998, enforced by the Health and Safety Executive that a gas safety check of all gas appliance is carried out annually.*

**(iv) Common parts, fixtures, fittings and appliances** - The manager shall also ensure that all common areas such as staircases, passageways, corridors and entrances are kept reasonably free from obstruction, maintained in good and clean decorative repair and in safe working condition. All handrails and banisters and any stair coverings must be kept repaired or replaced or be provided for the safety of the residents. All fixtures, fittings and appliances used in common are to be maintained in good and safe repair and in clean working order, except those that an occupier is entitled to remove, or which are otherwise outside the control of the manager.

Included are installations that serve any part of the house in common use:

- installations for the supply of gas and electricity, for lighting and for space heating or heating water;
- sanitary conveniences, baths, sinks, washbasins and installations for cooking or storing food;
- receptacles or other installations provided in connection with the delivery to the house of postal packets;
- other installations (if any) in a kitchen, bathroom, W.C or washroom that are not subject to any other provisions of the Regulations.

The manager shall ensure that any part of the HMO not in use is kept reasonably clean and free from refuse and litter.

**(v) Living accommodation** - The internal structure of any part of the house occupied by a resident as their living accommodation including the installations for supply of water, gas, electricity, ventilation, and sanitation must be maintained in a good state of repair. The manager must ensure that each unit of living accommodation and any furniture supplied are in a clean condition at the start of any occupation by a tenant.

**(vi) Lighting, windows and ventilation** - All windows and other means of ventilation in common areas must be 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 whether or not they are in common use.

**(vii) Outbuildings in common use** - All outbuildings, yards and forecourts that belong to the house and are in common use must be maintained in repair, clean condition and good order, and any boundary walls, fences and railings must be kept and maintained in good and safe repair so as not to constitute a danger to residents. Any garden to be kept in a safe and tidy condition.

**(viii) Waste disposal facilities** - The manager must ensure sufficient bins or other suitable receptacles are provided for the storage of refuse and litter pending disposal, and make further arrangements for disposal having regard to any service provided by the local authority.

**(ix) Information to occupiers** - The name, address and telephone contact number of the manager must be made available to each occupier and the details clearly displayed in a prominent position in the house.

**(x) Duties of occupiers** - It is the duty of all residents of an HMO to ensure that the manager can effectively carry out his duties. All residents must:

- Allow the manager or agent access, at all reasonable times, to any occupied room, so that they may carry out their duties;
- Provide the manager or agent on request with any relevant information needed to carry out their duties;
- Comply with arrangements made by the manager or agent in respect of litter storage and disposal;
- Conduct themselves in a way that will not hinder or frustrate the manager or agent in the performance of their duties;
- Take reasonable care to avoid damaging anything that the manager or agent is under obligation to supply, maintain or repair;
- Comply with the reasonable instructions of the manager or agent in respect to any means of escape from fire, prevention of fire and use of

- fire equipment;
- Treat the premises in a suitable tenant-like manner and conduct all activities as a reasonable tenant would do.

The manager of the HMO is the person who is responsible for the management as set out in the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006. This may be the owner/landlord or a manager appointed by them or a residential letting agent.

\*Or, for section 257 HMOs the **Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006**

The manager or Management Company **may** be the responsible person for carrying out the statutory fire risk assessment. More information on fire risk assessments can be found on the Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service website <http://www.bedsfire.com> click business fire safety.

## APPENDIX 1

### INTRODUCTION TO FIRE SAFETY AND LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

**The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005** is the main legislation enforced by Fire and Rescue Authorities. There are areas of overlapping duties in relation to the Housing Act 2004 provisions. The Fire Safety Order 2005 concentrates on the **communal areas** of higher risk residential properties such as houses in bedsits (HMOs), high rise flats and buildings with vulnerable occupiers. The legislation also applies to workplaces, hotels, factories and the majority of occupied premises other than domestic premises occupied as a single dwelling. The central feature of the Order is that fire safety responsibility is now the duty of the owners and occupiers of buildings so there is a similarity with health and safety legislation. The Order identifies the **responsible person** as the individual who must take responsibility for fire safety – this could be the owner, agent or manager depending on who has the powers/duties and the finance to manage fire safety within the building. The responsible person must undertake a **fire risk assessment** of the building and then act upon it.

**Fire risk assessment** (FRA) means that each building which is subject to the Fire Safety Order is individually assessed in detail and all necessary works are identified and prioritised. FRA also takes into account of any vulnerable groups – those with impaired mobility or psychological issues which could affect behaviour in the event of a fire.

**The greatest risks** for occupiers of residential properties are to be found in multi-occupied properties where there are 3 or more storeys. This may include houses that are converted into flats, hostels, managed or sheltered accommodation, purpose built multi-storey buildings and flats above shops. The risk rises with increased occupancy, multiple ignition sources (cookers, heaters, fires, smoking), vulnerable occupants, poor construction and lack of fire prevention measures. Analysis of national fire statistics have concluded that you are six times more likely to die in a fire if you live in any house in multiple occupation (HMO), compared with a single family house.

**These standards** aim to recommend fire safety solutions that are effective, practicable and appropriate for the existing local stock and the likely occupants. These standards are primarily based on national guidance (LACORS guidance) to all Local Housing Authorities on the fire safety options that are **appropriate and proportionate** to the fire risks for various standard property types.

**LACORS guidance** does not apply to all the housing types found in Bedfordshire. Where the guidance does apply, the details are given in **blue** with alternatives set out for consideration. The HM government – Fire Risk Assessment Sleeping Accommodation Guide - applies to all housing types and gives additional information on compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

## General limitations

While the standards in this document represent the level of fire safety within different categories of residential property there will be instances where premises require a higher level of fire safety because of vulnerable occupants or unusual and higher risk internal layouts or increased combustion risks. In such cases, an individual risk assessment will be made to determine the works that are required to improve fire safety measures to an acceptable standard.

While every attempt has been made to categorize the typical types of residential accommodation found in the local area, there exists the possibility that houses may not fit neatly into one group. In such cases the house in question will be assessed individually and appropriate recommendations made for improvement.

## Part 1 - General Fire Resistance Standards

### Definitions and Specifications:

<b>1.1</b> <b>Definition of minimum standard</b>  <b>Protected staircase</b>	This standard in <b>section 1</b> sets out the minimum level of protection throughout the building, (buildings are grouped together according to construction and risk) and focuses on entering an internal 'protected staircase' down which occupants would exit the premises in the event of fire. The minimum standard would be required for all premises. The 'protected staircase' replaces the requirement for an alternative or secondary escape route.
<b>1.2</b>  <b>Fire resisting Elements</b>  <b>Doors – see appendix 3</b>  <b>Cupboards</b>	<b>FIRE RESISTING ELEMENTS</b>  The term 'fire resisting' means walls, screens, partitions, doors, glazing and any other construction which, when tested in accordance with relevant British Standard or equivalent European Standard, achieves a minimum half hour (30 minutes) standard of fire resistance.  All such fire resisting doors to be constructed to comply with and conform to BS 476. Unless specified, all doors referred to are 30 minutes fire resisting doors and includes its frame and door furniture.  30 minute fire doors are usually bought either as a blank or a specific size or can be custom made for difficult sized openings. Door frames must also be considered. Door sets (doors, glazing and frames) guarantee 30 minutes fire resistance and can be proven. Fire doors and frames are constructed in accordance with BS 8214 and conform to BS 476. Fire doors include 1.5 pairs of fire resisting hinges, suitable locking devices such as mortice escape locks, intumescent strips and cold smoke seals fitted in appropriate locations to either the door or frame. Doors must fit without sticking or having gaps greater than 3mm. <b>All fire doors referred to in this document must be self closing.</b>  Any cupboard doors, such as those to service cupboards or store rooms which are required to be fire resisting, need not be self closing provided

