

Strategy for Houses in Multiple Occupation

1. Introduction

The term 'Houses in Multiple Occupation' (HMOs) is a legal definition which describes a type of dwelling that includes bedsits and other similar shared accommodation. The legal definition is a complex one and can be found in the Housing Act 2004, which also describes those HMOs that are subject to mandatory licensing.

HMOs provide a valuable source of affordable accommodation at the lower end of the private sector housing market. Young single people, students and migrant workers predominantly access this type of accommodation, where there is a higher level of transience than may be found in other sectors of the private housing market. As a whole there are more residents on low incomes in the HMO sector.

Disrepair, lack of amenities, inadequate fire safety provisions and poor management can often be associated with HMOs, and it is these matters that this strategy seeks to address. The Houses in Multiple Occupation Strategy forms part of the Council's overall Housing Strategy.

It is recognised that the success of the strategy depends on working in partnership with other departments within St Edmundsbury and with external agencies such as Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service. The co-operation of private landlords and tenants of HMOs is also essential to achieve the aims and objectives of the strategy.

2. Aim of the Strategy

To safeguard the health, safety and well-being of residents within the borough who live in houses in multiple occupation by ensuring the application of standards in these properties.

3. Strategic Objectives

To achieve the overall aim we have identified five strategic objectives, to:

- Develop our knowledge on the number of HMOs in St Edmundsbury
- Eliminate poor property and poor management standards in HMOs
- Meet the legislative obligations for HMO licensing
- Promote good standards in HMOs and provide information and advice to landlords and tenants
- Encourage co-operation between landlord and tenant

4. Strategy

Environmental Health & Housing is the service principally responsible for private sector housing standards and will therefore play the lead role in the HMO strategy. Our objectives will be achieved by engaging in a positive dialogue with landlords, tenants, letting agents and other internal and external partners using a set of policy tools.

4.1 To develop our knowledge we will:

- Carry out periodic surveys to identify HMOs
- Maintain and update a database of known HMOs
- Liaise with other organisations to determine trends which may lead to the creation of HMOs
- Exchange information with other council departments, such as housing benefits and planning
- Engage in partnership working with Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service
- Engage in partnership working with the University Campus Suffolk
- Work with local estate and letting agents
- Act upon information from the public

4.2 To ensure satisfactory standards we will:

- Carry out proactive routine inspections of HMOs in accordance with our hazard weighted risk assessment programme. (See appendix 1)
- Inspect newly identified HMOs within six months and incorporate them into the inspection programme.
- Advise landlords of any category 1 and category 2 hazards identified under the housing health and safety rating system
- Consult with Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service in accordance with the HMO protocol (<http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/sebc/live/pdf/envhealth/HMOProtocol.pdf>) adopted by all Suffolk local authorities
- Take enforcement action where necessary in accordance with the Council's enforcement policy
- Liaise with the Council's Planning and Engineering Services Department.
- Work with other organisations such as Trading Standards Officers (flammable furnishings) and the Health & Safety Executive (gas safety) to ensure the interests of the tenants are fully protected.
- Inspect properties for landlords wishing to have accreditation under the University Campus Suffolk scheme (see appendix 2)

4.3. Meeting our obligations for licensing.

The Housing Act 2004 introduced mandatory national licensing for all houses in multiple occupation of three storeys or more occupied by five or more persons. We have produced a comprehensive licensing pack for owners and have raised awareness of the new legislative requirements through the local press and landlords forums; we will:

- Advise owners of their obligations to licence HMOs
- Process licence applications within three months
- Maintain a register of licensed HMOs

- Ensure that all HMOs subject to licensing attain the standards required by the licence;
- Inspect each licensed HMO at least once every five years
- Take enforcement action where HMO owners evade licensing

4.4. To promote good standards we will:

- Provide information and advice to individual landlords through face to face discussions and site visits
- Provide guidance through our amenity standards (see appendix 3)
- Encourage all landlords to adopt the University Campus Suffolk Standards
- Have regular meetings of our landlord's forum.

