

**PRESTON CITY COUNCIL**

**LANDLORDS INFORMATION PACK**

**HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION**

**Category A:** Houses occupied or intended to be occupied as flatlets, bed-sitters and rooms which are fully self-catering with some degree of self-containment and normally let as furnished accommodation. The landlord will retain ultimate responsibility for the maintenance of good standards in those areas of the house used in common by tenants.

**STANDARDS OF AMENITY AND FITNESS FOR HABITATION**

1.0 **REPAIR**

1.1 The property shall be in a good standard of repair having regard to its age, character and locality and, in particular, shall be free from any disrepair, which may prejudice the health and safety of the occupiers.

2.0 **STABILITY**

2.1 The property must be in a structurally sound condition. Properties, which have previously experienced slight settlement, but are now structurally stable, are normally considered to be acceptable. However, where there is structural movement causing instability, or, if previous movement has left it substantially weakened, remedial action may be necessary.

3.0 **DAMPNESS**

3.1 The property shall be substantially free from dampness so that neither the personal comfort nor the health and safety of the occupier is prejudiced. This includes dampness caused by a missing or defective damp proof course, disrepair or condensation.

4.0 **NATURAL LIGHTING**

4.1 All habitable rooms shall be provided with an area of clear glazing situated in either a window and/or a door, equivalent in total area to at least one-tenth of the floor area of the room. Where a habitable room is located in a basement, more stringent standards apply. (See the Council's Standards for Basement Rooms).

4.2 Where practicable, all kitchens, bathrooms and rooms with toilets shall comply with 4.1 above. Where this is not practicable, adequate artificial lighting shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of Part 5. All glazing to windows in bathrooms and water closet compartments shall be in obscure glass.

4.3 Where practicable, all staircases, landings and passages shall be provided with an area of clear glazing in a window. Where this is not practicable, adequate artificial lighting shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of Part 5.

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- 4.4 Underground rooms used as habitable rooms shall comply with the Council's guidance note, 'Standards for Basement Rooms'.

### **5.0 ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING**

- 5.1 All habitable rooms, kitchens, bathrooms, rooms with toilets, staircases, landings and passages shall be adequately lit by electricity. All wiring and fittings should be maintained in a safe condition. Where the tenant is expected to change bulbs, particularly in more dangerous situations, such as above stairs, suitable means must be provided to enable this to be done safely.

### **6.0 VENTILATION**

- 6.1 All habitable rooms shall be ventilated directly to the external air by a window, the openable area of which shall be equivalent to at least one-twentieth of the floor area of the room and some portion of this should be at least 1.75m above floor level. Neither an openable door giving access directly to the external air or a louvered opening in such a door will be acceptable for the purpose of this requirement.

Where practicable all kitchens, bathrooms and rooms with toilets shall comply with 6.1 above, but where this is not practicable, mechanical ventilation or passive stack ventilation must be provided to meet the following rates:

- Kitchen - 30 litres per second where extraction is adjacent to a hob;  
or - 60 litres per second elsewhere.
- Utility room - 30 litres per second.
- Bathroom, shower and w.c. - 30 litres per second, connected to the lighting circuit of the room and fitted with an overrun device.

All rooms in this category must have some form of permanent ventilation, e.g. a flue, airbrick or a trickle ventilator without a closing device.

### **7.0 WATER SUPPLY**

- 7.1 A supply of cold running water suitable for drinking purposes shall be provided in each letting and in any separate kitchen.

### **8.0 PERSONAL WASHING FACILITIES**

- 8.1 Each bedroom shall be provided with its own supplies of hot and cold running water.
- 8.2 Hot and cold water supplies to every bath, shower and wash hand basin shall be available at all times.
- 8.3 There shall be sufficient bathrooms or shower rooms, for the number of users in the following ratios:
- |                 |                                    |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 - 6 persons   | 1 bathroom or shower room.         |
| 7 - 12 persons  | 2 bathrooms or shower rooms.       |
| 13 - 18 persons | 3 bathrooms or shower rooms, etc.. |

These must be located not more than one floor away from the user.

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### **9.0 DRAINAGE AND TOILETS.**

9.1 All drainage systems should comply, wherever possible, with current Building Regulations.

9.2 There shall be sufficient toilets to the following ratios:

- 1 - 6 persons     1 toilet.
- 7 - 12 persons    2 toilets.
- 13 - 18 persons   3 toilets, etc.

The toilets may be located in bathrooms or shower rooms or in separate compartments fitted with wash hand basins.

Preferably these should be located on each floor and alternatively not more than one floor away from the user.

In properties for four to six tenants with only one bathroom or shower room, there must be a separate toilet provided with wash hand basin.

Outside toilets shall not be counted for this purpose.

9.3 Rooms containing toilets must not open directly onto the area of a kitchen immediately adjacent to where food is prepared.

### **10.0 FACILITIES FOR STORAGE, PREPARATION AND COOKING OF FOOD AND FOR THE DISPOSAL OF WASTE WATER**

#### **General**

10.1 Where the letting is occupied by one-person only, shared kitchens are acceptable and should not be located more than one floor away from the letting.

10.2 Kitchens are to be used by a maximum of six tenants. Where the house has more tenants, individual tenants must be allocated a specified kitchen for their use.

10.3 All walls, floors and ceilings should be generally non-porous and reasonably smooth such that they can be cleaned easily.

10.4 There must be an adequate number of suitably located electrical power points for the safe use of kitchen appliances, including at least two power points in each kitchen serving up to five residents, or three where six are sharing. This is not including a socket for an electric cooker or oven.