<p><b>Walls</b></p> <p><b>Floors</b></p>	<p>that they are kept locked shut at all times and a suitable KEEP LOCKED SHUT notice is affixed to the door.</p> <p>The minimum standard of fire separation is 30 minutes, in the case of stud walls this could consist of 72 x 37mm softwood timber studs at 600mm centres and faced with 12.5 mm of plasterboard with joints taped and filled.</p> <p>A fire resisting floor will depend upon floor construction and ceiling finish, however 30 minutes protection can be achieved by using tongue and groove softwood of not less than 15mm thickness on 37mm timber joists, with a ceiling below of one layer of plasterboard to a thickness of 12.5mm with joints taped and filled and backed by supporting timber.</p>
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<p><b>1.3</b></p> <p><b>Existing escape doors and staircases</b></p> <p><b>Windows by escape staircases</b></p> <p><b>Break through panels</b></p> <p><b>Communicating doors</b></p>	<p><b>EXTERNAL FIRE ESCAPES AND BREAKTHROUGHS</b></p> <p>Where acceptable secondary escape staircases exist, each will be assessed on its merits, but generally, removal will not be required unless there is a safety deficiency which puts occupiers at risk. When in good condition, these staircases provide a valuable second exit and entry for fire fighters. Suitable signage must be provided. Exit locks which also protect the security of residents from intruders are also required.</p> <p>Where external escape staircases pass by openable windows and doors, such windows and doors would have to be fire resisting and locked shut or provided with limited top hung ventilation to within 1.8 m of the staircase concerned. This cannot be achieved for habitable rooms due to the higher requirements for ventilation. In all cases for external staircases there will need to be an individual risk assessment and decisions made on the most appropriate way to maximise fire safety while minimising the negative effects on occupiers of affected rooms.</p> <p>Communicating fire doors between properties or 'break-through panels' are no longer considered to be appropriate as escape routes due to the challenges of securing escape via a building over which the affected persons have no control. Break through panels should be improved to one hour's fire resistance with the co-operation of the adjacent property and the measures in the applicable section of this document put into place.</p> <p>Communicating fire doors which have been installed in accordance with Building Regulations <u>and</u> still conform to one hour's fire resistance <u>and</u> are fitted with appropriate emergency escape locks are still useful and acceptable but do not affect the requirement for a protected staircase within the property. A legally binding covenant should be already written into the property deeds and should place duties on each owner to maintain the communicating fire escape door.</p>
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<p><b>1.4 Fire resisting glazing</b></p>	<p>Where glazing is required in a fire resisting structure, it must afford the same level of resistance. The most common type of glazing is 6mm Georgian wired glazing; alternatively clear glazing (pyroglazing) can be used and must be etched with the approved mark to confirm its fire resistance. If no marking is provided then some other form of confirmation will be required.</p> <p>Installation of the glazing is critical as it should be fitted in a proven intumescent glazing system incorporating glued and screwed hardwood beading.</p>
<p><b>1.5 Service ducts and pipes etc</b></p>	<p>Care must be taken to ensure all openings in fire resisting construction are stopped with appropriate fire resisting materials such as intumescent filler or mastic which conforms to BS 476 when tested. Where there are holes for cables, pipe work and services or where there is damage to fire resisting elements of the structure – these all require careful repair to protect the fire resistance of the element. Specific challenges relating to protection of the fire resistance of an element are detailed within the guidance for affected property types.</p>
<p><b>1.6 One hour fire protect- ion</b></p>	<p>This is generally referred to as <u>lobby or double door protection</u>, and can be achieved by the provision of a 30 min fire door on the stairs which leads into a lobby or corridor with 30 min fire rated doors on the individual units of accommodation or risk rooms within a flat. The 2 doors and 2 sets of studwork give an effective one hour protection from each risk room to the staircase. Ceilings should also provide one hour protection. This level of separation may also be prescribed for basement ceilings and between shops/offices and residential accommodation.</p>
<p><b>1.7 Inner Rooms</b></p>	<p><b>Requirements for Inner Rooms (Extract from LACORS)</b></p> <p>A room where the only escape route is through another room is termed an 'inner room' and poses a risk to its occupier if a fire starts unnoticed in the outer room (sometimes termed an 'access room'). This arrangement should be avoided wherever possible. However, where unavoidable it may be accepted where the inner room is a kitchen, laundry or utility room, a dressing room, bathroom, WC or shower room.</p> <p>Where the inner room is any other type of habitable room (for example a living room, sleeping room, workroom or study) it should only be accepted if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the inner room has access to a suitable door opening onto an alternative safe route of escape, or it is situated on a floor which is not more than 4.5m above ground level and has an escape window leading directly to a place of ultimate safety;</li> <li>• an adequate automatic fire detection and warning system is in place (see paragraphs 22-25); and</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a fire-resisting door of an appropriate standard is fitted between the inner and outer rooms (typically FD30S standard for non-high-risk outer rooms).</li> </ul> <p>Escape windows are only acceptable if they meet the requirements of paragraph 1.8 below.</p> <p>In addition to the precautions outlined in the above paragraphs, in all cases the following additional requirements must apply for the arrangement to be acceptable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• outer rooms should be under the control of the same person as the inner room;</li> <li>• nobody should have to pass through more than one outer room while making their escape; and</li> <li>• ideally the outer room should not be an area of high fire risk, but if this is impracticable and there is no other option it could be accepted in this situation as exit via an escape window provides an alternative.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>1.8 Escape Windows</b></p>	<p><b>Requirements for Escape Windows (extract from LACORS)</b></p> <p>Any window provided for emergency escape purposes should have an unobstructed openable area that is at least 0.33m<sup>2</sup> and have a minimum 450mm height and 450mm width. The bottom of the openable area should not be more than 1,100mm above the floor.</p> <p>Escape windows can only be considered if satisfied that it would be safe to use them in an emergency. They should meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• they serve rooms whose floor level is no more than 4.5m from the ground;</li> <li>• every room served by the escape window has access to it without entering another habitable room with a lockable door (unless of a type that can be overridden from outside the room without the use of a key, tool or numerical code) and any tenancy agreement should ideally prohibit the fitting of alternative or additional locks. (This will usually be achievable in single household occupancies and most shared houses, but is unlikely in a bedsit-type HMO);</li> <li>• If it is necessary to pass through the common escape route to reach the escape window, consideration should be had to the travel distance involved. Where the common escape route is not a protected route, unusually long travel distances may be</li> </ul>
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	<p>unacceptable and other fire precautions may be necessary (this will not usually be the case in conventional houses);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• occupiers are able-bodied individuals with no specific high-risk characteristics and who can reasonably be expected to exit via the window unaided;</li> <li>• there is no basement well or other encumbrance beneath the window such as railings or a conservatory;</li> <li>• the escape window is openable from the inside without the use of a removable key; and</li> <li>• the ground below is level and free of obstructions; and</li> <li>• the window or door should lead to a place of ultimate safety, clear of the building. However, if there is no practical way of avoiding escape into a courtyard or back garden from where there is no exit, it should be at least as deep as the building is high.</li> </ul> <p>If any of the above requirements cannot be met, the use of the escape window should not be accepted and an alternative solution should be adopted.</p>
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<p><b>1.9</b></p> <p><b>Arson</b></p>	<p><b>ARSON PREVENTION MEASURES</b></p> <p>Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service have specific arson reduction advice which can prove very useful to all landlords' and property managers, not just for the internal areas of their property but the external too. You are advised to seek advice if in any doubt about how to minimise arson risks. The following occupiers may increase the risk of arson within multi occupied property:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerable occupiers;</li> <li>• Occupiers who may be at risk from others;</li> <li>• Those escaping domestic violence;</li> <li>• Those subject to racial or other abuse;</li> <li>• Ex-offenders;</li> <li>• Individuals on remand or out on licence;</li> <li>• Individuals with previous history of sex offending;</li> <li>• Those with substance abuse or drug dealing problems;</li> <li>• Alcohol problems or chaotic behaviours;</li> <li>• Ex rough sleepers;</li> <li>• Young vulnerable individuals – from care or institutions;</li> <li>• Those with a history of arson offending.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, any property in an area with higher than average incidence of arson or general crime may need to get specialist advice.</p>
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For the purpose of licensing HMOs it is assumed that all HMOs will require suitable arson preventative measures unless it can be demonstrated by reference to the above factors and local crime statistics that the risk is minimal.

**Options:**

Preventing unauthorised front access – installing heavy duty doors with self closing devices, entry systems, disabling trade buttons or making them coded and secure.

Making rear or side access difficult using secure gates and door blanks which have no external locks and handles but are positively self-closing.

Blocking up post boxes in front doors and providing other secure post arrangements such as individually lockable metal boxes in the porch. For higher risk locations or where space permits an inner lobby can be formed which has a secure door to the hallway area. The postman can enter the lobby but not the house and this will allow post to be delivered to internal boxes but keep out any person or arson risk from the main hallway or common areas.

Within converted self-contained flats or multi storey buildings there should be no letterboxes within fire doors. Not only is this an arson invitation but it breaches the fire resistance of the door element. Fire resisting letterboxes can be sourced as well as arson proof letterboxes. The best solution is not to have them at all and have centralised post collection. As items of value are now rarely sent through the main postal service (passports come by courier, valuables come via special delivery to be signed for) it is unusual for boxes to be broken into to steal the contents.

Fire Notices/instructions which are fixed to the back of the main exit door (either the flat door to the hall or landing or the bedsit door) should have specific advice about what to do in the event that the staircase is blocked by smoke and fire. As this is the last useful piece of advice for the escaping occupier it should be clear what action needs to be taken in this eventuality.

Bins are a focus for arson – usually just generally malicious rather than targeted attacks. The fire loading for 3 bins is similar to a small car with petrol in it. Therefore, if bins are stored up against a wall under windows or close to an exit door they may be a serious cause of fire and resultant harm. In 2008 a child died in a single family house as a result of an external bin fire when the bin was pushed against the house door. Site bin stores away from the main house, preferably secured in enclosures or part enclosures where they can be chained up if necessary. At the very least bins should be stored at least 3 - 6m away from the building.

Keep common areas sterile. If there are no combustibles then any fire from arson may be small and burn itself out, depending on whether petrol or similar accelerants are used.

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<p><b>1.10</b></p> <p><b>Managing fire safety</b></p> <p><b>Duties</b></p> <p><b>No items to be stored in the common parts</b></p> <p><b>Tenancy contracts to include</b></p>	<p><b>MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FIRE SAFETY - ALL BUILDINGS REQUIRING A FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT*</b></p> <p><b>The manager is responsible</b> for ensuring fire safety is managed in accordance with the <b>fire risk assessment</b> and the specific duties set out within this guidance. The manager could be a management company or the owner of the whole building or a company or person who has been employed or nominated with duties in relation to the premises.</p> <p>Note: Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 there are specific duties placed on the '<b>responsible person</b>'. This is the person or company who receives the rent and has the authority to spend it on the property. It could also be a letting agent or relative of the owner – you should satisfy yourself as to who the responsible person is as recent cases have found such persons liable for offences in relation to breaches of the Order.</p> <p>Every tenant must be informed about the action to be taken in the event of fire. This information should include explanation of the working of the fire detection system and the need for good housekeeping, such as keeping escape routes clear of combustible materials. The landlord must apply and enforce a policy which allows the effective management of the common areas to ensure fire safety is maintained. In particular, the common areas must not be used for either storage of combustible materials or any obstructions that can impede evacuation.</p> <p>Examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bikes and buggies that may cause an obstruction;</li> <li>• Rubbish or furniture that is unwanted by the tenant or awaiting removal;</li> <li>• Ignition sources or volatiles such as petrol lawnmowers or barbeque lighter fluids, old paint or volatile cleaning fluids etc.</li> <li>• Tables, chairs or sideboards that can add to the fire load;</li> <li>• Build-up of newspapers;</li> <li>• Washing on a drying rack;</li> <li>• Shoes or clothing that cannot fit inside a particular room or flat and the tenant commandeers the lobby space to store these items.</li> </ul> <p>The common areas are designed to be sterile and the fire safety measures detailed in this standard are based on the assumption that this will be the case. Routine checks should form part of the day to day management of the building.</p> <p>Instructions concerning fire and the maintenance of all fire safety measures should form part of a tenancy agreement. A copy of the Fire Escape Procedure which is relevant to the individual block should be</p>
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<b>fire safety</b>	prominently displayed on the back of the door to each flat. Tenants with language or learning difficulties should receive appropriate assistance to understand their particular fire safety instructions.
<b>Routine Checks</b>	Where tenants require specialist equipment to respond to the fire alarms within their flats then this should be flagged up by managers for action at the commencement of a tenancy or on receipt of information. While it is not possible to keep track of all individuals who may need assistance in this type of accommodation it should be routine to include information about specialist alarms or adaptations on notice boards or the information pack to tenants.
<b>Tenancy contracts</b>	<p>Routine checks of fire safety standards in the common areas should be established (in addition to those relating to the Fire Alarm System). Employees responsible for undertaking the checks (this might be caretaking staff or cleaners or handymen working for the landlord) should be trained so that they can identify problems and should be provided with a clear and effective mechanism that allows rectification of the problems quickly. E.g. breaches of fire resistance, combustibles in staircase enclosures, vandalism or damage to the structure, failures of the fire alarm system, Fire Service access and operation of dry risers.</p> <p><b>* This excludes</b> only family houses and also houses let on a single contract to sharers who may be students or professionals. No fire risk assessment is required for these housing/occupation types.</p>

## **Part 2 - Houses Converted into Self Contained Flats (Alternatively referred to as Section 257 flat conversions)**

This section details the specific fire protection works that are considered appropriate for the majority of accommodation in this category. This category of property is very important in that it has not been subject to Housing Act regulation or Fire Authority regulation in the past. New legislation specifically identifies this type of property ('Section 257 house in multiple occupation' – as long as more than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of flats are let on shorthold tenancies) and makes the distinction between houses converted before 1991 or converted without Building Regulations and those converted after 1991. Post 1991 conversions will have additional fire safety measures installed such as mains wired or panel controlled smoke detection systems in the common areas.

**All pre 1991 Section 257 flat conversions in Bedford Borough where more than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> are let on shorthold tenancies require an HMO licence under the HMO Additional Licensing scheme which runs to May 2018.**

Typical examples are:

- Large 3+ storey properties converted into self contained flats;
- Large 2 storey properties converted into self contained flats;
- Mixtures of flats/maisonettes;
- Flats converted 'over the shop';
- Some properties will have new build extensions/additions;
- Mixture of tenures, long leases and owner occupied, leased and sublet on short tenancies, registered social landlord stock;
- Mixture of fire separation standards depending on the age of conversion.

This is a high risk category because buildings **converted** into self contained flats from traditional construction (brick walls but with timber floors, staircases, internal partitions etc.) are more combustible than buildings which are designed to be fire resisting and built from non-combustible materials. Where there are mixtures of tenures, including vulnerable individuals, the risks increase due to this type of occupancy and associated lifestyle issues.

This standard is aimed at fitting fire safety protection and detection into buildings which do not meet modern post 1991 Building Regulation standards. When a converted building is inspected there needs to be awareness of the possibility that the structural fire protection may have been altered or repaired ineffectively, or internal layouts may have been changed and fire doors removed. This will nullify or reduce the level of the fire protection measures originally provided in the conversion.

