



Houses in Multiple Occupation

Landlord's Handbook



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Introduction

Many privately rented houses are let to people from several different families, either as flats, bedsits or as shared houses. Houses like this are known as houses in multiple occupation, or HMOs.

This handbook is a guide to the legal requirements of landlords of HMOs to ensure that their property meets an acceptable standard. In addition, it has information about which HMOs must be licensed and gives details of the student housing accreditation scheme. It also contains some useful contact information.

What is a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)?

Under the Housing Act 2004, a house in multiple occupation (HMO) is a building, or part of a building, occupied by three or more persons who do not form a single household (see below for the definition of household). Examples of HMOs include:

- A house converted into three or more bedsits;
- A house or flat rented out on a room by room basis to three or more unrelated persons;
- A house converted into self-contained flats where less than two thirds of the flats are owner occupied and the flats were not converted in accordance with the 1991 Building Regulations;
- A house occupied by three or more friends who rent from a private landlord;
- A house let to a group of three or more students;
- A flat with three or more bedsits (even if the flats were converted in accordance with the 1991 Building Regulations and more than two thirds of the flats in the building are owner occupied);
- A privately rented house occupied by a married couple and a friend.

What is a Household?

A household is a group of people who live together. They must be connected by marriage, civil partnership, be a recognised couple (same sex or opposite sex), be related – a child, parent, sister, brother, nephew, niece or in-law for instance – or have another recognised connection such as fostering or adoption.

People that live in the same place, but are not connected in this way, are not counted as a single household. So, for example, a group of five students or adult friends count as five households, even if they live at the same address and share facilities.



Licensing of HMOs

Mandatory HMO licensing across England has changed. From the 1st October 2018, all HMOs occupied by five or more persons forming more than one household will become licensable.

If you own or manage an HMO, answer these questions to find out if you need a licence:

1. Is the property occupied by five or more people?
2. Do these people live as two or more households?
3. Do tenants share any amenities such as the bathroom, toilet or cooking facilities?

If you have answered 'yes' to all of these questions you will need to apply for a licence as soon as possible.

Operating a licensable HMO without a licence could result in heavy penalties including an unlimited fine or a civil penalty of up to £30,000. A tenant living in a property that should have been licensed, but was not, can apply to the Residential Property Tribunal to claim back any rent they have paid during the unlicensed period (up to a limit of 12 months). The Council can also reclaim any housing benefit that has been paid during the time the property was operating without a licence.

The Council charges a fee to cover the administration costs of the licence procedure, and inspection costs.

The guidance specifications below refer to shared houses and bedsit type properties:

- A **shared house** is one where all tenants share the same tenancy agreement and have exclusive access to all areas of the property, for example, a group of friends who know each other and arrived in the property at the same time.
- A **bedsit** type property is one where the tenants rent a bedroom and have shared use of a kitchen, bathroom and lounge. The tenants will not always know each other and will have locks on their bedroom doors.

Council's Rights of entry

The Council's authorised officers are empowered by the Housing Act 2004 to enter premises at any reasonable time, on giving 24 hours written notice of their intentions to the occupier and owner, if the owner is known.

For certain specific reasons such as, checking whether a property is a HMO, officers may enter at any reasonable time without giving 24 hours written notice.



Legal powers of entry are only used where difficulty is anticipated and in most cases officers will enter premises where invited by occupier or tenant.

The reasons for entry may include inspections of the property to check compliance with housing legislation, to assist tenants in securing necessary repairs or improvements by the landlord, to advise the landlord on the standards required and enforcement of fire safety and management standards.

Guidance on Fire Precautions and Fire Safety

People who live in HMOs are more likely to die in a fire than those who live in a house occupied by a family. Therefore, fire safety is an important consideration in HMOs. The following standards are the minimum to be achieved. **Please note, these standards should be used as a guide only; the actual provisions required will be dependent on a risk assessment undertaken by a Council officer.**

Where reference is made to a specific standard e.g. a British Standard (BS), then it is the latest version of that standard that should be followed. Application of a comparable standard will have to be provided with evidence to demonstrate an equal, if not better standard, is achieved.