4.5. To encourage co-operation between landlord and tenant we will:

- Raise awareness of the statutory requirements particularly regarding termination of tenancy
- Encourage landlords to manage properties in accordance with best practice
- Advise and support responsible landlords in dealing with tenants causing problems with anti-social behaviour
- Advise tenants on their tenancy rights and provide information on general housing rights and responsibilities.
- Provide information and advice on the councils rent deposit scheme (see appendix 4)

5. Review

Officers will review the strategy biennially or more frequently if there are changes in the relevant legislation.

Appendix 1

HMO Inspection programme

HMOs on our data base are inspected on regular basis. The frequency is determined on a risk assessment basis and programmed inspections are carried out, every one, two or three years. Higher risk properties are inspected annually and the lower risk properties three yearly.

Risk factors include number of storeys, fire precautions, the housing health & safety rating system, amenities and management.

All newly identified HMOs will be inspected within six months and incorporated into the inspection programme.

No. of storeys	Less than 3 storey	15
	Three storey	30
Fire Precautions HHSRS hazard (24)	Full fire protection	0
	Partial fire protection	20
	No fire protection	40
Amenities HHSRS hazards (16), (17) & (18)	Satisfactory	0
	Unsatisfactory minor	5
	Unsatisfactory major	10
HHSRS Other hazards	No hazards	0
	Lower score category 2 (F-J)	5
	Category 2 hazards (D & E)	10
	Category 1 hazards (A-C)	20
Management	Confident	0
	Reasonably confident	15
	Little confidence	30
	No confidence	60

Inspection frequency

Score	Inspection frequency
0-50	Three Yearly
55-80	Two Yearly
85+	Yearly

Appendix 2

University Campus Suffolk Accreditation Scheme.

UNIVERSITY CAMPUS SUFFOLK STUDENT HOUSING ACCREDITATION SCHEME

CODE OF PRACTICE

A code of practice agreed by:

**University Campus Suffolk
St Edmundsbury Borough Council
Suffolk County Council
Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service
Suffolk Constabulary**

February 2007

1.

Introduction

Aim

- 1.1 The aim of the code of practice is to set out the minimum standards to be achieved by landlords who wish to become members of the accreditation scheme.

How the code of practice works:

- 1.2 The code of practice specifies physical standards for the property, and service standards for management.
- 1.3 Any person who wishes to make their accommodation available to students through UCS has to comply with the code of practice.
- 1.4 For landlords, whether as individuals or organisations, who wish to join the scheme there is an application and a fee. The application form and fee structure are available from the College and University. Persons or organisations who subscribe to the scheme are referred to as "members".
- 1.5 Users of the accreditation scheme whether as landlords or tenants, should note that whilst the statutory authorities and UCS have tried to provide guidance concerning compliance with the law, ultimately it is the landlord and his agent who must ensure that the property is safe and the law complied with.

Compliance with the code will mean that:

- 1.6 A high standard of repair, safety and amenity has been achieved.
- 1.7 A high level of housing management is maintained.
- 1.8 Disputes between students and members of the scheme should be few in number.

Promotion of accredited property

- 1.9 On being accepted on to the scheme the details of the properties will be advertised within UCS and via the internet.
- 1.10 The relevant institute will produce a "Notice of Accreditation" to display in the offices and student houses.

2.

The Code of Practice

Physical attributes of a "student accredited house"

2.1 “Accredited” accommodation will achieve the standards described below.

Housing law distinguishes between houses occupied by a single household and houses occupied by more than one household (houses in multiple occupation). For the purposes of the accreditation scheme all properties shall be dealt with as HMO’s and the relative legislative requirements for HMO’s will apply even for those properties in single occupation.

Repair and physical condition

2.2 All dwellings will meet the decent homes standard. The decent homes standard requires that a dwelling meets the following four criteria:

- a) It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing
- b) It is in a reasonable state of repair
- c) It has reasonably modern facilities and services
- d) It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

2.3 *Electrical wiring.* Because of the associated risks of fire and electrocution, a condition of the code of practice is that an inspection report be provided by a competent electrician. This may be provided by either a member of the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contractors or a member of the Electrical Contractors Association. The report should have been carried out within the last 5 years and shall state that the electrical installation is safe to use.