The **ideal** is for 60 minutes fire protection between each risk room within the occupancy and the staircase (which is the escape route). This is usually achieved by providing a 30 minute fire resisting flat door which provides protection between the hallway/staircase and a further 30 minute fire door on each internal door to a risk room. This gives the required 60 minute protection between the risk and the escape route which is the internal staircase. There may be external secondary escape stairs which serve the top floor and/or the first floor. These

may be useful and worthy of retention. However, if it is in a poor structural state of repair, removal may be the most costs effective option. Within each flat it is not possible to ensure each internal fire door is maintained in a closed position – it is more usual for such doors to be propped open or removed.

**Therefore this standard assumes only that the structural fire resistance between occupancies and the escape staircase is 30 minutes.**

**Note: LACORS National guidance does apply to this category of property.**

<p><b>2.1</b></p> <p><b>Fire Resist-ance Standards</b></p> <p><b>Fire doors see appendix 3</b></p>	<p><b>STRUCTURAL FIRE PROTECTION</b></p> <p><b>All dedicated escape routes</b> will consist of a protected route providing a minimum of 30 minutes fire resistance; this includes any screens and or doors forming the staircase enclosure. Therefore, the staircase will be protected on all landing levels by fire resisting doors which separate the staircase(s) from the individual flats. Entrance doors to the flats within the corridors on each level will, therefore be 30 minutes fire resisting. This package provides a minimum of 30 minutes between the flats and the staircase but may be as high as one hour's fire resistance between risk rooms (such as a kitchen or lounge in each flat) and the escape staircase. Service ducts, cupboards in the stairway and pipework must maintain the same level of fire separation.</p> <p><b>Flat entrance doors</b> and frames within converted houses must be maintained as 30 minutes fire resistance and all leaseholders, tenants and occupiers must be made aware that no change of door is permitted without prior approval of the management company who must enforce this rule.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter boxes must be fire resisting and arson proof – proprietary solutions are available;</li> <li>• Self-closing devices are required for flat entrance doors;</li> <li>• Locks should be either mortice escape locks or night latches which can be opened from the inside without using a key;</li> <li>• Chubb type security locks which require a key to open from the inside are not recommended;</li> <li>• 25mm door stops can be effective smoke and fire stops and therefore should be retained. Any holes, gaps or damage to fire doors must be effectively repaired.</li> </ul> <p><b>Flat entrance doors</b> may be changed when flats are sold. As such it is important that the doors maintain the specified level of fire resistance and that any alterations made to the doors must not materially affect this level of resistance. This includes a ban on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non fire resisting letterboxes;</li> <li>• Cat flaps;</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Self closing devices</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non fire resisting glazing panels;</li> <li>• Replacement with non-fire resisting doors.</li> </ul> <p><b>Self-closing devices</b> are required for flat entrance doors. Fire door restraining devices are not applicable to this location. As self-closing devices are required for flat entrance doors, locks should be mortice escape locks which cannot lock the occupier out of the flat by the action of the self-closing device. All locks must be capable of being opened from the inside without the use of a key and with a thumb turn on the inside.</p>
<p><b>Internal layouts</b></p>	<p><b>Any layout</b> which compromises the safe exit of occupiers (such as having to pass through a risk room to escape) must be made safe by using smoke detection appropriate to the location and use. Any planned improvements should also aim to minimise layouts that are unsatisfactory. Note requirements for inner rooms Part 1.7</p>
<p><b>Secondary escapes</b></p>	<p><b>Where a flat</b> has the provision of a secondary escape to a place of safety, the access door should be fitted with a mortice escape lock with a thumb turn on the inside. Doors that are not in practical locations should be assessed on an individual basis with consideration being given to security. Where properties have external escape stairs, they should have suitable weather protection and be properly maintained with at least an annual check programmed to ensure they remain in good condition.</p>
<p><b>Glazing</b></p>	<p><b>All glazing</b> that forms part of the escape route should be 30 minutes fire resisting.</p>
<p><b>Cellars</b></p>	<p><b>Cellars/basements</b> should be separated by 30 minutes fire resistance plus smoke detection. The access door should be either self-closing or kept locked shut. The staircase should be underdrawn to afford the same level of resistance. If access to the basement is required on a regular basis (e.g. electric pay meter in basement) then the fire resisting door must be self-closing.</p>
<p><b>Cupboards</b></p>	<p><b>Cupboards in the escape route</b> should be emptied and kept locked shut or protected by 30 minutes fire resistance and kept locked.</p>
<p><b>Electric meters</b></p>	<p><b>Electric meters</b> in the escape route should be enclosed in a fire resisting cupboard, preferably top hung, so as to be self-closing.</p> <p><b>No storage</b> of any kind should be permitted in the escape route.</p>
<p><b>Exit doors</b></p>	<p><b>All final exit doors</b> (i.e. front doors and back doors) should be fitted with mortice escape locks which allow the door to be</p>

	<p>opened from the inside without the use of a key.</p>
<p><b>2.2</b></p> <p><b>Fire Alarm Standards</b></p> <p><b>LACORS guidance</b></p> <p><b>Grade D mixed system</b></p>	<p><b>FIRE ALARM STANDARDS</b></p> <p>-----</p> <p><b>LACORS NATIONAL GUIDANCE – MIXED SYSTEM</b></p> <p>A fire alarm system conforming to BS 5839 Part 6, <b>Grade A</b> (panel controlled automatic fire alarm system), category LD2, for three or four-storey buildings and a Grade D: LD2 system for two-storey buildings, both systems comprising optical smoke detectors on each landing level of the staircase, plus a single point heat detector in the circulation space of each flat, should be provided.</p> <p>Within each flat there must be a Grade D: LD3 system with a stand-alone mains operated smoke detector sited in a suitable position, usually the circulation space/lobby.</p> <p>-----</p> <p><b>ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS</b></p> <p><b>MAINS OPERATED MIXED SYSTEM</b></p> <p><b>A fire alarm system</b> conforming to BS 5839 Part 6, <b>Grade D</b>, category LD 2, comprising optical smoke detectors on each landing level of the staircase, plus a single point heat detector in the circulation space inside each flat (optimum location is on the ceiling, 300-600mm away from the main flat entrance door), should be provided. All detectors to be interlinked to form one system. This is a mixed system which gives staged evacuation – exactly as in the LACORS standard but with Grade D standard for the alarm system rather than Grade A.</p> <p>Many properties are suited to Grade D protection as long as there are not more than 14 detectors (see limitations)* wired together in the main system (in such cases, for large buildings, a grade A system should be used).</p> <p><b>Each detector head</b> is a stand-alone smoke detector so even in the event that some detectors are not functioning the main system will still operate. This type of system requires less checking and is less costly so is ideal where there are financial constraints. The recommended detector type is one with mains power but also a <b>rechargeable battery backup</b> which is on constant trickle charge from the mains supply.</p> <p><b>Within each flat</b></p> <p><b>A stand-alone optical smoke detector</b> conforming to BS</p>

<p><b>No more than 14 detectors</b></p>	<p>5839 Part 6, Grade D, category LD3, should be provided in the circulation space (or suitable living area) of each flat. This will allow for occupants to silence false alarms without disturbing other residents, but in the event of a more serious fire or if the flat is empty at the time, the heat detector will activate and sound throughout the building for an evacuation to take place. Optical smoke detectors are most suited to this location. Where more than one detector is installed to overcome poor layout, detectors to be interlinked to form a mini system.</p> <p><b>A remote hush/test</b> and locate switch is highly recommended for this detector to prevent occupiers having to use ladders or chairs to hush false alarms.</p> <p><b>*Limitations</b> – limitations apply where the size of the building and the number of flats exceeds the total recommended number of detectors which can be <u>interlinked</u> in this way. Consult the manufacturer for advice. The accepted maximum is 14 detectors. However, additional modifications or radiolinking may allow for more detectors to be used in the main system. For very large buildings, therefore, a panel controlled Grade A system should be used.</p> <p><b>Poor layout within the flat</b> where an occupant has to pass through a risk room to exit to safety should be resolved using appropriate additional detection in the flat, interlinked with the proposed detector(s) in the flat itself. The resulting system should remain separate from the main alarm system in the communal areas.</p> <p>Note requirements for inner rooms in Part 1.7</p>
<p><b>Disabled occupiers</b></p>	<p><b>Occupants with disabilities</b> should be provided with appropriate specialist features such as vibrating pillows or strobe lights etc.</p>
<p><b>Radiolink</b></p>	<p>The method of interlinking using 'Radio link' may be considered where interlinking is required to existing systems but the additional wiring is not installed. Note however that the battery life of a Radio Link unit is 5 years so a replacement program must be put in place to ensure the system continues to operation satisfactorily.</p>
<p><b>10 year re-placement</b></p>	<p><b>A maintenance programme</b> incorporating an annual test should be initiated with records kept that are available for inspection. In consultation with a specialist alarm engineer a 10 year rolling replacement programme is also required in accordance with the British Standard. It is also recommended that the detectors are either checked or replaced on change of tenure.</p> <p>Existing panel controlled Automatic Fire Detection systems</p>

<b>Existing Automatic Fire Detection Systems.</b>	conforming to BS 5389 Pt 1 in premises where a BS 5839 Pt 6 system is recommended and which remain operable need not be replaced, however if there are problems with vandalism and false alarms then replacement should be considered.
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<b>2.3</b>  <b>Evacuation Procedure</b>	<b>EVACUATION PROCEDURE</b>  <b>Full evacuation</b> of the premises should be undertaken upon activation of the main fire alarm system.  Every tenant must be informed about the action to be taken in the event of fire and designate responsibility for calling the Fire Service.  Information should include explanation of the working of the fire detection system and the need for good housekeeping, such as keeping escape routes clear of combustible materials. Instructions should form part of a tenancy agreement. A copy of the Fire Escape Procedure should be prominently displayed on the back of the door to each flat. Tenants with language or learning difficulties should receive appropriate assistance to understand their particular fire safety instructions.
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<b>2.4</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES</b>  <b>See Part 1.10 for general fire safety management standards</b>
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<b>2.5</b>  <b>Fire risk assessment</b>	<b>FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT</b>  <b>Buildings and houses converted into self-contained flats</b> will require a fire risk assessment to be carried out in accordance with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order.
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<b>2.6</b>  <b>Fire Fighting equipment</b>	<b>FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT</b>  <b>The provision of a Fire Blanket</b> conforming to BS 6575 (or equivalent) should be provided in each kitchen mounted on the wall 1.5m high adjacent to an exit door away from the
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	<p>cooking facility.</p> <p><b>LACORS</b> recommends portable fire fighting equipment for converted flats and HMOs. Fire fighting equipment is not recommended in these standards if vandalism is a concern or if there are doubts about the ability of occupiers to respond sensibly to a fire using the equipment. Where there are wardens or caretakers the property will require FFE under the Fire Safety Order. See section 3.6.</p>
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<p><b>2.7</b></p> <p><b>Emergency Lighting</b></p>	<p><b>EMERGENCY LIGHTING</b></p> <p><b>A converted house</b> may need emergency lighting to be provided in the escape staircase. This will depend upon the amount of borrowed light from outside, the proximity of streetlights and the staircase layout. However the likelihood is that the original conversion into flats has impeded natural or street light getting into the staircase, so this must be considered.</p> <p><b>Where emergency lighting</b> is required it should conform to BS 5266 Pt 1 and illuminate stairways, corridors, and other exit routes to allow persons to make their way out of the premises safely. The system should be independent from the main supply. The system should be non-maintained with a duration period of 2 hours (standard NM/2).</p>
<p><b>2.8</b></p> <p><b>Refuse bins</b></p>	<p><b>REFUSE BINS AND STORES</b></p> <p><b>Bulk bins may sometimes be provided</b> but, in general, wheelie type bins are provided. They yield a significant fire loading and should, therefore, be sited in a suitable location, preferably fixed in position within some sort of part enclosure, away from the house and in particular, windows and doors. If not in a dedicated fire resisting enclosure they should be located at least 8m away from the building.</p>

## Part 3. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) 3 or 4 storeys including basement/cellar (or large complex 2 storey\*)

### Introduction

HMO accommodation provides housing for a variety of occupiers but tends to be accommodation for individuals on benefits or of limited means. Examples are:

- Traditional bedsits with shared facilities;
- Hostels, with or without full time supervision;
- Bed and breakfast establishments for residents who have no other home;
- Houses where there is no sharing of facilities, but lettings are not self-contained;
- Students sharing, but, living as a group;
- Professional sharers who live as a group;
- Rooms let out with a residential landlord.