Shared house scenario - no more than 2 storeys

- Sound general construction to partition walls and ceilings.
- 30 minutes fire separation between basement/cellar and ground floor.
- Mains wired interlinked optical type smoke detectors/alarms in the common area (hallways, lounge/dining room) and basement/cellar and a heat detector in the kitchen (BS 5839-6 Grade D, LD3).
- Escape windows (to current building regulations standard, see Approved Document B, Volume 1 – Dwelling Houses, where needed).
- Close fitting doors.
- Provision of a fire blanket and dry powder fire extinguisher in the kitchen.

Shared house scenario - 3 or 4 storeys

- Mains wired interlinked optical type smoke detectors/alarms in the common area (hallways, lounge/dining room) and a heat detector in the kitchen (BS 5839-6 Grade D, LD3).
- 30-minute fire resisting doors to all habitable rooms and the kitchen.
- 30-minute fire resisting structure to walls and ceilings separating habitable rooms from other habitable rooms, kitchens and the common escape route.
- 30-minutes fire separation between basement/cellar and ground floor.
- Provision of a fire blanket and dry powder fire extinguisher in the kitchen

Bedsit scenario – no more than 2 storeys

- Mains wired interlinked optical type smoke detectors/alarms in common parts, basement/cellar and in all habitable rooms and a heat detector in the kitchen (BS 5839-6 Grade D, LD2).
- 30-minute fire resisting structure to walls and ceilings separating habitable rooms from other habitable rooms, kitchens and the common escape route.
- Fire doors with 30-minute fire resistance complete with intumescent fire and cold smoke seals (FD30S) and an overhead self-closing device (BS EN 1154).
- Emergency lighting to common parts (BS 5266-1) where the escape route is long , dark or complex.
- Fire escape signage (BS 5499) where the escape route is long or complex.
- Provision of a fire blanket and dry powder fire extinguisher in the kitchen and a simple multi purpose extinguisher to each floor level

Bedsit scenario – 3 or 4 storeys

- Mains wired interlinked optical type smoke detectors/alarms in common parts, basement/cellar and in all habitable rooms and a heat detector in the kitchen (BS 5839-6 Grade A, LD2).
- 30-minute fire resisting structure to walls and ceilings separating habitable rooms from other habitable rooms, kitchens and the common escape route.
- Fire doors with 30-minute fire resistance complete with intumescent fire and cold smoke seals (FD30S) and an overhead self-closing device (BS EN 1154).
- Emergency lighting to common parts (BS 5266-1) where the escape route is long or complex.
- Fire escape signage (BS 5499) where escape route is long or complex.
- Provision of a fire blanket and dry powder fire extinguisher in the kitchen and a simple multi purpose extinguisher to each floor level.

Purpose built flats and buildings converted into flats

Purpose built flats and buildings converted into flats that can demonstrate compliance with the 1991 Building Regulations, or Building Regulations thereafter, will usually be considered sufficient and may not require additional fire safety measures as described above.

Where any doubt exists, this must be discussed with the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) on a case by case basis who will advise on the measures that may need to be taken.



Suppression Systems

This authority is committed to protecting the community of Suffolk by ensuring suitable and sufficient fire safety measures are in place. We proactively endorse the installation of suitable suppression systems e.g. Sprinklers and Water Mist, and firmly believe that they save lives and improve safety. Where installed they reduce the environmental, social and economic impact of fires in domestic, and other premises.

As such, this authority recognises there may be relaxations in some fire safety measures where a suitable suppression system is installed, this should be discussed with the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) on a case by case basis.

Sprinkler systems should be installed to BS 9251 and Water Mist systems installed to BS 8458.



Guidance on Amenities

The kitchen and bathroom facilities that you are expected to provide depend on the type of HMO and the number of occupants sharing the accommodation. The following table indicates the level of amenities that must be provided regardless of the level of risk.