2.4 *Gas appliances.* All gas appliances and flues shall be subject to a service check by a Gas Safe registered installer every 12 months. Records of the inspection must be forwarded to UCS’s accommodation officer within 2 weeks of the inspection. A copy of the most recent report should be on display in the dwelling and shall state that the appliance is safe to use.

Fire Safety

2.5 The following are minimum fire safety requirements dependant on the size of property and number of tenants. For self-contained flats compliance with the 1991 Building Regulations is sufficient. For single-storey dwellings and dwellings of any size which are of an unusual layout landlords are advised to seek advice from UCS Accommodation Office.

2.6 **2 Storey property with no floor area over 200m²**

Up to and including 3 persons

- Mains wired interlinked optical type smoke detectors/alarms in common parts and in all habitable rooms and a heat detector in the kitchen (BS 5839-6:2004 LD2, Grade D)
- Smoke stopping doors (standard/existing doors fitted with smoke seals to the top and both sides and a self closing device)
- Sound general construction to partition walls , floors and ceilings
- Provision of a fire blanket and dry powder fire extinguisher in the kitchen
- Escape windows (to current building regulation standard)

2.7 **4 persons and above**

- Fire alarm system with optical type smoke alarms in common parts and habitable rooms, heat detectors in kitchens, break glass call points and control panel (BS 5839-6:2004 LD1, Grade A)
- 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 smoke seals and an overhead self-closing device (FD30S)
- Emergency lighting to common parts (BS5266)
- Fire escape signage
- Provision of a fire blanket and dry powder fire extinguisher in the kitchen and a 9 litre water extinguisher to each floor level

Or

- A fire sprinkler system (BS 9251:2005) with relaxations on the above requirements

2.8

3 Storey property

Any number of tenants

- Fire alarm system with optical type smoke alarms in common parts and habitable rooms, heat detectors in kitchens, break glass call points and control panel (BS 5839-6:2004 LD1, Grade A)
- 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 smoke seals and an overhead self-closing device (FD30S)
- Emergency lighting to common parts (BS5266)
- Fire escape signage
- Provision of a fire blanket and dry powder fire extinguisher in the kitchen and a 9 litre water extinguisher to each floor level

Or

A fire sprinkler system (BS 9251:2005) with relaxations on the above requirements.

2.9

4 Storey property

Specific requirements dependant on individual property in consultation with the local authority and fire service.

Amenities

2.10

Schedule of amenity provisions in relation to number of persons

1 – 5 persons	At least 1 bathroom and 1 WC (the bathroom and WC may be combined) 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.
6 – 10 persons	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)
10 + persons	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

	<p>1 large kitchen with dining room, with sets of facilities dependant upon the actual number of tenants.</p> <p>3 bathrooms AND 3 separate WCs with WHBs (but the WHBs can be contained within 2 of the bathrooms)</p>
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Water Closet

- 2.11 In accordance with the above schedule the minimum number of water closets required shall either open off a hallway, landing or passageway, or be entered via a ventilated lobby. It shall not open off a bedroom, or directly off a kitchen or living room. (This requirement is not applicable to WC's above the minimum number e.g. en-suites). A wash hand basin shall be provided in the same room as the water closet. All surfaces should be clean and be capable of being kept clean.

Bathroom or Shower

- 2.12 In accordance with the above schedule the minimum number of bathrooms or shower rooms should either open off a hallway, landing or passageway or be entered via a ventilated lobby. It shall not open off a bedroom, or directly off a kitchen or living room. (This requirement is not applicable to bathrooms or showers above the minimum number e.g. en-suites). All surfaces should be clean and be capable of being kept clean.

Kitchen

- 2.13 The kitchen shall be equipped with a cooker, sink and drainer, fridge-freezer, microwave, kettle, storage space and work surfaces. The layout of the kitchen shall not be prejudicial to safety. All surfaces shall be clean and be capable of being kept clean.

Bedrooms

- 2.14 Bedrooms will contain a bed, mattress, clothes storage space, chest of drawers, desk or desk surface, chair, shelving and curtains, and adequate circulation space.

Sitting Rooms/Dining Rooms

- 2.15 For shared housing there shall be a sitting room and at least the same number of easy chairs as residents, there shall be a dining table and chairs with at least the same number of places as residents. (N.B there is no requirement to have a separate dining room unless required to comply with paragraph 2.10).