\*Large, complex 2 storey HMOs with long travel distances from any bedroom to the final exit, unusual or complex layouts may fall into this category for the purposes of deciding the level of fire precautions to be required.

**LACORS** divides traditional HMOs into 'shared houses' and 'bedsit' type houses with different standards for each type. For the purposes of these standards there is no distinction between these uses so both types are included in this section.

HMOs of 3 storeys and above with 5 or more residents require a mandatory licence to operate and all HMOs in Bedford Borough also require licensing under the Additional HMO licensing scheme which runs to May 2018. Fire safety is separate from HMO licensing and will be dealt with using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) as detailed earlier in this guide. HHSRS will apply regardless of HMO licensing or number of storeys or lettings.

### **LACORS national guidance applies**

<b>3.1</b>	<b>STRUCTURAL FIRE PROTECTION</b>
<b>Standards Of fire resistance</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">-----</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>LACORS NATIONAL GUIDANCE is for 30 minutes protected route.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">-----</p> <p><b>All dedicated escape routes</b> will consist of a protected staircase providing a minimum of 30 minutes fire resistance - this will be the door to the accommodation which will be a 30 minute fire resisting door.</p> <p>Walls and floors to be of sound traditional construction in good condition. Any weaknesses in wall or ceiling construction to be addressed and improved to 30 minutes fire resisting.</p>
<b>Glazing</b>	<p><b>All glazing</b> that forms part of the escape route should be 30 minutes fire resisting.</p>

<b>Cellars</b>	<b>Cellars/basements</b> should be separated by 30 minutes fire resistance plus smoke detection. The access door should be either self-closing or kept locked shut. The staircase should be underdrawn to afford the same level of resistance. If access to the basement is required on a regular basis (e.g. electric pay meter in basement) then the fire resisting door must be self closing.
<b>Cupboards</b>	<b>Cupboards in the escape route</b> should be emptied and kept locked shut or protected by 30 minutes fire resistance and kept locked.
<b>Electric meters</b>	<b>Electric intake</b> and meters in the escape route should be enclosed in a fire resisting cupboard, preferably top hung, so as to be self-closing.  <b>No storage</b> of any kind should be permitted in the escape route.
<b>Door locks</b>	<b>All final exit doors</b> (i.e. front doors and back doors) should be fitted with mortice escape locks which allow the door to be opened from the inside without the use of a key.

<b>3.2</b>	<b>FIRE ALARM STANDARDS</b> -----
<b>Fire Alarm Standards</b>	<b>LACORS NATIONAL GUIDANCE</b>  <b>Where cooking facilities are located in bedsits</b> – An automatic fire alarm and detection system fitted in accordance with BS 5839 Part 6, and conforming to Grade A, LD2 is to be installed. <b>This is a mixed system.</b> Smoke detectors in the hallways and heat detectors in bedsits, all interlinked together. Additional standalone Grade D mains operated smoke detector are to be provided in the room itself. Phased evacuation.  <b>Where cooking facilities are in a shared kitchen</b> - An automatic fire alarm and detection system fitted in accordance with BS 5839 Part 6, and conforming to Grade A, LD2 is to be installed. Smoke detectors in the hallways and in the rooms all interlinked together with heat detectors in the kitchen(s). <b>This is a single system.</b> Full evacuation. -----
<b>Background</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS:</b>  <b>The majority of HMOs</b> in Bedfordshire are single room bedsits with either integral cooking facilities or a shared kitchen. It is usual to have shared bathroom/WC facilities. There will be only one 30 minute fire door between the fire risk and the escape staircase. It is possible, using newer and more flexible detector technology, to provide life protection for both the occupier in the room and the rest of the occupiers. This is an improvement on LACORS standards.

<p><b>Grade A single system</b></p>	<p><b>Mains operated multi sensor detector</b> units give intelligent sensing in rooms with cooking equipment and minimise false alarms thus allowing one system to be installed. This gives finely tuned activation and sufficient early warning in the event of fire to provide life protection to occupiers while maintaining relative freedom from false alarms. Such a system increases the occupier safety.</p> <p><b>BS 5839 Part 6 Grade A</b> multisensor systems are also available with a panel control but they are expensive to provide and have to be installed as a complete system due to the higher level of technology and control in the panel.</p> <p><b>Where cooking facilities are located in bedsits.</b></p> <p><b>OPTION 1</b></p> <p><b>An automatic fire alarm</b> and detection system fitted in accordance with BS 5839 Part 6, and conforming to Grade A, LD2. Optical smoke detectors in the hallways/landings, shared lounges and any cellars or basements and multisensors in every bedsit, all interlinked together to form one system. No additional stand alone smoke detectors in the rooms. Silencing and testing via the panel. Full evacuation.</p>
<p><b>Grade D system</b></p>	<p><b>OPTION 2</b></p> <p><b>A mains operated fire alarm</b> and detection system fitted in accordance with BS 5839 Part 6, and conforming to Grade D, LD2. Optical smoke detectors in the hallways/landings, shared lounges and any cellars or basements and multisensors in every bedsit, all interlinked together to form one system. No additional stand alone smoke detectors in the rooms. Hush/test/locate switch to be located in a suitable position – to avoid false hushing. Full evacuation.</p> <p><b>Limitation</b> – Maximum number of detectors is 14 – check manufacturers recommendations.</p> <p><b>Where there are shared kitchens</b></p>
<p><b>Grade A system</b></p>	<p><b>OPTION 3</b></p> <p><b>An automatic fire alarm</b> and detection system fitted in accordance with BS 5839 Part 6, and conforming to Grade A, LD2. Optical smoke detectors in the hallways/landings and in each bedsit. A heat detector sited in each shared kitchen. All detectors linked together to form one system. Full evacuation.</p>
<p><b>Grade D system</b></p>	<p><b>OPTION 4</b></p> <p><b>A mains operated fire alarm</b> and detection system fitted in accordance with BS 5839 Part 6, and conforming to Grade D, LD2. Smoke detectors in the hallways and bedsits – optical smoke type. Heat detectors in each shared kitchen - all interlinked together to form one</p>

<p><b>Grade D system with multi sensors</b></p>	<p>system. Full evacuation.</p> <p><b>OPTION 5</b></p> <p><b>A mains operated fire alarm</b> and detection system fitted in accordance with BS 5839 Part 6, and conforming to Grade D, LD2. Optical smoke detectors in the hallways/landings, shared lounges and any cellars or basements and every bedsit. A multisensor in each shared kitchen - all interlinked together to form one system. Full evacuation.</p>
<p><b>Note about evacuation plans</b></p>	<p><b>NOTE:</b> Full evacuation is generally recommended for HMOs due to the higher level of fire loading, the potentially vulnerable nature of the occupiers and the single fire door between any fire and the escape route. Phased evacuation with a mixed fire alarm system may result in delays in evacuation when there is a genuine fire emergency.</p>
<p><b>New build 3 storey HMOs</b></p>	<p><b>OPTIONS FOR PURPOSE BUILT HMOS OF 3+ STOREYS</b></p> <p><b>Where new build houses which are compliant</b> with current Building Regulations have been converted to HMOs – there can be a high degree of confidence that the structure is fully 30 minutes or more fire resistant and all fire stopping has been properly carried out and checked. As part of the construction there will be a BS 5839 Part 6 mains operated Grade D, LD3 system installed in the halls, stairs and landings. HHSRS risk assessment for 'Fire' would not yield a sufficiently high hazard band to warrant stripping out this system and putting in a new one. Therefore, extending the existing system should be the first choice option. This can easily be done with conventional mains wired detectors, all interlinked together in accordance with one of the options above, or using radiolinking and replacing one of the hallway detectors with radiolink head and using this as a base to link other radio detectors in each room and a heat/multisensor in the kitchen or kitchens.</p>
<p><b>Extras</b></p>	<p><b>FIRE ALARM EXTRAS</b></p> <p><b>Modifications and additions</b> may be considered appropriate. These could include repeater panels, anti vandal devices, use of radio interlinking - as permitted by the British Standard - but this will depend upon occupancy type and assessed fire risk. Where there is a mixture of residential and commercial then modifications to the system may include mixing Part 1 and Part 6 systems.</p> <p><b>Remote hush/locator/test switches</b> on Grade D whole house systems should be installed either in secure places where false hushing will not cause problems or with a degree of caution.</p> <p><b>Magnetic fire door release mechanisms</b> are very useful for doors to shared kitchens and through lounges/dining rooms. The advice should be to manually release them at night but there will be automatically</p>

	<p>release on activation of the alarm. These devices can be interlinked with both Grade A and D systems. The self closing device to be checked as fully operational.</p> <p><b>CHOOSING OPTIONS</b></p> <p><b>Grade A systems</b> will work best in higher risk HMOs but only those which benefit from a high degree of day to day management to avoid any tampering or vandalism which may render the alarm inactive. Well managed high risk HMOs such as voluntary or social sector hostels or independent living houses with high level of supervision are in this category. Poor management or lack of regular visits by manager should flag up that weekly tests – vital to ensure the functioning of the Grade A system – are not being carried out. Poor management should feed into the risk assessment and the appropriateness of fire safety options.</p> <p><b>Grade D systems do fail to safety</b> even if one or more of the detectors has been removed or broken. Thus the system will still protect occupiers as long as sufficient detectors are in place to sound the alarm.</p> <p><b>Grade D systems</b> can also be provided with increased functionality (with a mini panel control) that may be a mid point between the coverage of a Grade A system and the flexibility and lower cost of a Grade D system.</p>
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<p><b>3.3</b></p> <p><b>Evacuation Procedure</b></p>	<p><b>EVACUATION PROCEDURE</b></p> <p><b>Full evacuation</b> of the premises should be undertaken upon actuation of the principle fire alarm system.</p> <p><b>Mixed systems will necessarily</b> give phased evacuation but escape via the fire door may trigger the smoke alarm in the common areas before the heat detector in the room is activated and sounds the whole system for evacuation.</p> <p><b>Every tenant must be informed</b> about the action to be taken in the event of fire and designate responsibility for calling the Fire Service.</p> <p><b>Information should include</b> explanation of the working of the fire detection system and the need for good housekeeping, such as keeping escape routes clear of combustible materials. Instructions should form part of a tenancy agreement. A copy of the Fire Escape Procedure which is relevant to the HMO itself should be prominently displayed on the back of the door to each flat as well as on the notice board in the hallway. Tenants with language or learning difficulties should receive appropriate assistance to understand their particular fire safety instructions.</p> <p><b>Further general information</b> is given in the section on managing fire safety in Part 1.10 .</p>
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<p><b>Entry and security</b></p>	<p>Standard.</p> <p><b>Given the nature of HMO living</b> it will not be possible to exclude visitors or even non authorised persons from the building. The front door should be self closing and occupiers informed not to keep it propped open and to report unauthorised access to their landlord or manager. In practice, this may be difficult to enforce. Fire safety systems, therefore, must take account of possible arson attacks and the action that may need to be taken.</p> <p><b>Fire doors which do not lock</b> the person out of their room by the action of the self closing device are vital in an arson attack which is likely to be within the staircase area or common parts. These locks are mortice escape locks which must be locked from the outside using a key. It is therefore not possible to be locked out of the bedsit. Occupiers can retreat into their rooms and await rescue. The Fire Notice on the back of the bedsit door should reinforce this advice.</p>
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<p><b>3.5</b></p> <p><b>Fire risk assessment</b></p>	<p><b>FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT</b></p> <p><b>Buildings and houses converted into HMOs</b> will require a fire risk assessment to be carried out in accordance with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order. Letting agents or landlords should have a risk assessment of the HMO on file.</p>
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<p><b>3.6</b></p> <p><b>Fire Fighting equipment</b></p>	<p><b>FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT</b></p> <p><b>The provision of a Fire Blanket</b> conforming to BS 6575 (or equivalent) should be provided in each kitchen and mounted on the wall 1.5m high adjacent to an exit door away from the cooking facility.</p>
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<p><b>3.7</b></p> <p><b>Emergency lighting</b></p>	<p><b>EMERGENCY LIGHTING</b></p> <p><b>An HMO in this category may need</b> emergency lighting in the escape staircase. This will depend upon the amount of borrowed light from outside, the proximity of streetlights and the staircase layout.</p> <p>Where emergency lighting is required it should conform to BS 5266 Pt 1 and illuminate stairways, corridors, and other exit routes to allow persons to make their way out of the premises safely. The system should be independent from the main supply.</p> <p>The system should be non-maintained with a duration period of 2 hours (standard NM/2).</p>
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**3.8****REFUSE BINS AND STORES****Refuse bins**