<p>1 – 5 Persons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At least 1 kitchen, not more than 1 floor distance from furthest bedroom. Where there is more than 1 floor distance an additional kitchen should be provided, or, a dining room provided on the same floor as the kitchen. ● At least 1 bathroom and 1 WC. Where there are 5 persons the bathroom and WC must be separate, although the bathroom may also contain a WC.
<p>6 – 10 Persons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At least 2 kitchens, not more than 1 floor distance from furthest bedroom. Where there is more than 1 floor distance a dining room should be provided on the same floor as the kitchen. OR 1 large kitchen with dining room, with 2 sets of facilities - dependant upon the actual number of tenants. ● 2 bathrooms AND 2 separate WCs with WHBs (but one of the WCs can be contained within one of the bathrooms).
<p>10 + Persons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At least 2 kitchens, not more than 1 floor distance from furthest bedroom. Where there is more than 1 floor distance a dining room should be provided on the same floor as the kitchen. OR 1 large kitchen with dining room, with 2 sets of facilities - dependant upon the actual number of tenants. ● 3 bathrooms AND 3 separate WCs with WHBs (but two of the WCs can be contained within the bathrooms).

Additional Guidance on Kitchen Requirements:



Minimum floor area of kitchen

- 1—5 persons—7m²
- 6—10 persons—10m²

Kitchens shall be provided no more than one floor away from any occupied rooms, unless a dining area is available.

Each kitchen for up to 5 persons shall be provided with the following:

- 1 cooker with 4 rings, oven and grill
- 1 sink with hot water, cold drinking water, base unit and drainer
- 1 single floor cupboard per person for food storage (min size 500mm wide and of standard height and depth) *or*
- 1 double wall cupboard for food storage per person (min size 1000mm wide and of standard height and depth)
- 1000mm x 600mm worktop for food preparation per 3 persons *or*
- 2000mm x 600mm worktop for food preparation per 5 persons plus additional worktop for the safe storage of kitchen appliances
- 1 standard fridge with a freezer compartment per 3 persons (with separate shelf for each person) *or*
- 1 large fridge/freezer per 5 persons (with separate shelf for each person)
- 1 dedicated electrical socket per fixed appliance (such as a fridge)
- A minimum of 2 undedicated double electrical sockets above an area of worktop
- Separate cooker panel for electric cookers.
- Adequate ventilation

The kitchen shall be of sufficient area for the safe provision of all necessary facilities. Cookers shall not be placed adjacent to doorways and there shall be sufficient floor space for the safe retrieval of items from the oven and for the safe circulation of occupants.

Guidance on Space Standards

All licensable HMOs have to comply to the National minimum room size. The following space standards will be required in HMOs. We recommend that you consider these standards when buying houses to let or when improving existing HMOs.

If a room is smaller than the minimum acceptable size, a legal notice shall be served on the landlord, either prohibiting the use of the room or limiting the number of people who may occupy it. This does not mean that the tenant who currently occupies the room has to leave, but when they do leave the landlord must not re-let the room.

Bedrooms

The following space standards will be required in all HMOs:

Minimum bedroom size with separate living room (**11m²**):

- **1 Person—6.51m²**
- **2 Persons—10.23m²**

Minimum bedroom size study/living room where there is no separate living room

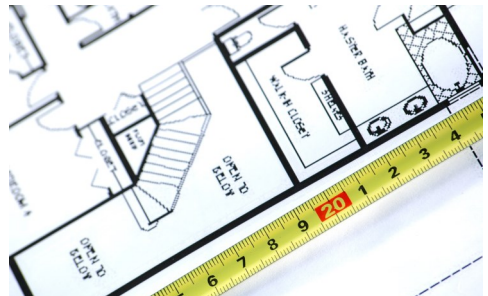
- **1 person—10m²**
- **2 persons—15m²**

Living room

Minimum living space

- **1—5 persons—11m² OR 13m² combined kitchen/dining room**
- **6—10 persons—14m² OR 16.5m² combined kitchen/dining room**

Unless related, persons should not be required to share bedrooms. It is accepted, however, that some groups may wish to share rooms.



Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation

The law's emphasis is now on the way in which houses are run, rather than concentrating on physical standards. This demands a more active approach from landlords and letting agents.