Overcrowding

- 2.16 The landlord shall not knowingly allow a house to be statutorily overcrowded. Sharing of rooms is prohibited unless the tenants are co-habiting and the room is large enough for two persons. Each bedroom shall be directly off a circulation area and shall not be needed to be used as a thoroughfare to access

other parts of the property.

Yard areas or gardens

- 2.17 Ensure suitable receptacles are provided for local authority waste collection. Provide a clothes line.

Furniture and appliances - safety

- 2.18 All furniture and furnishings will comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988.
- 2.19 All electrical appliances will have been checked to make sure that they are not chipped, broken, or otherwise showing undue wear and tear, and to make sure that the correct fuse has been used.

Appliances and Instructions

- 2.20 Within the dwelling simple instructions will be provided on the use and any necessary user maintenance of any of the following:
- Vacuum cleaner
 - Shower
 - Cooker
 - Microwave oven
 - Washing machine
 - Clothes iron
 - Hot water, and heating controls
 - Domestic smoke alarm

Heating

- 2.21 Programmable central heating shall be installed so that there is a radiator in every room. All radiators must be fitted with Thermostatic Radiator Valves
- 2.22 Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and paraffin heaters are not permitted
- 2.23 Where there is a loft this shall be insulated with a minimum of 270mm of loft insulation. All hot water pipes should be lagged.

Security

- 2.24 Doors not forming part of a means of escape shall be fitted with door viewer, door-bar or chain and 2 morticed key operated security bolts and be 44mm thick and in good repair.
- 2.25 All ground floor windows shall be fitted with security locks to the opening sash.
- 2.26 Any first floor windows accessible from a flat roof shall be fitted with security locks to the opening sash.

3.

Management of the Accommodation

Advertising and introductions

3.1 Members will ensure that:

1. an accurate description of the property and its contents is provided to avoid misrepresentation to prospective tenants.
2. all prospective tenants will be given the opportunity to view the property, with consideration being given to any existing tenants.
3. a copy of all contractual matters is provided to prospective tenants and they will be granted a minimum of 24 hours to seek independent advice on the contractual terms.
4. no monies for deposits or rent are demanded prior to the signing and exchange of any letting agreement.
5. any contractual documentation is presented in clear form and use understandable phraseology. It shall not include any unfair contract terms. Where legal statements are made then an explanatory sheet could be issued to clarify points of practice.

Rents and Charges

- 3.2 Clear and precise statements will be provided including annual rental values, dates and how payments will be made. The value and purpose of any deposits held will be clearly stated.
- 3.3 A clear statement will be made in respect of which party will pay water rates.
- 3.4 Details of the responsibility for payment of other utility payments and any division of those payments will be stated.
- 3.5 Should any other charges require detailing, they will be specific and any division of those payments will be stated.
- 3.6 Receipts will be issued for all payments of rent, deposit or charges.

Standard Procedures for new tenants

3.7 Members will ensure:

1. That any statutory notices relevant to repossession of the property are served on existing tenants to avoid any undue delay to incoming tenants.

2. The property will be complete and ready for occupation at the commencement of the tenancy.
3. That prospective tenants will be allowed to view the property and room prior to being issued a contract.
4. That clear details are presented or displayed within the property of how contact is to be made with the landlord/agent or his/her nominee in the case of emergency and that contingency plans are in place when the member is unavailable.
5. That a comprehensive inventory is provided which details items present within the property and some measure of their condition to allow proper assessment of any dilapidation or damage, which will be agreed and signed by both parties as soon as possible after occupation.
6. That where access for routine inspection is required, not less than 24 hours notice is given and that access for other reasons will be in the case of repairs or emergency only.
7. Where access is required for viewing purposes, 24 hours notice shall be given or other reasonable arrangements agreed prior with the residents.
8. That they conduct themselves in a courteous, considerate and professional manner at all times.
9. The member will make student tenants aware that the UCS operates a programme of house visits and that a member of the UCS accommodation office may wish to monitor standards.
10. Reasonable access will be arranged on request for the following officials:

Environmental health officer
Fire Officer
Trading standards officer
Police officer

and any person accompanying them or acting on their behalf.
11. An ongoing commitment to safety and security by undertaking to disseminate information provided from time to time by Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, Suffolk Constabulary, Suffolk County Council and Ipswich Borough Council (other Suffolk Local Authorities).