**Bulk bins may sometimes be provided** but in general wheelie type bins are provided. They yield a significant fire loading and should, therefore, be sited in a suitable location, preferably within some sort of part enclosure which may be lockable, away from the house and in particular, windows and doors. . If not in a dedicated fire resisting enclosure they should be located at least 8m away from the building.

## Part 4 – Smaller less complex 2-storey Bedsit type Houses in Multiple Occupation and shared houses

Regard should be given to factors such as overall size and number of lettings, unusual layouts, long corridors, travel distances to final exit and high risk uses when making decision about the most appropriate fire prevention measures for each property.

**LACORS** divides traditional HMOs into 'shared houses' and 'bedsit' type houses with different standards for each type. When HHSRS risk assessment is applied to 2 storey HMOs the risks for shared houses are significantly lower than for bedsit type houses. This is not necessarily the case for 3+ storey shared houses. Therefore, some relaxation on fire safety is permitted but there are conditions – see Part 5 for this relaxation.

<p><b>Standards of fire resistance</b></p>	<p><b>2 STOREY BEDSIT TYPE HMOS</b></p> <p><b>STRUCTURAL FIRE PROTECTION</b></p> <p><b>The landlord is in full control</b> of the house including the common parts. The landlord is responsible for letting each room and filling any vacancies. The common areas are maintained and kept clean by the landlord. Each tenant has a separate tenancy agreement. There may be shared lounges and dining rooms, as well as kitchens and bathrooms but there is no assumption of exclusive use of these.</p> <p>Such houses may have occupiers who are very vulnerable and present a higher than average risk of fire.</p> <p><b>All dedicated escape routes</b> will consist of a protected staircase providing a minimum of 30 minutes fire resistance, this will provide all occupants easy access to a place of safety.</p> <p><b>Walls and floors to be of sound</b> traditional construction.</p> <p><b>No additional upgrading</b> between occupancies or levels is required as long as the structure is sound, traditional and not subject to damage or poor repairs in the past.</p> <p><b>All glazing</b> that forms part of the escape route should be 30 minutes fire resisting.</p> <p><b>Cellars/basements should be separated</b> by 30 minutes fire resistance plus smoke detection. The access door should be either self closing or kept locked shut. The staircase should be under drawn to afford the same level of resistance. If access to the basement is required on a regular basis (e.g. electric pay meter in basement) then the fire resisting door must be self closing.</p> <p><b>Cupboards in the escape route</b> should be emptied and kept locked shut or protected by 30 minutes fire resistance and kept locked.</p>
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	<p><b>Electric intake and meters</b> in the escape route should be enclosed in a fire resisting cupboard, preferably top hung, so as to be self closing.</p> <p><b>No storage</b> of any kind should be permitted in the escape route.</p> <p><b>All final exit doors</b> (i.e. front doors and back doors) should be fitted with mortice escape locks which allow the door to be opened from the inside without the use of a key.</p>
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<p><b>4.2</b></p> <p><b>Fire Alarm Standards</b></p>	<p><b>FIRE ALARM STANDARDS – 2 STOREY BEDSIT HMOS</b></p> <p>-----</p> <p><b>LACORS NATIONAL GUIDANCE</b></p> <p><b>Where cooking facilities are located in bedsits – An</b> automatic fire alarm and detection system fitted in accordance with BS 5839 Part 6, and conforming to Grade D, LD2. Smoke detectors in the hallways and heat detectors in bedsits, all interlinked together. Additional stand alone Grade D mains operated smoke detector in the room itself. <b>Mixed system.</b> Phased evacuation.</p> <p><b>Where cooking facilities are in a shared kitchen - An</b> automatic fire alarm and detection system fitted in accordance with BS 5839 Part 6, and conforming to Grade A, LD2. Smoke detectors in the hallways and in the rooms all interlinked together with heat detectors in the kitchen(s). <b>Single system only.</b> Full evacuation.</p> <p>-----</p> <p><b>ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS</b></p> <p><b>Where cooking facilities are located in bedsits</b></p> <p><b>OPTION 1</b></p> <p>An automatic fire alarm and detection system fitted in accordance with BS 5839 Part 6, and conforming to Grade D, LD2. Smoke detectors in the hallways/landings, shared lounges and any cellar or basement and heat detectors in every bedsit, all interlinked together to form one system. Additional stand alone <u>multisensor</u> in the room with <u>remote hush and test switch</u> in the bedsit (this reduces likelihood of nuisance alarms and the resultant deactivation of the alarm itself). Managed evacuation.</p> <p><b>OPTION 2</b></p> <p>An automatic fire alarm and detection system fitted in accordance with BS 5839 Part 6, and conforming to Grade D, LD2. Optical smoke detectors in the hallways/landings, shared lounges and any cellars or basements and multisensors in every bedsit, all interlinked together to form one system. No additional stand-alone detectors in the rooms.</p>
<p><b>Grade D system</b></p>	

<p><b>Note about evacuation plans</b></p> <p><b>Extras</b></p>	<p>Remote hush/test/locate switch installed in suitable position in the common area – usually within the meter cupboard or similar location. Full evacuation.</p> <p><b>Where there are shared kitchens</b></p> <p><b>OPTION 1</b></p> <p>A mains operated fire alarm and detection system fitted in accordance with BS 5839 Part 6, and conforming to Grade D, LD2. Optical smoke detectors in the hallways/landings, shared lounges and cellars or basements and in every bedsit. A heat detector sited in each shared kitchen. All detectors linked together to form one system. Remote hush/test/locate switch installed in suitable position. Full evacuation.</p> <p><b>OPTION 2</b></p> <p>A mains operated fire alarm and detection system fitted in accordance with BS 5839 Part 6, and conforming to Grade D, LD2. Optical smoke detectors in the hallways/landings, shared lounges and any cellars or basements and every bedsit. A multisensor in each shared kitchen - all interlinked together to form one system. Remote hush/test/locate switch installed in suitable position. Full evacuation.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Full evacuation is generally recommended for HMOs due to the higher level of fire loading, the potentially vulnerable nature of the occupiers and the single fire door between any fire and the escape route. Managed evacuation with a mixed fire alarm system may result in delays in evacuation when there is a genuine fire emergency.</p> <p><b>FIRE ALARM EXTRAS</b></p> <p>Modifications and additions may be considered appropriate. These could include repeater panels, anti vandal devices, use of radio interlinking - as permitted by the British Standard - but this will depend upon occupancy type and assessed fire risk. Where there is a mixture of residential and commercial then modifications to the system may include mixing Part 1 and Part 6 systems.</p> <p>Remote hush/locator/test switches on Grade D whole house systems should be installed either in secure places where false hushing will not cause problems or with a degree of caution.</p> <p>Magnetic fire door release mechanisms are very useful for doors to shared kitchens and through lounges/dining rooms. The advice should be to manually release them at night but there will be automatically release on activation of the alarm. These devices can be interlinked with both Grade A and D systems. The self closing device to be checked as fully operational.</p> <p><b>CHOOSING OPTIONS</b></p> <p>The likely smaller size of this type of HMO will ensure that the alarm,</p>
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	<p>when sounded, will easily be heard throughout the house. There may be challenged with layout where alterations have resulted in poor or non standard layouts and long corridors at first floor level. Small narrow hallways and steep staircases are features of this type of house. For modern 2 storey HMOs there may be open plan lounges and lack of separation between the lounge/kitchen and the staircase.</p> <p>Grade D systems are generally acceptable to users when remote hush switches are easily accessible. In these smaller houses the siting of the detectors may need to be more carefully planned to avoid problems with false alarms.</p>
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<p><b>4.3</b></p> <p><b>Evacuation Procedure</b></p>	<p><b>EVACUATION PROCEDURE</b></p> <p><b>Full evacuation</b> of the premises should be undertaken upon actuation of the principle fire alarm system.</p> <p>Mixed systems will necessarily give phased evacuation but escape via the fire door may trigger the smoke alarm in the common areas before the heat detector in the room is activated and sounds the whole system for evacuation.</p> <p>Every tenant must be informed about the action to be taken in the event of fire and designate responsibility for calling the Fire Service.</p> <p>Information should include explanation of the working of the fire detection system and the need for good housekeeping, such as keeping escape routes clear of combustible materials. Instructions should form part of the tenancy agreement. A copy of the Fire Escape Procedure which is relevant to the HMO itself should be prominently displayed on the back of the door to each flat as well as on the notice board in the hallway. Tenants with language or learning difficulties should receive appropriate assistance to understand their particular fire safety instructions.</p> <p>Further general information is given in the section on managing fire safety in Part 1.10.</p>
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<p><b>4.4</b></p> <p><b>Fire risk assessment</b></p>	<p><b>FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT</b></p> <p>Buildings and houses converted into HMOs will require a fire risk assessment to be carried out in accordance with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order. Letting agents or landlords should have the risk assessment of the HMO on file.</p>
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<p><b>4.5</b></p> <p><b>Fire Fighting</b></p>	<p><b>FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT</b></p> <p>The provision of a Fire Blanket conforming to BS 6575 (or equivalent) should be provided in each kitchen and mounted on the wall 1.5m high</p>
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<b>equipment</b>	adjacent to an exit door away from the cooking facility.
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<b>4.6</b>	<b>EMERGENCY LIGHTING</b>
<b>Emergency lighting</b>	<p>An HMO in this category may need emergency lighting in the escape staircase. This will depend upon the amount of borrowed light from outside, the proximity of streetlights and the staircase layout.</p> <p>Where emergency lighting is required it should conform to BS 5266 Pt 1 and illuminate stairways, corridors, and other exit routes to allow persons to make their way out of the premises safely. The system should be independent from the main supply.</p> <p>The system should be non-maintained with a duration period of 2 hours (standard NM/2).</p>

## **Part 5 - 2-STOREY Houses in Multiple Occupation occupied as SHARED HOUSES – under Joint Tenancy e.g. Professionals, Students, Company Lets etc.**

### **General statement of limitations**

The landlord lets the whole house including the common parts. The landlord is responsible for letting out the house in good condition and will receive the house back at the end of the contract – periodic inspections would normally be carried out. The common areas are maintained and kept clean by the occupiers, excluding repairs and physical maintenance. Each tenant signs the joint tenancy agreement and the group are responsible for filling any vacancies. The tenancy agreement should make specific reference to the routine testing and operation of the fire safety measures

Not all shared 2 storey HMOs which have a single contract will be suitable for this reduced standard of fire safety.

It is possible that smaller houses are occupied by various higher risk groups, including those with learning disabilities, mental health problems or rough sleepers, for example. Social housing providers may use single contracts as part of a wider policy of reintegrating such individuals into the community. It should, therefore, never be assumed that 2 storey shared properties do not have vulnerable higher risk occupiers living in them.

This relaxation applies only to premises which have a travel distance from the farthest bedroom in the house to the final exit of 18 metres or less, have a standard layout and no special risks. In general, this standard will only apply if 6 individuals or less occupy a house. Groups of people such as students who occupy under one contract or professional sharers that are deemed to be 'living as a family' may fulfil this criteria. Higher levels of occupancy may not be considered for this relaxation and may be assessed to require a higher level of fire protection.

### **Summary of limitations**

- Single contract;
- No more than 6 sharing;
- Professional or student type sharers;
- House to be traditional – no alterations or cooking in rooms;
- No vulnerable or higher risk occupiers;
- No cellars or basements;
- Travel distance not more than 18 m from farthest point to final exit;
- No cellar or basement – it will be 3 storey if this is the case.

**If the above criteria are met, the requirements in Part 4 are reduced as follows:**

<b>5.1</b>	<b>2-STOREY SHARED HOUSES UNDER JOINT TENANCY</b>
	<b>STRUCTURAL FIRE PROTECTION</b>

<b>Standards of fire resistance</b>	<p>Well fitting internal flush or panel doors that close and latch properly – no smoke seals.          60 mins between shops/other uses and HMO.          Doors to letting rooms and final exit doors must be openable without the use of a key (recommended mortice escape locks).          Electric meters within the staircase to be enclosed in a fire resisting cupboard/housing.          Escape route to be kept free from combustible materials and obstructions.</p>
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<b>5.2</b>  <b>Fire alarm system</b>  <b>Emergency lighting</b>  <b>Fire blanket</b>  <b>Maintenance and testing:</b>	<p><b>FIRE ALARM STANDARDS</b></p> <p>Mains operated fire alarm and detection system designed and installed to British Standard 5839 Part 6, Grade D and category LD3 (optical smoke detectors in escape routes, any shared lounges or dining rooms, and a heat detector or multisensor in the shared kitchen), detectors to be interlinked together to form one system. Remote hush/test/locate switch to be sited in a suitable position. Full evacuation.</p> <p>Not normally required, unless there is significant lack of borrowed lighting within staircase enclosure and layout/changes of level present exit difficulties in the event of a fire.</p> <p>Minimum fire blanket in every kitchen.</p> <p>Fire alarm should be tested weekly by landlord or tenant. Remote test switch allows for easy testing. An annual check by a competent person to comply with BS5839 Part 6 should include cleaning in accordance with manufacturers recommendations. Each detector head should be replaced every 10 years (guaranteed life of the standby battery). If the building has been unoccupied or the mains power has been disconnected, the system should be tested to ensure the operation of the power supply and standby supply.</p>
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<b>5.3</b> <b>Fire risk assessment</b>  <b>Remaining matters</b>	<p>None required</p> <p>Refuse bins, emergency lighting, fire fighting equipment and management all as Part 4.</p>
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## Part 6 – Flats or HMOs Over the shop

Flats over shops have been identified as higher risk type of accommodation due to the use of the premises underneath, the lack of control over the risks below and potential obstructions to access routes where businesses have use of ground floor external areas. Accumulated combustibles or obstructions and locked exit routes can provide additional risk factors.

There are many different types of over the shop flats which require different solutions:

Two storeys or three or more storeys.

Single flat above shop – separate entrance, no shared stairways.

Two or more flats sharing a common staircase with shared entrance/exit doors.

Bedsits or rooms over the shop with full HMO status.

Mixture of flats and bedsits.

Single family occupied 'house' over the shop with its own staircase.

The building may be converted or purpose built.

These variations must be taken into consideration when deciding on the appropriate level of fire protection.

<b>6.1</b>	<p><b>STRUCTURAL FIRE PROTECTION</b></p> <p><b>There should be 60</b> minutes fire protection between the business use below and the residential accommodation above. In cases where the ceiling of the business has been underdrawn it may not be possible to determine fire resistance without proper examination of the ceiling underneath.</p> <p><b>All dedicated escape routes</b> will consist of a protected route providing a minimum of 30 minutes fire resistance; this comprises the flat entrance door (30 minutes) and may also include other fire resisting partitions and doors within the staircase. Service ducts, cupboards in the stairway and pipework must maintain the same level of fire separation.</p> <p><b>Flat entrance doors</b> and frames within over the shop blocks of flats must be maintained as 30 minutes fire resistance and all leaseholders, tenants and occupiers must be made aware that no change of door is permitted without prior approval of the management company who must enforce this rule.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Letter boxes must be fire resisting and arson proof – proprietary solutions are available;</li><li>• Self closing devices are required for flat entrance doors;</li><li>• Locks should be either mortice escape locks or night latches which can be opened from the inside without using a key;</li><li>• Chubb type security locks which require a key to open from the inside are not recommended;</li><li>• 25mm door stops can be effective smoke and fire stops and</li></ul>
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therefore should be retained. Any holes, gaps or damage to fire doors must be effectively repaired.

**Self closing devices** are required for flat entrance doors. As self closing devices are required for flat entrance doors, locks should be mortice escape locks which cannot lock the occupier out of the flat by the action of the self closing device. All locks must be capable of being opened from the inside without the use of a key and with a thumb turn on the inside.

**Any layout** which compromises the safe exit of occupiers (such as having to pass through a risk room to escape) must be made safe by using smoke detection appropriate to the location and use. Any planned improvements should also aim to minimise layouts that are unsatisfactory.

**All glazing** that forms part of the escape route should be 30 minutes fire resisting.

**Cupboards in the escape route** should be emptied and kept locked shut or protected by 30 minutes fire resistance and kept locked.

**Electric meters** in the escape route should be enclosed in a 30 minutes fire resisting cupboard.

**No storage** of any kind should be permitted in the escape route.

**All final exit doors** (i.e. front doors and back doors) should be fitted with mortice escape locks which allow the door to be opened from the inside without the use of a key.

There are specific considerations for the different types of over the shop flats.

**Single flat over a shop** (2 storeys max) with clear exit route to outside – no internal fire doors but flat door should be 30 minutes fire resisting if it is inside a staircase enclosure. 60 minutes between shop and flat floors.

**Several flats over a shop/s** (2 storeys max) – 30 minute fire doors to each flat entrance door. Clear exit route out to a place of safety. 60 minutes between shop and flat floors.

**Several flats over a shop** (3+ storeys) - 30 minute fire doors to each flat door. 60 minutes between floors. Internal doors should also be fire resisting thus giving a 60 minute fire resistance between the flats and the staircase. Clear exit route out to a place of safety.

**HMO over the shop** – 2 or 3+ storeys – 30 minutes fire resistance between rooms and the staircase.

**Shared flat over shop** – 2 storeys only – no fire doors inside flat but flat door must be 30 minutes fire resisting.

	<p><b>Shared flat/maisonette</b> over the shop 3+ storeys (any layout) 30 minutes fire resistance as per HMO standard.</p> <p>The fire resistance standard is for both purpose built and converted flats over shops.</p> <p>No occupiers should have to pass through a potentially obstructed area (Shop yard or alley or staircase) to get out to a place of safety. Any locks on gates to be fire escape locks easily openable from the inside without using a key.</p> <p>Poor layouts involving fire exit through risk rooms should be improved using additional detection. Flats over shops often have the kitchen at the rear which gives out onto the exit staircase. Each case must be checked by the Fire Prevention Officer before recommending extra detection.</p>
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<b>6.2</b>	<p><b>FIRE ALARMS AND SMOKE DETECTION SYSTEMS</b></p> <p><b>Single flat over a shop</b> – working smoke detector/s which may be battery but mains operated detection is preferable. Interlinking with shop downstairs if considered necessary due to the risk from the business or uncertainty about the structural fire protection of the ceiling.</p> <p><b>Flats over shops</b> which are <b>converted buildings</b> - Design and install a mixed system which comprises:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) a mains operated fire alarm and detection system designed and installed to British Standard 5839 Part 6 2004 Grade D and category LD2 (detectors in escape routes and <u>heat</u> detector, 300-600mm from main entrance fire door within each flat), detectors to be interlinked together to form one system.</li> <li>(2) Inside each flat, in circulation space, single point optical smoke detector with remote hush/test switch to be fitted, not linked, but under control of occupant. System defaults to evacuate mode if a flat is on fire and heat detector activates prior to fire door being under threat from blaze. Minimises false alarms. No remote hush to be fitted to main system (1)</li> </ol> <p>The Fire Prevention Officer may recommend interlinked detection between the shop and the flats above – an inspection will be required to determine this.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Where such systems comprise more than 12 detectors in total, an automatic panel controlled fire alarm must be considered – refer to the Fire prevention Officer.</p>
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	<p><b>Flats over shops</b> which are <b>purpose built buildings</b> – no smoke detection system is required under this standard for purpose built blocks with sterile stairs/landings/escape routes. Inside each flat, in circulation space, single point optical smoke detector with remote hush/test switch to be fitted, not linked, but under control of occupant. (Grade D and LD3)</p> <p>Existing buildings which have been recently converted may already have smoke detection systems within communal stairways.</p> <p><b>HMOs over shops</b> require the same level of fire detection as for the HMO standard. (Grade D or A and LD2).</p> <p><b>A shared flat of 2 storeys</b> only over the shop occupied by sharers on one contract should have the same standard of detection (Grade D and LD3) as the shared house standard for HMOs.</p> <p><b>A shared flat of 3+ storeys</b> will require a full smoke detection system (Grade D or Grade A and LD2) as it cannot be considered for the reduced shared house standard.</p>
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<p><b>6.3</b></p> <p><b>Evacuation procedures</b></p>	<p><b>EVACUATION PROCEDURES</b></p> <p><b>In the event of a fire</b> in any over the shop premises full evacuation should be undertaken.</p> <p><b>See Managing responsibilities for fire safety in section 1.10 on page 13.</b></p>
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<p><b>6.4</b></p>	<p><b>MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE</b></p> <p><b>See Managing responsibilities for fire safety in section 1.10 on page 13.</b></p>
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<p><b>6.5</b></p> <p><b>Fire risk assessment</b></p>	<p><b>FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT</b></p> <p><b>For any over the shop premises</b> where there is a common staircase and shared areas a fire risk assessment to be carried out in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.</p>
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<p><b>6.6</b></p> <p><b>Fire fighting equipment</b></p>	<p><b>FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT</b></p> <p><b>To be fitted in accordance with the individual type of accommodation.</b></p> <p>Fire fighting equipment for individual flats is recommended - fire blankets in kitchens help with small kitchen fires.</p>
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<p><b>6.7</b></p> <p><b>Emergency lighting</b></p>	<p><b>EMERGENCY LIGHTING</b></p> <p><b>Emergency Lighting to BS 5266 Pt 1</b> will be required in circulation areas if the amount of borrowed light provided by street lighting is insufficient.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Emergency Lighting system is tested on a monthly basis with a record of the test maintained.</p>
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## **Part 7 – EXPLANATION OF FIRE SAFETY TERMS USED**

**BS 5839 Pt 1: Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems for Buildings:** Code of Practice for system design, installation, commissioning and maintenance.

**Category M:** Manual break glass call points

**Category L:** Automatic fire detection systems intended for life safety.

**Category L4:** System providing Automatic Fire Detection within those parts of an escape route comprising circulation areas and circulation spaces such as corridors and stairways. Additional detection can be provided in specific areas e.g. communal rest rooms.

**Category L5:** System providing Automatic Fire Detection to satisfy a specific fire safety objective. E.g. Bin rooms

**BS 5839 Pt 6: Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems for buildings:** Code of Practice for the design and installation of fire detection and alarm systems in dwellings.

**Grade A:** A system of mains operated smoke alarms with an integral standby supply. This is a panel controlled system with manual call points.

**Grade D:** A system of one or more mains powered smoke alarms each with an integral standby supply. There is no control panel.

**Category LD:** Automatic Fire Detection and alarm system intended for the protection of life in dwellings.

**Category LD2:** A system incorporating detectors in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape routes from the dwelling, and in all rooms or areas that present a high fire risk to occupants.

**Category LD3:** A system incorporating detectors in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape routes from the dwelling e.g. the individual flats.

**BS 5266 Pt 1:** Code of practice for the emergency lighting of premises other than cinemas and certain other specified premises used for entertainment.

**Maintained lighting (M):** Emergency lighting system is energised continuously using normal supply source with a battery backup supply on interruption of the main supply.

**Non maintained Lighting (NM):** Emergency lighting systems are not normally energised. An automatic monitoring and switching system is provided to switch on the lighting if the normal supply is interrupted.

**Duration:** An emergency lighting system is designed to supply the required load for a desired period of time, is usually between 1-3 hours.

Hence, a system conforming to NM/2 is a Non Maintained system of 2 hour duration.

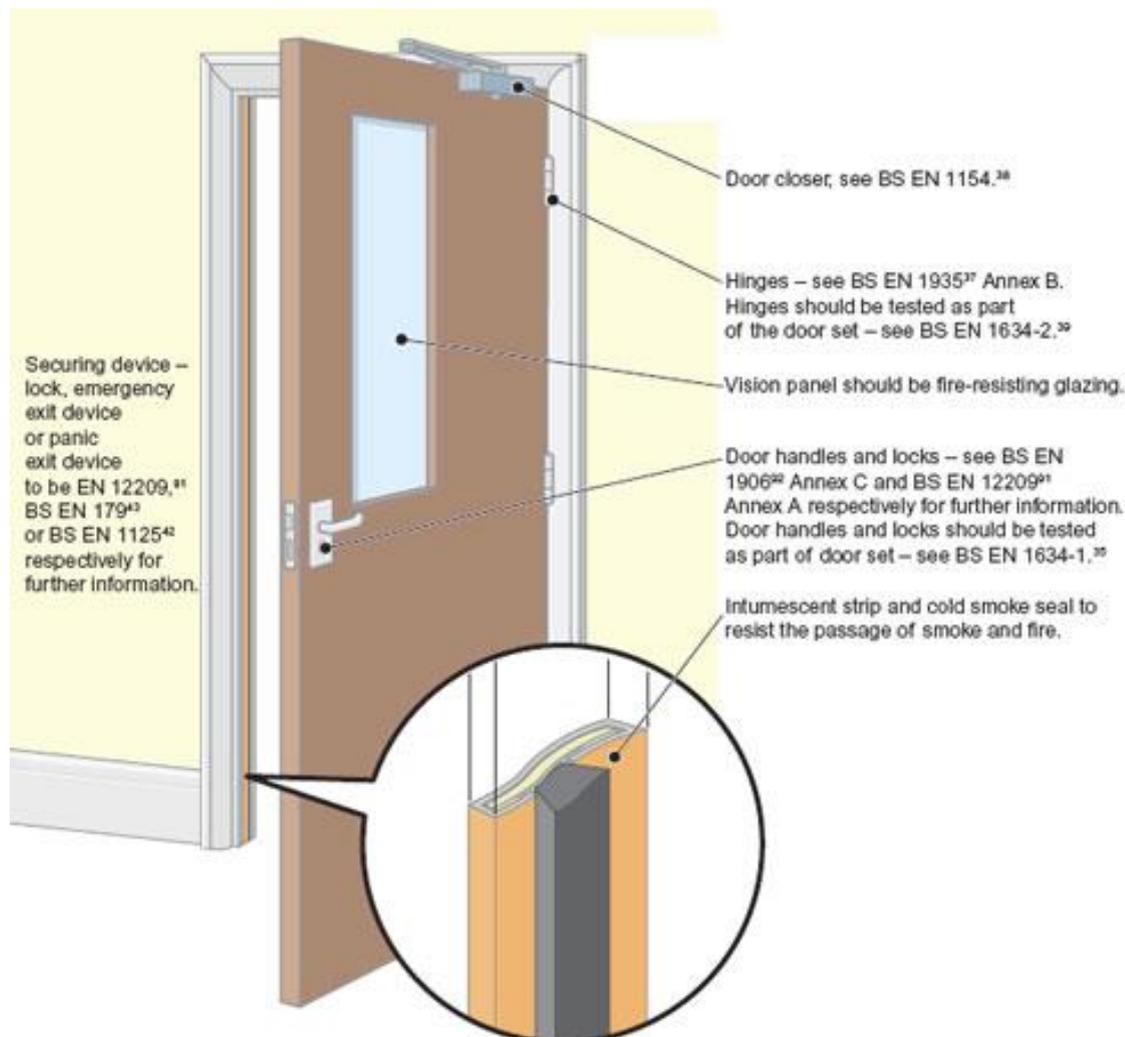
## Appendix 2 – Fire Door Specification and Notice to Occupiers.

### SPECIFICATIONS AND GUIDANCE FOR FIRE RESISTING DOORS

All references to “fire resisting” (in relation to doors) to be taken as meaning: having a fire resistance of not less than 30 minutes when tested in accordance with British Standard BS 476: Part 22:1987 (or equivalent European Standard). Glazing in any fire resisting door, wall, partition or screen should comply with British Standard Published Document PD6512: Part 3:1987. If existing doors are to be upgraded then specific advice must be sought prior to doing any work.

It is recommended that purpose made door sets which meet the 30 minute fire resisting standard be fitted. For difficult/non standard door openings blanks can be purchased and cut down. In most cases standard fire doors can be adjusted to fit normal door opening sizes.

#### What makes up a fire door?



## **Hinges**

All fire doors should be hung on one and a half pairs of steel hinges, to resist bowing in the event of a fire and to bear the increased weight of the door.

## **Self closing devices**

The best closers are dual action hydraulic type self closing devices (overhead) which are adjusted to close quickly but latch slowly so as not to wear the smoke seals or damage the door or frame. Perco closers are not generally effective as they cause the doors to slam causing noise nuisance to occupiers and they tend to wear the smoke seals/frames causing damage over a period of time.

However, if you do not want overhead closers and you install the percors correctly or the new type of spring hinges and the doors close effectively, they can be accepted. All self closers need adjusting from time to time and need checking to make sure they close. Tenants will sometimes tamper with them or disconnect them – it's important to emphasize the role of self closers and make sure tenants respect them.

Specialist closers – in certain locations such as kitchen doors or areas with high foot traffic, it is possible to fit a fire door magnetic hold back device, which is tied in to the fire alarm system. If the alarm goes off the door then closes, under the action of the self closing device – and you need to make sure the door closes effectively. A swing free closer can be fitted which is again connected to the fire alarm. It acts like a normal door until the alarm goes off then it closes the door. If you think you need one of these devices, ask for guidance.

## **Door stops and fitting**

Door frames may be improved to have 25mm door stops which the doors should close onto. The benefit of doing this is that it covers minor irregularities of fit, often found when working on existing door openings. Alternatively, if purpose made doors are used which have integral intumescent strips then standard door stops can remain.

On completion doors should be reasonably close fitting into frames with a maximum gap of 3mm between door and frame. If doors are too tight then the self closers do not work, there has to be a certain air gap around the door. In addition, heavy fire doors may drop by a millimetre or 2 over time and so tight fitting doors will stop closing and need to be adjusted. A note of warning, hang the door first, then fix the stops, not the other way round.

## **Smoke seals/Intumescent strips**

Smoke seals must be fitted to all fire doors. This specification is for a "night time escape" standard and so smoke seals are important to enable occupiers to escape down the protected route without being subjected to smoke which can be

toxic, impede breathing and affect vision. Cool smoke, often given off by smouldering furnishings and electrical equipment, is exceptionally toxic and tends not to rise immediately, therefore smoke seals on fire doors are essential. Nylon brush or neoprene smoke seals (draught proofing kits) are acceptable. Smoke seals can be fitted into the door itself or, a better option is to apply to the door stop so that the fire door closes onto the seals. See diagram.

Intumescent strips are materials which, when subjected to heat, swell up and close the gaps between door and frame. Intumescent filling materials are useful for filling holes, voids etc where pipework has been run through wall or ceilings etc. Fire door performance and integrity depends on the installation of such strips which can be fixed into a channel in the door or fitted to the frame. New doors and frames may come with these factory fitted, it is useful to choose this option as it saves work on site and ensures the doors/frames perform to the British Standard. In this case smoke seals should be fitted independently as detailed above. When existing doors are not fitted with intumescent strips but do have 25mm stops, the requirement is only for smoke seals to be fitted.

In the event of a fire, the intumescent strips ensure a door retains fire resisting properties and holds back the blaze while occupiers escape.

### **Door furniture**

Door handles should be chosen so that they give security but do not allow tenants to be locked out of their lettings by the action of the self closers. For this reason, the best design is a simple mortice lock and door handles which require a key to lock the door, but the inside has a thumb turn instead of a key. This means that the occupant can escape from the room in an emergency without relying on a key. A Rim lock with a rollerball is also acceptable. Note fixing instructions for the roller ball lock.

All final exit doors should also have this type of lock or a simple latch lock which allows exit without using a key in the event of an emergency. Care must be taken when installing any additional security locks to final exit doors, so that this requirement is not overridden and by doing so, occupiers are locked into the house if a fire breaks out.

This lock standard applies to all bedroom/bed-sit doors and final exit doors, including doors onto any secondary fire escape stairs.

**Overhead hydraulic closer**



**Union mortice escape lock**



**SEE NOTE 1 BELOW**

**Thumb turn escape lock**



**Arrone Spring hinges**



**SEE NOTE 2 BELOW**

**Magnetic hold back device**



Magnetic hold back devices are used when a fire door is at risk of being propped open (to a kitchen, for example) and you need to make sure it closes if there is a fire. The device is connected to the fire alarm and if activated, the door closes under the action of the self closer.