We aim to ensure that all HMOs in the district are managed in a proper manner so that tenants can live in safe conditions. The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 and The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006 place legal duties on both managers and tenants to ensure that the property is maintained to a good standard. The Management Regulations are summarised below:

Duties of manager

- To display his or her name, address and phone number prominently in the house.
- To keep the premises generally safe, but in particular:
 - Keep the means of escape from fire in good order and free from obstruction
 - Make any unsafe roofs or balconies safe or inaccessible
 - Fit bars or alternatives to low windows to prevent accidents
- To keep water supply and drainage in proper working order and fit covers to all water tanks.
- To supply to the Council the latest Gas Safety Certificate and the latest Electrical Safety Certificate within seven days of being asked to do so (Gas appliances must be tested annually and electrical testing must be carried out every five years.)
- To maintain in good repair, clean condition and proper working order all stairs, banisters, carpets, lights and any other parts that are used in common by two or more households.
- To maintain in good repair, clean condition and good order any outbuildings, yards, forecourts, boundary walls, fences and railings.
- To keep the garden safe and in a tidy condition.
- To make sure every letting room and any furniture supplied with it is clean at the beginning of every tenancy.
- To make sure all fixtures, fittings or appliances are in good repair and in proper working order and maintain them in this condition.
- To make proper arrangements for the storage of refuse and litter pending their disposal.
- To make appropriate additional refuse disposal arrangements for occasions when the local authority's collection service is insufficient (for example at the end of term or when furniture has been replaced).

Duties of occupiers

- To take reasonable care to avoid causing damage and disrepair.
- To co-operate in a reasonable way with the manager and provide information to allow the manager to carry out his/her duties.
- To comply with any reasonable arrangement made by the manager regarding means of escape from fire, refuse storage and disposal.
- To allow the manager access to their rooms at all reasonable times to carry out their duties.

Failure to comply with the Management Regulations is an offence for which you may be prosecuted. If taken to Court and found guilty, you could receive an unlimited fine or civil penalty of up to £30,000 for each offence.

One of the biggest complaints from people living close to HMOs is the problems caused by tenants not putting their household waste out on the right day/in the right place or in the right bag. For further information on Waste and Recycling please contact:

Babergh Mid Suffolk Waste : 0300 123 4000

[Email—recycling@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:recycling@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk)



Fire Alarm Systems

If you have a fire alarm and detection system this must be maintained in full working order.

You should keep a fire safety log book to record all regular inspections, including the weekly tests and the inspection and service of the system carried out by others. Table 1 at the back of this handbook is offered as a model 'log book' for recording purposes.

The two types of fire alarm and detection system found most commonly in HMOs are Grade A (A system of electrically operated interlinked smoke/heat detectors linked to a control panel and call points) and Grade D (a system of interlinked mains powered smoke/heat detectors).



Grade A systems must be tested weekly, using a different call point on a rotating basis, to ensure they are working satisfactorily. In addition to this test which can be carried out by the manager, six monthly inspections and service of the system must be carried out by a suitably qualified fire alarm engineer with specialist knowledge of fire detection and alarm systems. The service certificate must be retained by the HMO manager and made available to the Council within 7-days of a request being made.

It is strongly recommended that you take out a maintenance contract with a suitably qualified person to undertake maintenance of the system on your behalf.

Grade D systems must also be tested weekly to ensure they are working satisfactorily. In addition all the detectors must be cleaned annually in accordance with the manufacturers instructions, this must be recorded in the fire safety log book.

Emergency Lighting System

If your property is fitted with an emergency lighting system you have a responsibility to ensure it is maintained in working order.

You should keep a log book to record the regular inspections of the system. Table 2 at the back of this handbook is offered as a model 'log book' for recording purposes.

It is strongly recommended that you take out a maintenance contract with a suitably qualified person to undertake maintenance of the system on your behalf.



You are required to ensure the following tests are undertaken:

- **Weekly** - a visual check of each light must be made.
- **Monthly** - each emergency light must be activated from its battery by simulating a failure in the normal supply and an inspection made of each luminaire (emergency light) to ensure that it is functioning properly, and the outcome of each test recorded in the fire safety log book.
- **Annually** – the emergency lighting system shall be subject to a full discharge test and service by a suitably qualified person to ensure that the emergency lighting system is functioning correctly.

A service certificate shall be issued by the person undertaking the test. The certificate shall be retained by the HMO manager and made available to the Council within 7-days of such a request being made.