#### **Food Storage**

10.5 Each separate letting shall be provided with a proper food store consisting of a refrigerator of 0.13m<sup>3</sup> (i.e. approximately (50cm)<sup>3</sup> or (20")<sup>3</sup>) minimum capacity. In practical terms, the standard indicates that each HMO occupier should be provided with a dedicated shelf slot within a conventional fridge, of typical 550-600mm width. The space above the shelf needs to be of a usable height, typically 125-150mm.

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Each separate letting shall be provided with dry goods storage of 0.3m<sup>3</sup> (i.e. approximately (67cm)<sup>3</sup> or (23")<sup>3</sup>) minimum capacity. Any cupboard or space below a sink will not be accepted.

Section 14 below refers to minimum floor area of kitchens. Landlords should also be aware that the overall shape and internal arrangement must allow for safe use of kitchen facilities and easy cleaning.

- 10.6 Where shared kitchens are provided, each letting shall have its own food storage facility within the unit of accommodation or lockable cupboard space in the kitchen. The sharing of un-partitioned food storage spaces by separate lettings in shared kitchens is inappropriate.

### Food Preparation

- 10.7 In kitchens shared by up to three people, worktops of 0.6m<sup>2</sup> per letting shall be provided which are securely fixed, at least 0.6m depth, impervious and capable of being readily cleaned (e.g. 0.6m x 1.0m).
- 10.8 For each additional person sharing an extra 0.3m<sup>2</sup> must be allowed.

### Cooking

- 10.9 Each letting shall be provided with a safely located cooker. The minimum acceptable standard is:
- 10.9.1 Two rings or hot plate, together with a grill and oven for a one person unit of accommodation, OR
- 10.9.2 A cooker with four rings or hot plates, together with a grill and an oven for units of accommodation for more than one person.
- 10.10 In shared kitchens, a cooking appliance in accordance with 10.9.2 above shall be shared by not more than four people. In kitchens serving five or six people, an additional cooker in accordance with 10.9.2, or a microwave oven must be provided.

### Disposal of Waste Water

- 10.11 Each separate occupancy shall be provided with its own sink complete with drainer and provided with its own supplies of hot and cold running water. In shared kitchens, sinks shall be provided in the ratio of one sink with drainer for a maximum of five persons sharing. Where six people share a sink with double drainer, or a sink with twin bowls and drainer, or a second sink with drainer, must be provided.

## 11.0 SPACE HEATING

- 11.1 All habitable rooms shall be adequately heated by a fixed space-heating appliance of either gas or electricity or by a central heating system. The appliance must comprise a reasonably efficient and safely designed and installed fixed heating source. Solid fuel will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where it can be shown that there is no risk to safety. For example, access to the coal store must be in a safe condition and well lit at all necessary times.

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11.2 All heating systems shall be of a sufficient output to adequately heat the rooms they are designed to serve and where central heating is installed, arrangements must be such as to allow individual tenants to heat their rooms adequately at all times.

11.3 Paraffin and oil fired heaters are not acceptable.

### 12.0 REFUSE STORAGE AND DISPOSAL

12.1 Refuse storage bins shall be provided sufficient for the needs of the type of house acceptable to the Council.

12.2 All bins are to be located on hard standing with suitable access for cleansing of the area and removal.

### 13.0 MEANS OF ESCAPE FROM FIRE AND OTHER FIRE PRECAUTIONS

13.1. Please see separate Leaflets, "Guidance on Means of Escape from Fire in Houses in Multiple Occupation, Medium to High risk Properties".

### 14.0 SPACE STANDARDS

14.1 In rooms with sloping ceilings, the floor area will only be measured for the portion where the ceiling height exceeds 1.5m. Elsewhere ceiling heights must be a minimum of 2.3m.

14.2 In calculating room areas, parts of the room, which provide insignificant amenity to the occupants, must be disregarded. In particular, narrow corridor space, which is only useful for access, should be disregarded.

#### ONE PERSON UNITS OF ACCOMMODATION

##### Minimum Areas

One room units: 13.00m<sup>2</sup> with kitchen facilities.  
10.00m<sup>2</sup> with separate shared kitchen.

Shared kitchens: 6.00m<sup>2</sup> for up to three sharing.  
9.00m<sup>2</sup> for four to six sharing.

Two or more room units:	each kitchen	4.50m <sup>2</sup> .
	each living/kitchen	11.00m <sup>2</sup> .
	each living room	9.00m <sup>2</sup> .
	each bedroom	6.50m <sup>2</sup> .

#### TWO PERSON UNITS OF ACCOMMODATION

One room units: Not normally suitable for two or more persons.

Two or more room units:	each kitchen	5.00m <sup>2</sup> .
	each living/kitchen	15.00m <sup>2</sup> .
	each living room	12.00m <sup>2</sup> .
	each living bedroom	14.00m <sup>2</sup> .
	each bedroom	10.00m <sup>2</sup> .

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### **THREE OR MORE PERSONS UNITS OF ACCOMMODATION**

For occupancies by more than two persons, reference should be made to sections 325 and 326 of the Housing Act 1985.

#### **15.0 FURNISHINGS, ELECTRICAL AND GAS SAFETY.**

- 15.1 Where provided, furnishings shall comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988.
- 15.2 Where provided, all electrical appliances shall comply with the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994.
- 15.3 Where provided, gas appliances and installations shall comply with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1994 (as amended).
- 15.4 The legislation is not enforced by Preston City Council but by Lancashire County Council Trading Standards Department (15.1 and 15.2) and the Health and Safety Executive (15.3).

Note: This is a guidance note only and is not a statement of law. If you are not sure about your legal position in any respect you should contact the Council.