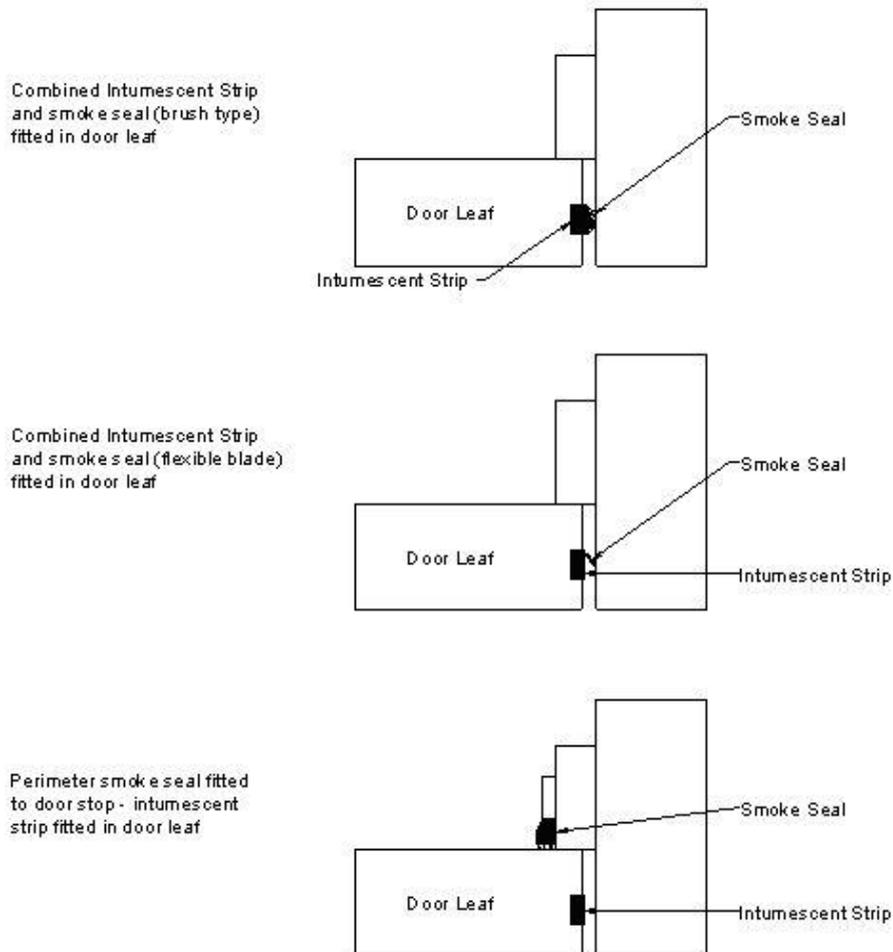
**NOTE 1** – it is imperative that fixing instructions for this lock are followed accurately and that the clearance between the latch and the keep allows for the rollerbolt to move freely and open and close. Too tight and it will not operate, door will stick shut.

**NOTE 2** – This is a relatively new product and there is limited experience with it. It is certified for use with fire doors but should be used with caution – if you

intend to use these closers, please check with us first. See [http://www.lockandkeyshop.co.uk/acatalog/Spring\\_Hinges.html](http://www.lockandkeyshop.co.uk/acatalog/Spring_Hinges.html)

## ALTERNATIVE POSITIONING OF SMOKE SEALS TO FIRE DOORS

Smoke seals are designed to stop toxic smoke getting from one room (usually a risk room) into the escape route. They are found in the combination intumescent strip/smoke seal often in a channel in the door or the frame. Some seals fitted this way must be positioned so they do not stop the door closing. You can split the function of intumescent strip from the smoke seal. Put the strip in the door so that it is flush with the door and then add a simple draught proofing kit, fixed to the door stop. The image below shows alternative positions.



## NOTICE TO OCCUPIERS

(AFFIX TO THE INSIDE OF THE BEDROOM/ BEDSIT DOOR OR FLAT DOOR)

**If the main fire alarm goes off it means the smoke detection system has been activated by smoke or fire in the house.**

- The alarm means **evacuate** so go quickly out of your letting, do not stop to collect belongings, and make your way calmly down the main stairs to the outside.
- Call the Fire Brigade from a mobile phone, a neighbour's house or a phone box. Give the address of the fire.
- Check doors with the back of your hand before opening - if they are warm, do not open them - the fire is on the other side.
- If there is any smoke in the hallways or stairs think carefully before proceeding - dense black smoke means you should **STAY PUT** and call for help. If there is only a little smoke then you can go out quickly - keeping low where the air is cleaner.

### **Don't go back inside your home**

- Call the Fire Brigade from a mobile phone, a neighbour's house or a phone box. Give the address of the fire.
- Don't stop or go back for anything.

### **What to do if your escape route is blocked by smoke or fire**

- Get everyone into one room, move as far away from the source of fire as you can - remembering that fire goes up so move towards the farthest safe place away from the fire. Get behind a (fire) door if possible, and **STAY PUT**.
- Open the window in the room and stay near it for fresh air and to let the firefighters see you.
- Phone the Fire Brigade or shout for help so that someone else can phone for you.



**GET OUT  
STAY OUT  
CALL THE FIRE BRIGADE OUT  
999  
FIRE KILLS**

Abridged from Govt leaflet  
'Make your plan-get out alive'

## Appendix 3 –

### Definition of House in Multiple Occupation - Summary

“House in Multiple Occupation” means a building or part of a building (e.g. a flat):

- which is occupied by more than one household and in which more than one household shares an amenity (or the building lacks an amenity) such as a bathroom, toilet or cooking facilities; or,
- which is occupied by more than one household and which is a converted building which does not entirely comprise self-contained flats (whether or not there is also a sharing or lack of amenities); or
- which comprises entirely of converted self-contained flats and the standard of conversion does not meet, as a minimum, which required by the 1991 Building Regulation and more than one third of the flats are occupied under short tenancies.

And is 'occupied' by more than one household:

- as their only or main residence , or,
- as a refuge by persons escaping domestic violence, or,
- during term time by students, or,
- for some other purpose that is prescribed in regulations.

And the households comprise:

- families (including foster children, children being cared for) and current domestic employees,
- single persons
- co-habiting couples (whether or not of the opposite sex).

A full definition is given under S254 and schedule 14 Housing Act 2004

## Appendix 4 –

### Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) Hazards

No.	Hazard	Common Causes
<b>Physiological Requirements</b>		
1	Damp and Mould Growth	Health threat from dust mites and mould caused by dampness and/or high humidity. Includes threats to mental health from living with damp and condensation.
2	Excess Cold	Health threat from low indoor temperatures from lack of central heating or affordable heating, poor insulation, disrepair of heating system or building components etc.
3	Excess Heat	Health threat from high indoor temperatures caused by lack of ventilation, excess heating or heat gain in summer from poor insulation, large expanses of glass etc.
4	Asbestos (and MMF)	Health threat caused by exposure to asbestos fibres and manufactured mineral fibres (MMF) e.g. from insulation of pipework, lofts and cavity walls. Inhalation of fibres.
5	Biocides	Health threat from chemicals used to treat timber, insect infestation and mould growth in dwellings. Health effects may vary.
6	Carbon Monoxide (CO) and fuel combustion products	Health threat from excess levels of CO, nitrogen dioxide (e.g. from gas cookers), sulphur dioxide (e.g. from coal fires) and smoke in the dwelling.
7	Lead	Health threats from high levels of lead e.g. in old paintwork and old lead plumbing.
8	Radiation	Health threats from radon gas building up in sub-floor space from radiation emitting rock as part of normal ground conditions.
9	Uncombust-ed Fuel Gas	Health threat from escaping gas within a dwelling causing potential explosions/fire.
10	Volatile Organic Compounds	Health threats from organic chemicals such as formaldehyde found in a wide variety of materials in the home.
<b>Psychological Requirements</b>		
11	Crowding and Space	Psychological as well as infectious disease health threats from overcrowding due to lack of living space including sleeping, cooking, washing etc.
12	Entry by Intruders	Psychological and actual health threat from intruders or fear of intruders due to poor security against unauthorised entry e.g. inadequate/broken door and window locks, fences.
13	Lighting	Lack of natural and/or artificial light or poorly positioned lights. Includes psychological effect from lack of a view. Assessment is of whole dwelling.

14	Noise	External noise from railways, airports, factories or roads, internally from adjacent dwellings lacking sound insulation (between flats), internal noise from plumbing, for example.
<b>Protection Against Infection</b>		
15	Domestic Hygiene Pests and Refuse	Due to poor design and construction, damaged surfaces, access and harbourage for pests.
16	Food Safety	Inadequate facilities for storage, preparation and cooking of food.
17	Personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage.	Infectious disease and effects on mental health associated with poor personal hygiene due to inadequate washing and clothes washing facilities, sanitation and drainage.
18	Water Supply	Disease, poisoning and parasitic infections due to poor quality or contaminated domestic water supply.
<b>Protection Against Accidents</b>		
19	Falls associated with Baths	Slipping getting in or out of bath or showers resulting in injury, fractures , cuts etc.
20	Falling on Level Surfaces	Falling on floors, yards, paths, trip steps less than 300mm resulting in injury, fractures, cuts etc.
21	Falling on Stairs etc.	Falls associated with internal or external stairs, steps over 300 mm and ramps resulting in injury.
22	Falling Between Levels	Where difference in level is over 300 mm - includes injuries arising from falls from balconies, landings, windows, accessible roofs, basement wells, retaining walls etc.
23	Electrical Hazards	Shocks and burns from electrocution due to defective wiring, plugs etc. Includes lightning strikes.
24	Fire	Potential fatality from burns and smoke inhalation caused by uncontrolled (accidental) fires frequently associated with cooking appliances, chip pans, defective heating/electrical appliances, dangerous wiring etc.
25	Flames and Hot Surfaces	Burns caused by contact with hot flames/surfaces or controlled fires or liquids (e.g. when cooking or from heaters) or scalds from hot liquids and vapours.
26	Collisions, Cuts and Strains	Physical injury from a) trapping body parts in architectural features, doors or windows; or b) collisions with architectural glazing, windows, doors, low headroom, ceilings and walls.
27	Explosions	Injury and the threat of injury from explosions from mains or stored gas.
28	Position and Operability of Amenities	Strains and injuries from awkward positioning of windows, amenities such as sinks and wash hand basins, kitchen cupboards, switches etc.
29	Structural Collapse and Falling Elements	Injury arising from falling slates, bricks, ceiling plaster or windows etc. and collapse from structural failure of roofs, walls or floors, guard rails etc.

## Appendix 5 – Civil Penalties under the Housing and Planning Act 2016

Under the Housing Act 2004, schedule 13A, the Council can now apply a Civil Penalty of up to £30,000 for the following offences:

- Section 30 of the Housing Act 2004 – Failing to comply with an Improvement Notice;
- Section 72 of the Housing Act 2004 – Offences in relation to the licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation;
- Section 95 of the Housing Act 2004 – Offences in relation to the licensing of houses under Part 3 of the Housing Act 2004 (Selective Licensing of Residential Accommodation);
- Section 139 of the Housing Act 2004 – Offences in relation to the contravention of an overcrowding notice;
- Section 234 of the Housing Act 2004 – Failure to comply with Management Regulations in respect of Houses in Multiple Occupation.

## Appendix 6 - Where can I get more information?

**HMO enquiries.** The Housing Enforcement team with specialist HMO officers at Bedford Borough Council will be pleased to advise about any aspect of Houses in Multiple Occupation – contact 01234 718099.

**Other Rented Property.** The Housing Enforcement team can advise about other rented property enquiries – contact 01234 718099

**Rent Deposit Scheme and private sector leasing – landlords enquiries about offering property to the Council for housing.** The Housing Options Team can advise on different options – contact 01234 718681.

**Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service.** Telephone 01234 845000 or email - [naofiresafetyadministration@bedsfire.com](mailto:naofiresafetyadministration@bedsfire.com).

The Bedford Borough Council website contains more information about rented property, including housing advice, empty homes, housing strategy, homelessness and grants and loans. The address is <http://www.bedford.gov.uk> click "Housing" in the menu.

The Department for Communities and Local Government website <http://www.communities.gov.uk> also contains useful information which can be downloaded or ordered in hard copy. **Enquiries regarding this Guide:**

Environmental Services Community Regulation Team  
Bedford Borough Council  
Borough Hall  
Cauldwell Street  
Bedford MK42 9AP  
01234 718099 urgent enquiries  
[Email: ehadmin@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:ehadmin@bedford.gov.uk)  
[Email: hmolicensing@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:hmolicensing@bedford.gov.uk)