Fire Fighting Equipment

Fire Extinguishers

You should ensure that any fire extinguishers within the premises are serviced by a competent engineer **at least annually** to ensure that the extinguishers are safe and will function in an emergency. Competent engineers are often registered by the British Approvals for Fire Equipment (B.A.F.E.) and are members of the Fire Industry Association (F.I.A). A service certificate shall be issued by the person undertaking the test. The certificate shall be retained by the HMO manager and made available to the Council on request.


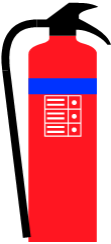


You should also conduct an 'in house' examination of your fire extinguishers at least monthly to check for any signs of tampering, missing or used extinguishers. Document any issues found and ensure suitable remedial action is taken (e.g. ensure tamper tags are replaced and the extinguisher is refilled). Table 3 at the back of this handbook is offered as a model 'log book' for recording purposes.

It is advisable that you follow the simple guidelines below when siting fire fighting equipment, as it is essential that the appliances provided are positioned in the correct locations i.e.:

- Hung on brackets with handle approximately 1m from the floor (or 1.5m for extinguishers of less than 2kg).
- Away from heaters.
- Not obstructing escape routes.
- Not in recesses or out of direct sight.
- Sited with the appropriate instruction signage.




The table on the next page show the different types of Extinguishers/Fire Blankets.

Type of Extinguisher	Best used for	How to use
<p style="text-align: center;">Red - Water</p> 	<p>Wood, cloth, paper, plastics etc.</p> <p>Fire involving solids.</p> <p>DANGER: Do not use on live electrical appliances or on burning fat or oil such as chip pan fires.</p>	<p>Point the jet at the base of the flame and keep it moving across the area of the fire. Seek out any hotspots after the fire is out.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Blue – Dry Powder</p> 	<p>Fires involving solids and fires involving liquids, i.e. paint and petrol. Safe on live electrical equipment, although does not penetrate the spaces in equipment easily and the fire may flare up again.</p> <p>DANGER: Do not use on chip pan fires.</p>	<p>Point the jet or discharge horn at base of flames and with a rapid sweeping motion drive the flames towards the far edge until all the flames are out. If the extinguisher has a shut off control, wait until the air clears and if you can still see the flames, attack the fire again.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Cream - Foam</p> 	<p>Fires involving liquids.</p> <p>Warning: Not suitable for all liquids – check instructions.</p> <p>DANGER: Do not use on chip pan fires. These extinguishers are generally not recommended for home use.</p>	<p>Do not aim the jet straight at the liquid. Where the liquid on fire is in a container, point the jet at the inside edge of the container or on a nearby surface above the burning liquid, allow the foam to build up and flow across the liquid.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Black – Carbon Dioxide</p> 	<p>Fires involving liquids. Clean, effective and safe on live electrical equipment.</p> <p>DANGER: Do not use on chip pan fires.</p>	<p>Warning: This type of extinguisher does not cool the fire very well and you will need to watch out that the fire does not start up again.</p> <p>Danger: Fumes from CO² extinguishers can be harmful to users in confined spaces, ventilate the area as soon as the fire has been controlled.</p>

Fire Blankets

Ensure that only fire blankets which conform to the current British Standard are provided, and are wall mounted in the kitchen so that the base of the container is about 1.5m above floor level. The fire blanket should be sited at an accessible point away from the cooker position but in close proximity to the exit door.

<p>Fire Blanket</p> 	<p>Fires involving solids and fires involving liquids. Good for small fires in clothing and chip pan fires provided the blanket completely covers the fire.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Turn off the gas or electricity supply.2. Remove the fire blanket from its container and hold it by the fabric straps3. To prevent burns on the hands and arms, make sure you wrap the top edges of the blanket around your hands to protect them.4. Roll up your sleeves so they do not catch in the flames.5. Carefully cover the flames with the fire blanket, making sure that you cover the whole area so that you can effectively cut off the airflow and extinguish the flames.6. However, if the fire is larger than the blanket, do not attempt to put it out. GET OUT and call the fire brigade immediately. <p>DO NOT touch the fire blanket or anything underneath it until at least an hour has passed since the fire was extinguished.</p>
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Fire Doors and Structural Means of Escape

Regular inspections of the property are essential to check that passive fire safety measures (fire resisting doors, walls and ceilings) are in a well maintained condition. Fire doors should be regularly checked for damage to surfaces or heat/smoke seals, and to ensure that they are self-closing and self-latching.