Maintenance and Repair

- 3.8 The member (or landlord) will have made sure that the property and its contents comply with the requirements in the first part of the code. In some cases certificates will have been obtained. There is an ongoing commitment to make sure that the property and its contents are maintained in a satisfactory condition as far as is reasonably practicable.

Testing, Maintenance and Record Keeping of Fire Precautions

- 3.9 Alarms installed to BS5839: Part 6 should be tested monthly and the inside of smoke alarms should be cleaned using a vacuum cleaner annually to ensure that dust is not blocking the sensor.
- 3.10 Fire warning systems installed to BS5839: Part 1 should be tested at least weekly using a different call point for each successive test. The duration of the test should be sufficient to check that the system is operating satisfactorily. Any defects should receive immediate attention. The date, result and the signature of the person carrying out the test should be recorded.
- 3.11 Fire warning systems installed to BS5839: Part 1 shall be overhauled and tested annually and a form to BS7671 for 'Fire Detection and Alarm System Periodic Testing Certificate' should be obtained from the contractor responsible for the work.
- 3.12 Emergency lighting systems installed to BS5266 shall be tested by a competent person at regular intervals not exceeding six months. Any defects should receive immediate attention. The date, result and signature of the person carrying out the test should be recorded.
- 3.13 Where provided, fire fighting equipment shall be examined annually by the manufacturers or other competent persons and maintained and tested in accordance with BS5306-3.

Response to disrepair

- 3.14 Where a complaint about disrepair is received the following service standards should be met:

Emergencies	Remedy within 24 hours
Urgent repairs	Remedy within 3 working days
Priority repairs	Remedy within 7 working days
None priority repairs	Remedy within 28 working days or longer if necessary

- 3.15 Emergencies include:
- Total loss of electric power
 - Unsafe lighting socket or electrical fitting
 - Blocked or leaking foul drain
 - Toilet not flushing
 - Leak from water or heating system
 - Blocked flue to open fire or boiler

Insecure external window, door or lock

- 3.16 Urgent repairs include:
- Partial loss of electric power, e.g. light socket
 - Blocked sink, bath or basin
 - Tap which cannot be turned on or off
 - Loss of space heating or hot water supply
 - Loose or detached banister or hand rail
- 3.17 Priority repairs include: Leaking roof
- 3.18 Planned or routine maintenance should be carried out with respect and consideration to the convenience of the students.
- 3.19 Where possible reasonable notice will be given to tenants for the commencement of works or visits by contractors, and that following works of repairs all debris and waste materials will be cleared from the building in a clean and tidy manner. It is expected that all tradesmen will behave in a courteous and professional manner at all times.
- 3.20 All repairs reported shall be recorded in a log which can be used to confirm dates of referral.

Responsibility to neighbourhood

- 3.21 A notice will be provided which describes the refuse storage arrangements for the dwelling and the refuse collection arrangements for the locality.
- 3.22 Members will ensure that any front gardens are kept tidy and that any litter is cleared away. Similarly rear gates and alleyways should be kept in a clean and tidy manner.
- 3.23 Members will be expected to respond to complaints about the behaviour of the tenants, and to notify the UCS accommodation officers who may liaise with the appropriate statutory body.

At the end of the tenancy

- 3.24 Members will ensure that:
1. tenants are issued with details on what liabilities they may have incurred and that clear guidelines are issued on what cleaning and other arrangements are necessary.
 2. all deposits are only use for the purpose for which they were levied.
 3. where a member has control of up to 5 properties, deposits are returned within 4 weeks of the end of the tenancy.
 4. where a member has control of 6 or more properties, deposits are returned within 6 weeks of the end of the tenancy.
 5. where monies are withheld for reasonable costs incurred by the

Landlord/Agent that a supporting statement of those costs are provided on the return of the deposit within the time scale mentioned in 6.14.3 - 6.14.4.

6. There is an adequate period between tenancies (no less than 4 weeks) to ensure that essential maintenance work can be carried out and the necessary deep clean completed.

Disputes

- 3.25 Should a dispute between a member and student occur, then it is expected that members will deal with that dispute in a reasonable manner at all times.

Therefore members will agree to:

1. Respond reasonably and promptly to any complaints raised by tenants or their representatives.
2. Ensure written response to correspondence from tenants or their representative within 2 weeks of receipt.
3. Ensure that all settlements and agreements reached are actioned within 3 weeks of the settlement being agreed.

Complaints and Appeals

- 3.26 Members will undertake:

to acknowledge complaints about a breach of the code of practice; and to respond to repairs in the time scales specified in para 3.14 – 3.17.

- 3.27 If a breach of the Code is confirmed, then accreditation and all advertising for that landlord or agent may be suspended until the matter has been resolved. If the landlord is of the opinion that these actions are unreasonable then an appeal may be submitted to a panel comprising of members taken from the signatories to the code of practice. The final decision will remain with the UCS. This procedure does not affect any statutory rights that may be consequent to any action taken by one of the statutory bodies.

4.

Participation in the Scheme

- 4.1 If you think that your accommodation meets the standards required by the scheme and you are prepared to agree to the management arrangements, then you may apply to join and, if accepted, your property details will be advertised.

The standard that landlords are asked to achieve may be more than that which can be enforced in law.

Notice of Accreditation

- 4.2 Ipswich Borough Council (and other Suffolk Local Authorities) has undertaken to inspect all properties for which an application and fee is submitted. Where properties have been inspected and found to be satisfactory for their purposes, then the property will be accredited.
- 4.3 A separate application form and fee is required for each property. The property and not the landlord is to be accredited.
- 4.4 The code of practice has been prepared in conjunction with the statutory bodies and who will offer advice to either party.
- 4.5 When an application has been accepted the property details will be advertised with the University.
- 4.6 The University or College will produce an 'Accredited Notice' for display in the offices and student houses.
- 4.7 Compliance with the code of practice does not mean a particular property complies with local authority standards, which will be subject to inspection and to current legal requirements and official guidance at the time of the inspection.
- 4.8 To cover the costs of additional administration and promotion an annual charge will be made.

CHECK LIST BEFORE SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

1. The property is in good repair.
2. The decoration is in good order.
3. All rooms and surfaces are clean.
4. Gas appliances new (less than 12 months) or serviced within last 12 months.
5. Electrical installation inspected
6. Automatic fire detection in place.
7. Fire blanket fixed in easy reach.
8. Fire extinguisher where provided fixed in easy reach.
9. WC has wash hand basin.
10. Kitchen safe layout, all amenities.
11. Bedrooms - all amenities.
12. Sitting room/dining room - all amenities.
13. Furniture and furnishings - all labelled for safety.
14. Appliances - all checked for safety.
15. Heating - provided for each room.
16. Insulation - roof insulated, pipes lagged.
17. Security - measures in place.
18. Refuse bin provided.
19. Clothes line provided.
20. Planning permission has been obtained for the proposed use of the dwelling.
21. The dwelling will not be overcrowded.

NOTICES TO DISPLAY IN HOUSE

1. Latest gas appliances report.
2. Use of fire extinguisher.
3. All appliances have easy to use instructions.
4. Refuse collection details.
5. Contact details for emergencies.

DOCUMENTS

1. Electrical report including readings, whole dwelling, supplied by member of NICEIC or ECA.
2. Service record of gas appliance (last 2 years i.e. last 2 reports).
3. Electrical report describing the automatic fire detection system, supplied by member of NICEIC or ECA.
4. Tenancy Agreement
5. Brief description of house and amenities.
6. Inventory of fixtures, fittings and contents. Comment on condition where appropriate.

Appendix 3

Houses in Multiple Occupation Amenity Standards

All houses are assessed using the Housing Health & Safety Rating system as defined by the Housing Act 2004. Houses should not contain any category 1 hazards. The following standards relate specifically to Houses in Multiple Occupation and are a guide for the minimum standard which should be achieved. There may be variations to take into account particular circumstances for individual properties.

<i>Schedule of amenity provisions in relation to number of persons</i>	
1 – 5 persons	<p>At least 1 bathroom and 1 WC (the bathroom and WC may be combined).</p> <p>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.</p>
6 – 10 persons	<p>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.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>1 large kitchen with dining room, with 2 sets of facilities - dependant upon the actual number of tenants.</p> <p>2 bathrooms AND 2 separate WCs with wash hand basins (WHBs); one of the WCs can be contained within one of the bathrooms</p>
10 + persons	<p>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.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>1 large kitchen with dining room, with sets of facilities dependant upon the actual number of tenants.</p> <p>3 bathrooms AND 3 separate WCs with WHBs (but two of the WCs can be contained within the bathrooms)</p>

Space Standards

All rooms should be of suitable size the following is a guide:

Bedroom

Bedroom only with separate living room

1 Person	6.5m ²
2 Persons	11m ²

Bedroom and study/living room where there is no separate living room

1 person	10m ²
2 persons	15m ²

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

Living room

To be provided where bedrooms are not large enough for use as study/living rooms

1 -5 persons	11m ²
6 -10 persons	16.5m ²

Kitchen

A minimum floor area of 7m².

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

Each kitchen for up to 5 persons should 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 wall or floor cupboard per person for food storage (min size 300 x 1000 x 900mm) or
- 1 double wall or floor cupboard for food storage per 2 persons (min size 300 x 1000 x 900mm)
- 1000mm x 600mm worktop for food preparation per 3 persons **or**
- 2000mm x 600mm worktop for food preparation per 5 persons
- 1 standard fridge per 3 persons (with separate shelf for each person) **or**
- 1 large fridge per 5 persons (with separate shelf for each person)
- 1 dedicated electrical socket per fixed appliance (such as a fridge)
- 2 undedicated electrical sockets above an area of worktop
- Separate cooker panel for electric cookers.

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 generally.

Dining room

To be provided where:

- Bedrooms are not large enough for use as study/living rooms, or
- Where bedrooms/study/living room is provided, and any room is more than one floor distance away from a kitchen

1 - 5 persons	11 m ²
6 - 10 persons	16.5m ²

Kitchen/diners are acceptable, where the dining area is separate from cooking and sink areas and are of the above dimensions.

Appendix 4

Rent Deposit Scheme

Excerpt from Housing Options Booklet

Damage Deposit Scheme

What is a damage deposit scheme?

- The damage deposit scheme aims to help people who are homeless and in receipt of benefits, or on a low income to access private rented housing within the St Edmundsbury borough.

Who is eligible for the Damage Deposit Scheme?

To be eligible for the scheme you must be:

- Homeless or threatened with homelessness;
- In receipt of housing benefit or eligible for housing benefit or on a low income;
- Local to the St Edmundsbury area with an established connection; and
- Classed as priority need or have special circumstances as to why you need assistance.

How does the Damage Deposit Scheme work?

- St Edmundsbury Borough Council will provide a landlord with a 'written guarantee or bond' to cover the damage deposit equal to a maximum of six weeks rent on a property (depending on individual circumstances). The landlord is given a legal document to confirm that St Edmundsbury Borough Council would pay at the end of the tenancy if any damage occurred. You would be responsible for repaying the council if a claim were made.
- Depending on your eligibility and your individual circumstances, you will be given the go ahead to seek accommodation. You will be responsible for finding your own accommodation, once found the council will inspect the property to make sure it is suitable. The final decision to take on a tenancy will be between you and the landlord.

For further details or an application pack please contact the Housing Options Team at St Edmundsbury Borough Council on 01284 757605

Rent in advance

Most landlords will require you to pay up to six weeks rent in advance on top of the deposit for damages. Ipswich and Suffolk Credit Union have now expanded into the

Bury St Edmunds area and are able to offer loans for rent in advance to those people who start to save with them (minimum of three months or 13 weeks). The credit union are a non profit-making organization who encourage those on low incomes to save; credit unions are co-operatives owned and run by their members. To become a member of the credit union you must complete an application form and pay £3 membership fee.

For further details on applying for a loan for rent in advance or general savings schemes contact Ipswich and Suffolk Credit Union on 01473 690690 or visit www.iscu.org.uk

Application forms can also be collected from the Housing Options Team

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