Check that the main final exit door and doors to individual bedsit rooms **do not** require the use of a key to escape. Any lock requiring the use of a key to exit **must** be removed.

Check that partitions around the staircase are complete and undamaged. Check that walls and ceilings are complete and undamaged. Check that no items are stored in, or obstruct the escape route.

The frequency of inspection is a matter of judgement in each case. It is accepted that access to lettings may be difficult in some cases and that landlords should not intrude unduly on tenants privacy. However most of the 'fire escape' provision in an HMO will in fact be visible from the common areas and there should be no difficulty in gaining access to such areas on a regular basis.

It is advisable that you record any issues found and the action that you take to rectify any problem. Table 4 at the back of this handbook is offered as a model 'log book' for recording purposes.



Fire Instructions to Occupiers

All occupiers must be familiarised with the routine to be followed in the event of fire and advised how the fire alarm system works. It is advisable to incorporate such fire safety information in the tenancy agreement paperwork.

Advise the occupiers that in the event of a fire they should:

- Sound the alarm/alert the other residents.
- Get out of the building as quickly as possible and close all doors.
- Telephone the Fire Service (999).
- Do not go back into the building for any reason.

You should also advise occupiers of the following:

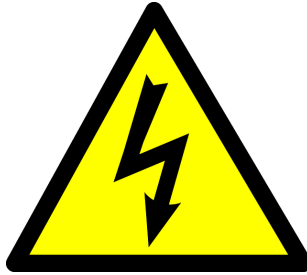
- **DO NOT** block corridors, landings etc, which are an escape route.
- **DO NOT** tamper with self closing devices on fire doors.
- **DO NOT** prop open fire doors.
- **DO NOT** tamper with fire equipment e.g. smoke detectors, fire extinguishers.
- **DO** know where fire exits are located.
- **DO** report any damage to fire equipment to the landlord immediately.

It is recommended that a copy of Leaflets 1 & 2 at the back of this handbook are displayed in the house and given to each occupant at the start of a tenancy.



Electrical Safety

The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 requires landlords to ensure that the wiring within HMOs is maintained in a safe condition and in good working order.



The wiring must be inspected periodically (at least every 5 years) and you must get a certificate that shows the test results and confirms that the installation is safe for continued use. Someone registered with one of the following organisations is regarded as competent:

- ECA (Electrical Contractors Association)
- ELECSA (part of the ECA group)
- NICEIC (National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting)
- NAPIT (National Association of Professional Inspectors and Testers)

An electrical installation condition report shall be issued by the person undertaking the inspection. The report shall be retained by the HMO manager and made available to the Council within 7 days of such a request being made.

If the electrical installation in your HMO is found to be in a defective condition, you should arrange repairs without delay. The Council can serve notices on landlords requiring remedial works to remove the risk of injury to tenants.

You should also arrange, at least once a year, for a qualified electrician to carry out a portable appliance testing (PAT) safety test on any portable electrical equipment you provide for tenants, like kettles, fridges and toasters. The PAT tester will give you a dated certificate and put stickers on the plugs of appliances to show that they are safe.

A test certificate shall be issued by the person undertaking the test. The certificate shall be retained by the HMO manager and made available to the Council on request.

Gas Safety

Under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998, all landlords have a duty to ensure that gas appliances provided within rented accommodation are properly maintained. The regulations are enforced by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) but the Council can also ask to see the latest certificate.

Landlords must:

- Ensure that any gas appliance or pipework in houses let by them be maintained in a safe condition by a GAS SAFE registered gas installer.
- Ensure all appliances (ie gas boiler, fire, cooker, water heater and flues) are checked for safety at intervals of not more than 12 months by a Gas Safe registered gas installer.
- Keep a record of such safety checks, which must be kept for at least 2 years.
- Provide evidence to all tenants within 28 days of gas safety inspection that annual safety checks of gas appliances and flues have been carried out.
- Provide new tenants with a copy of the gas safety record when the Tenancy Agreement is signed.

These regulations are principally designed to prevent death or injury to tenants from carbon monoxide poisoning. Any breach of these regulations is an offence and you risk being prosecuted, and this could result in you facing imprisonment or a fine of up to £20,000, or both, for each offence.

A service certificate shall be issued by the person undertaking the test. The certificate shall be retained by the HMO manager and made available to the Council within 7-days of such a request being made.

**If you think there is a gas leak in your building,
call the National Grid gas
emergency number immediately on 0800 111 999.**

Fire Safety of Furniture and Furnishings

If you let furnished accommodation, all furniture you provide must be fire resistant. The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 set levels of fire resistance for domestic upholstered furnishings. These regulations are enforced by Trading Standards Officers from Suffolk County Council.

Upholstered furniture filled with polyurethane foam tends to burn quickly and gives off large amounts of smoke and poisonous fumes. Older or second-hand furniture may only be used if it has the appropriate label showing that it is cigarette and match-resistant.



The regulations apply to:

- beds, mattresses, headboards and pillows;
- sofa beds, futons, scatter cushions and seat pads; and
- loose and stretch covers for furniture.

The regulations do not apply to:

- sleeping bags or loose covers for mattresses;
- bed clothes, duvets and pillow cases; and carpets and curtains.

New furniture that complies with the regulations is sold with a permanent label stating that it is cigarette and match-resistant. Landlords should ensure that they do not let accommodation with furniture that is not fire resistant

Building Control

Building regulations are designed to protect the health and safety of people living in or near a building, control structural stability, drainage, fire escape routes and many other things.

Building regulations approval is required for:

- New building work;
- Conversion of a building into flats;
- Installing toilets, sinks, baths, showers etc;
- Replacement windows;
- Replacement heating systems;
- Structural alterations including removing load bearing walls; and most electrical work within a building.

If you intend to carry out works that may require Building Control approval you must contact a Building Control Officer at the Council.

Planning

If you wish to convert a property into a HMO then it is likely that you will require planning permission. Please contact your local planning officer to check what permissions are required. If you are making any external alterations or extensions to a building planning permission is usually required.

If you wish to alter a listed building you will also need to contact the Conservation Officer.





Useful Contact Details

For Babergh & Midsuffolk

Building Control/Planning:	0300 123 4000
Private Sector Housing	0300 123 4000
Housing	0300 123 4000

Other Agencies:

Anglian Water (reporting a leak)	0800 771 881
Gas Safe Register	0800 408 5500
National Grid Emergency	0800 111 999
ECA (<i>Finding a registered electrician</i>)	020 7351 5000
NICEIC (<i>Finding a registered electrician</i>)	0333 015 6625
Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service	01473 260588

FIRE KILLS

ADVICE TO OCCUPANTS OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

If you live in a house in multiple occupation, you are more at risk from fire than if you live in a single-family dwelling house. In order to reduce the likelihood of fire:-

REMEMBER:

- **NEVER** wedge open fire doors
- **NEVER** remove door closing devices
- **NEVER** tamper with fire alarms or equipment
- **NEVER** overfill chip pans
- **NEVER** leave children alone with matches or in rooms with cooking or heating appliances
- **NEVER** smoke in bed
- **NEVER** block halls and stairways
- **DO** become familiar with escape routes and exits from the building
- **DO** unplug electrical appliances at night
- **DO CLOSE** room doors
- **DO CHECK** for burning cigarettes before going to bed
- **DO NOT** use paraffin or bottled gas heaters
- **DO** report any damage to fire equipment to the landlord immediately



FIRE!

NOTICE TO ALL TENANTS

The stairway in this building is protected to provide a route to safety in the event of a fire.

This protection is dependent upon the manner in which you and the other occupants observe certain basic rules.

Fire resisting self-closing doors can be found in most parts of the building including the entrance doors to all of the individual rooms/flats. These doors are provided to stop the spread of smoke and fire and they must be kept closed.

AS TENANTS YOU MUST NOT

- REMOVE ANY DOORS
- TAMPER WITH ANY SELF CLOSING DEVICES
- WEDGE OPEN DOORS
- BLOCK OR OBSTRUCT ANY DOORS, CORRIDORS OR PASSAGEWAY



IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE

- Leave the building immediately—operating the nearest call point, if provided, if the alarm system has not been activated.
- Call the Fire Service on 999.

If you have any problems or defects occur to the means of escape from fire at your house, these should be reported to: