

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and Flats Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

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Contents

Chapter No	Chapter Name	Page
1	Introduction Purpose of this planning guidance Background Pre- application and pre-consultation	3
2	Amenity of Occupiers The size of self-contained Flats Shared rooms Flats Outlook and prospect Basement accommodation Roof space accommodation Outdoor Amenity Space Trees and greenspace Bin Stores Car Parking and Travel Choice Inclusive Accessibility Conversions of Heritage Assets	5
3	Amenity of Neighbouring Properties Comings and Goings Privacy of neighbouring properties Party Walls and internal Layouts	13
4	Contacts and Useful Links Contacts Procedures Key Sefton planning policy websites National Planning Policy Framework website	15
Appendix A	Definition of an HMO	17
Appendix B	Definition of a Heritage Asset	18
Appendix C	Fire Safety	19
Appendix D	Security	43
Appendix E	Work that will be likely to require an application under the Building Regulations.	44

1. Introduction

What is a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and why this guidance is necessary

1.1 Government policies and the new National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) promote a choice of housing recognising that it is important for balanced communities. Part of this mix is provided by HMOs and self contained flats.

What are HMOs and Self-contained Flats?

An **HMO** can broadly be defined as:

A house occupied by unrelated individuals, some of whom share one or more of the basic facilities. Commonly shared facilities include: bathrooms, toilets, shower rooms, living rooms and kitchens. A building defined as a HMO may consist entirely of bedsit unit type accommodation (where some or all amenities are shared) or a combination of both bedsits **and** self-contained flats. (A fuller definition and a guide on when Planning Permission may be needed is included as Appendix A).

A **self-contained flat** differs from a bedsit unit of accommodation in an HMO in that:

It will contain all the basic amenities actually within the flat. This will include: a sleeping area with sufficient space for a bed, wardrobe and chest of drawers, a kitchen area, a bathroom including a toilet, wash hand basin and a shower and/or bath and some outdoor recreation space.

The guidance in this document will apply to both HMOs and Self-

1.2 HMOs and flats provide small, affordable, flexible and safe accommodation for a wide variety of people including students, low paid and seasonal workers, those on short term contracts and unemployed single people on housing benefits and are an essential part of the housing market. However poorly designed HMOs can lead to problems both for the occupants and for neighbours, due to the large number of people living within relatively small places. These issues can include, noise, disturbance, loss of privacy and inadequate living accommodation.

1.3 The SPD has been produced to provide up-to-date advice on how the Council will deal with planning applications for HMOs and Self-contained flats, apartments and bedsits. The SPD will help the Council when assessing planning applications for HMOs and Flats and will help promote good quality

development that protects the basic amenity, safety and living standards of residents and occupiers of neighbouring properties.

1.4 This guidance has become necessary for a number of reasons:

- Changes to legislation and case law on what constitutes an HMO.
- Changes to the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended 2010) which introduced a new Use Class C4. This allows dwellinghouses to be shared by three to six people without the need for planning permission. This brings the definition of HMOs in line with that contained within Section 254 of the Housing Act 2004.
- The need to address HMOs and Flat types has also arisen because of changes to housing benefits. Housing benefits now link the number of occupants to the number of rooms. This is likely to lead to a greater demand for smaller, one and two bedroom accommodation throughout Sefton. Previously the Council had sought to limit the number of one bedroom flats, particularly within South Sefton. The change in Housing Benefits rules means it is no longer desirable to restrict one bedroom flats as the new benefits regime comes into force.

1.5 The Council would prefer where possible, for self-contained flats rather than bedsits sharing facilities as this generally will provide a better quality of accommodation. This guidance note only applies to proposals that will require planning permission. (See Appendix A for further details).

Getting advice before making your application

1.6 We strongly recommend that you discuss your proposals with the planning team before you apply for planning permission for HMOs or flats. There will be a charge for this advice. Please see section 4 for more details. Any planning assessment is independent of any other consent regimes. It is the responsibility of the developer to check whether they require a HMO License and/or Building Regulations consent. Contact details are given in section 4. The types of building work that may require Building Regulations consent can be found in Appendix E.

1.7 As well as this SPD, Planning applications will be assessed against the policies in the Sefton Unitary Development Plan (2006). The most directly relevant policies are MD2 – Conversion to Flats and MD3 – Houses in Multiple Occupation. A number of other policies and supplementary guidance are referred to within the text.

1.8 This SPD has also been prepared within the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published March 2012.

2. Amenity of Occupiers

2.1 It is important that the occupiers of both HMOs and flats enjoy a satisfactory standard of amenity and do not live in sub-standard accommodation. Poor quality HMO accommodation can cause health, safety and welfare problems for occupants due to small, cramped accommodation with inadequate hygiene.

Minimum space standards for units of accommodation in HMOs

2.2 To ensure that space standards in HMOs are acceptable, this SPD provides guidance on minimum acceptable room sizes for bedsit units that share some amenities. The standards are based on those from the Based upon the former CIEH standards which have been brought in line with Merseyside Licensed HMO Standards and are set out in table 1 below and will be used to assess whether new build or converted accommodation is acceptable¹. Please note however that these are considered the minimum acceptable standards and so we encourage accommodation that exceeds these standards. The Council recognise that HMOs can come in many different types and varieties and not all of these can be covered here. An 'HMO bedsit unit' is a single unit of accommodation within an HMO that shares some essential facilities with other HMO units. HMO units may comprise of a single room but can include two or more rooms.

Table 1

Minimum Sizes for 1 person bedsit units in HMOs*

	Unit type	Minimum Area (internal measurements)**
A	Single room bedsit unit without kitchen	10m ²
B	Single room bedsit unit with integral kitchen facilities	13m ²
C	Two or more roomed bedsit unit	Combined living/kitchen 11m ² Living room 9m ² Each combined living/bedroom 10m ² Each bedroom 8.5m ² Each kitchen 5.5m ²

**These figures are minimum figures assuming that there is only one occupant. Where a shared bedsit unit within an HMO is intended for more than one occupant then these rooms should be larger to take into account the intended number of occupants.*

***Area excludes bathrooms, toilets, shower or wash rooms.*

2.3 Every unit should be capable of accommodating:

- A bed
- A wardrobe

¹ Based upon the former CIEH standards which have been brought in line with Merseyside Licensed HMO Standards.

- A chest of drawers

Plus sufficient circulation space around them to use each item effectively.

2.4 Where there are shared kitchens, bathrooms and living rooms within HMOs, they should comply with the standards in Table 2 below.

Table 2
Shared Amenities

Room type	Standards
Shared kitchens	Shared kitchens should be a minimum of 7m ² and should be at least 1.8m across at its narrowest point. Kitchens should be increased in size and more kitchens provided depending upon the number of occupants.
	Shared kitchen facilities should be provided on the same floor or no more than one floor up or down from the bedsit units.
Shared Bathrooms and WCs	Where HMO bedsit units are sharing bathroom facilities, baths or showers will need to be provided in a readily accessible shared bathroom or shower room, being not more than one floor distance from any user. An appropriate number of bathroom and shower rooms should be provided in relation to the number of units sharing those facilities.
	An appropriate number of WCs should be provided in relation to the number of bedsit units sharing those facilities.
Shared Living Rooms	Shared Living Rooms should be provided on the same floor or no more than one floor up or down from the bedsit units.

Minimum sizes for self-contained flats

2.5 To ensure that self-contained flats are large enough, minimum habitable room sizes are listed in table 3 (below). The room sizes should be considered as a minimum size. The space standards have regard to the former CIEH standards which have been brought in line with Merseyside Licensed HMO Standards and are set out in table 3 below².

2.6 A **habitable room** is a room that people are in for long periods of time, such as living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens and bedrooms.

A **non-habitable room** is a landing, hallway, bathroom, or other room that people do not normally occupy for much time.

² Based upon the former CIEH standards which have been brought in line with Merseyside Licensed HMO Standards.

2.7 Regardless of the size of floor area, other factors will be taken into account such as room shape and usable living space within the room in determining whether the room is suitable for occupation.

Table 3
Room sizes for flats

	Type of Room	Minimum Floor Area (internal Measurements)**
A	Single bedroom	8.5m ^{2**}
B	Double bedroom	10.5m ²
C	Living room	9m ^{2**}
D	Combined bedroom/living room	10m ^{2**}
E	Combined living room/kitchen	11m ^{2**}
F	Kitchens	5.5m ^{2**}
G	Studio Flats includes (combined bedroom/living room/kitchen area)	13m ^{2**}

*Area excludes bathrooms, toilets, shower or wash rooms.

**These figures are minimum figures assuming that there is only one occupant. Where a flat is intended for more than one occupant then these rooms should be larger to take into account the intended number of occupants.

Outlook and prospect³

2.8 It is important for residents to have access to a main window in a habitable room (as defined in paragraph 2.6) with a reasonable outlook and prospect.

2.9 The guidance on New Housing Development (2003) and House Extensions (2003) sets a standard for new properties and extensions. There should be a minimum distance of at least 12 metres between a main window in a habitable room and a two storey blank wall. These standards apply to all residential accommodation.

2.10 In the case of conversions, 12 metres may not be achievable in many urban parts of Sefton. In some instances we may accept a lower standard as long as all occupants of an HMO have access to a habitable room with a reasonable outlook and prospect. We will assess each case on its own merits.

2.11 In the case of a conversion to a self-contained flat, each habitable room should have at least one window with a reasonable outlook and prospect.

Basement accommodation

2.12 For basements, we will only grant planning permission where there is a reasonable outlook from all habitable room windows. We will also only grant planning permission where there is no known flood risk, or where flood risk

³ Sefton MBC – Supplementary Planning Guidance in Sefton, New Housing Development. (November 2003) –see <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/spg>

has been managed to the satisfaction of both the Environment Agency and the Council.

2.13 More generally, internal floor levels should not be more than 1 metre below the existing ground level from outside (it will not be acceptable to excavate land in order to provide a reasonable outlook). This is to prevent accommodation from being dark, gloomy and damp. Basements can be used for storage / bicycles or other uses. This restriction on excavation to provide a reasonable outlook from a basement applies especially to 'heritage assets'⁴ (see Appendix B for definition) as additional excavation can affect the appearance of the building.

Roof space accommodation

2.14 The same principles apply to roof space accommodation as to other accommodation. Roof lights that face the sky are not considered to provide a reasonable outlook and prospect, and rooms with roof lights will need also to include a main window with a reasonable outlook.

2.15 Rooms within the roof need will need to be thermally insulated from excess cold or heat

2.16 Developers should be aware that large numbers of roof lights can spoil the appearance of a building, especially where the building is a heritage asset, and such proposals are unlikely to be acceptable.

Outdoor Amenity Space

2.17 It is important that some private outdoor space is provided for residents for outdoor activities where possible. The current standard for new flats is 30m² per flat.

2.18 There may be some cases where meeting these standards would not be achievable or realistic. However, it is important for both flats and HMOs to have some usable private outdoor amenity space for informal recreation, drying clothes, barbeques, and where applicable, for children to play. This should make the best use of existing space.

2.19 Where conversions of heritage assets are being considered, it is also particularly important to consider the contribution soft landscaping makes to the heritage importance of the building.

Trees and Green space⁵

⁴ Heritage Asset – building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets (including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Historic Parks and Gardens) and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

⁵ Sefton Council - Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2006) – see <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/udp>, chapter 16.

Sefton Council – Green space, trees and development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), (July 2008) – <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/greenspacespd> .

2.20 The Council policy on trees and greenspaces is found in UDP policies DQ3 'Trees and development' and DQ4 'Public greenspace and development' and in the supplementary guidance, 'Green space, trees and development' (2008). The guidance sets out the standards for new trees and green space that are expected to be provided in association with development.

Trees

2.21 Developers should plant 3 trees on site for every (net) new home created, (see below). Applications should be accompanied by a landscaping scheme that includes the layout, location, size and species of trees to be planted. Where it is not possible for all of these trees to be planted on site then the developer should enter a legal agreement with the Council to pay a contribution to have the trees planted elsewhere. The current sum for 2012/13 for off site contributions is **£506.50** per tree, plus legal costs of making the agreement. The sum rises annually, as set out in the supplementary guidance.

2.22 The trees policy applies to residential conversions as well as for new developments. The following approach is used to decide how many new units are created by a development:

The number of new homes is 'net', that is - the number of new homes minus the number of pre-existing homes, subject to the following:

- Where an HMO comprises only bedsit units sharing facilities, it will be classified as being 1 home.
- Where an HMO comprises a mix of bedsit units sharing facilities and self-contained flats, the bedsits will together be considered as one home and each flat will be counted as a separate home.
- Where a building comprises just self-contained flats then each flat will be counted as a separate home.

Example

A conversion from a single dwelling house (one home) into 4 bedsit units sharing facilities and 5 self contained flats :

The 4 bedsit units sharing facilities count as 1 home.

The 5 self-contained flats count as 5 homes.

In total this makes 6 homes. This is a net gain of 5 homes from the original single dwelling house.

The total trees required would therefore be 5 additional homes x 3 trees per home = 15 trees to be planted on site, or off-site through a financial contribution.

i.e. 15 x £506.50 = £7,597.50 plus legal costs (2012/2013 sums)

2.23 Where a development would be made unviable through the cost of financial contributions for trees off site, we may make an exception. It is up to

a developer to demonstrate that the contribution for the trees would make their development unviable.

Green space

2.24 New residential development is expected to provide green space for the occupiers of the site. It is recognised that having adequate outdoor green space is essential for healthy communities.

2.25 Our guidance usually expects new green space to be provided within the development site only where the development scheme is for 50 or more homes, although it also sets out the kinds of situation where providing green space within the site may not be appropriate. An HMO scheme is unlikely to create this number of homes. However, where 5 or more homes are created by a development, developers should enter a legal agreement with the Council to pay a contribution to provide the greenspace elsewhere. The current sum for 2012/13 for off site contributions is **£1908.50** per home, plus legal costs of making the agreement. The sum rises annually, as set out in the supplementary guidance. As with the approach to trees, this is based on net gain of homes (see above).

2.26 Where a development would be made unviable by having to pay to provide greenspace off-site, we may make an exception. It is up to a developer to demonstrate that green space contribution would make their development unviable.

Bin Stores⁶

2.27 A suitable space for refuse and recycling bins must be provided, for all of the occupants of the building. The bin storage area must be within 25m of a publicly accessible pavement for ease of collection. Where possible, the bin store should be to the side or rear of the property out of public view and where it will not be a nuisance. Where it is necessary for bins to be stored at the front of the property, the bin store should be designed to fit in with the street scene. Bin stores should not create dark recessed areas which could encourage misuse, vandalism or pest control problems.

2.28 Where a development affects a heritage asset, the bin store should, where possible, be out of sight from the road.

2.29 Developers should also note that the Building Regulations includes maximum distances people should have to waste and also waste storage advice on high rise domestic developments. See Building Regulations contact details in section 4 for further details.

Car Parking and Travel Choice⁷

2.30 The residents of HMOs are less likely to own a car than the average resident, and so it is important that HMOs are located in areas that have good

⁶ Sefton MBC – Supplementary Planning Guidance in Sefton, New Housing Development. (November 2003) – see <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/spg> .

⁷ Sefton MBC – Ensuring Choice of Travel Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2009) – see <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/travel>

access to a variety of means of travel including walking, cycling and public transport. The Council's guidance 'Ensuring Choice of Travel' sets out the principles of making sure that new developments are accessible by different means of transport, which in turn encourages more sustainable travel choices.

2.31 The guidance does not include specific car and cycle parking standards for HMOs, although the Ensuring Choice of Travel SPD does provide standards for flats and dwelling houses. The Applicant will need to consider how many car parking spaces, if any, are required, and provide a plan of the site showing the layout of the spaces as part of any planning application.

2.32 The Applicant must also include secure cycle parking facilities within the site. This is especially important due to the low levels of car ownership associated with HMOs. Unless the developer demonstrates to the Council's satisfaction that this is not possible, one secure cycle parking space should be provided for every HMO bedsit unit or self-contained flat within the building. Again, details should be provided as part of any planning application.

2.33 Car parking areas can spoil the appearance of heritage assets, particularly where they are at the front of buildings. Where this is unavoidable, car parking should be sensitively designed and kept to the minimum. In accessible locations, on site parking would not normally be appropriate. You may wish to speak to the Council's Conservation team to discuss your proposal (see section 4 for contact details).

Inclusive Accessibility

2.34 Where a development is for a HMO or a flats, or extensions to HMOs or flats, the development must comply with Building Regulations to make it accessible for all people regardless of their mobility. (See Building Regulations contact details in section 4 for further details).

Conversions of Heritage Assets

2.35 External alterations to heritage assets should be kept to a minimum. New window and door openings and roof lights should generally be avoided. Where they are considered necessary, they should be designed carefully to fit in with the building's architecture and features. The development should not normally include extensions, as this is likely to detract from the features of the property and/or the character of the area. For the definition of a Heritage Asset please see Appendix B.

Flood Risk

2.36 Flood risk includes tidal or river flood risk, surface water flood risk and groundwater flood risk. Conversions or new built basement self accommodation will not normally be acceptable in Flood Zone 3, and in Flood Zone 2 the sequential test and exceptions test must be passed⁸.

⁸ National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and Technical Guide (2012), Department of Communities and Local Government - see <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/planningpolicy/planningpolicyframework/>

2.37 For conversions to basement self contained flats or HMO accommodation in Flood Zone 3, and in Flood Zone 2, and where there is other risk of flooding, the developer must show that the basement accommodation (and indeed the whole development) is safe from risk of flooding, that surface water is dealt with satisfactorily within the site and that the development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

Fire Safety and Security

2.38 Fire safety and security is very important for the occupants in HMOs and flats. Requirements will vary from site to site depending upon size, layout, number of storeys and location. Whilst this document will not set out specific standards, safety is an important planning consideration. Guidelines as to what fire precautions might be included can be found in Appendix C. Appendix D sets out the standards for security.

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3. Amenity of Neighbouring Properties

Comings and Goings⁹

3.1 HMOs and flats are generally used by more people than residential dwelling houses. This can result in a large number of comings and goings from a property throughout the day and night. This can cause disturbance to those living near to those properties.

3.2 These issues can become more acute where the building has a large number of occupants, or where there is a localised cluster of these uses. The developer should consider these issues from the outset. The impact upon neighbouring properties of comings and goings and the cumulative affect on a local community will be taken into account by the Council when making a decision on an application.

3.3 We strongly encourage anyone proposing to create an HMO to consult with neighbouring properties and to take into account any concerns that they may have before making a planning application. Please see section 4 (below) for further details.

Privacy of neighbouring properties¹⁰

3.4 It is important that conversion to an HMO does not result in the loss of privacy for neighbouring properties.

3.5 Sefton Council's standards for overlooking and privacy are set out in the guidance on New Housing Development. We will use these standards as a starting point for assessing proposed HMO and flat developments. It is accepted that in some of the older urban areas within Sefton conversions may not be able to strictly meet these standards. We will assess these situations case by case.

Party Walls and Internal Layouts

3.6 The criteria we use to assess a proposed conversion to an HMO are set out in UDP policy MD3 'Houses in multiple occupation'. We normally only allow conversions to an HMO where the building does not share a party wall with another dwelling. This is to stop the occupants of an HMO creating too much noise and disturbance for neighbouring uses.¹¹

3.7 However this will not always be possible or realistic. In these cases a developer should where possible, design the internal layout so that:

- kitchens and communal lounges are not situated next to party walls.
- Kitchens, bathrooms and communal lounges are not situated, below or next to bedrooms within the same building.

⁹ Sefton Unitary Development Plan paras 18.7 and 18.11 – see <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/udp>, chapter 18.

¹⁰ Sefton MBC – Supplementary Planning Guidance in Sefton, New Housing Development. (November 2003) – see <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/spg>

¹¹ Sefton MBC – Supplementary Planning Guidance in Sefton, New Housing Development. (November 2003)

- Circulation areas (including stairs, hallways and landings) are not situated next to the walls of bedrooms and living rooms of neighbouring properties.

3.8 Where it is not possible to achieve (3.6 and 3.7 above), adequate sound proofing will be required to protect residents. Internal floor plans must be submitted as part of the application.

3.9 All HMO and Flat developments should also include sound insulation internally both in walls and between floors, to minimise noise to the other occupants of the property. The developer may wish to seek guidance from Building Regulations (see contact details in section 4, below).

3.10 Where fire and/or sound insulation is being carried out to a listed building, the details need to form part of the application.

3.11 Conditions may be used where granting planning permission to ensure that adequate sound insulation is used in HMOs and flats.

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4. Contacts and Useful Links

Useful Contacts

For Development Management	0151 934 3569
For Planning Policy (including flood risk)	0151 934 3558
For Heritage and design issues (Conservation team)	0151 934 3574
For Building Control	0151 934 4618
For Highways Development Control	0151 934 4175
For Environmental Protection	0151 934 2271
For Housing Standards & HMO Licensing (Investment Programmes & Infrastructure)	0151 934 2273 / 3927

The postal address for all of the above is:

Sefton Council
Magdalen House
30 Trinity Road
Bootle, L20 3NJ

E-mail: planning.department@sefton.gov.uk

Procedures

1. Consulting with the community before making your application

You are encouraged to consult local residents and other key interests before making an application. A step-by-step guide is available on Sefton Council's website entitled 'Involving the Community in your application: A Guide for Developers'. This can be found at: <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/SPG>.

2. Pre-application advice

As discussed above, this type of development involves a number of issues that will need to be addressed with a planning application. An applicant is therefore strongly encouraged to seek advice before making the application from the Council. Information about what service we offer, what information is needed and what fees we charge for pre-application advice can be found at: <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=11098>

3. Design and access statement

A design and access statement will need to be submitted with any Planning Application. More information about this is available on Sefton's web site at: <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=6213>

4. Validation Checklist

This sets out the information needed before applications for planning permission are considered to be valid. These are available to download from our website at: <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=7487>

Key Sefton planning policy web-sites

The Sefton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2006) – see <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/udp>

New Housing Development Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) (November 2003) – see <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/spg>

Green space, trees and development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), (July 2008) – <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/greenspacespd> .

Ensuring Choice of Travel Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2009) – see <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/travel>

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework (2012), Department of Communities and Local Government – see: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/planningpolicy/planningpolicyframework/>

Appendix A

HMO Definitions / Different Use Classes – the Need for Planning Permission

Whether you require planning permission is most likely to depend upon what use class the HMO property falls within. The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes Order) 1987 (as amended, 2010) places different types of development into different Use Classes. Changes of use within a particular use class will not require planning permission, however, a material change of use from one class to another will require planning permission unless stated otherwise. The relevant Use Classes for HMOs are listed below.

C3 – dwellinghouse - occupied by people living together as a family – usually up to 6 persons, but can be more. People living in a C3 dwellinghouse do not have to be related and this can include, for example, people being cared for. C3 includes self-contained flats. Planning Permission will not normally be required for a change of use to C4 HMO (below).

C4 – a small-scale House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), occupied by up to 6 persons. This may be arranged wholly as shared accommodation, or a mixture of shared accommodation and self-contained bedsit units – see Section 254 of the Housing Act 2004. Planning permission will not generally be required for a change of use from a dwellinghouse (C3) to a C4 HMO.

***Sui generis* House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)** – this is an HMO with more than 6 occupants. Again this can be arranged as wholly shared accommodation or a mixture of shared accommodation and self-contained units. A *Sui generis* HMO will in all cases require planning permission.

The use of any property will have to be considered on its merits as to whether a planning application is required.

Planning Permission will be required:

- For any *Sui generis* HMO.
- A change of use from any use other than a C3 dwellinghouse (see above) to a C4 HMO.
- A legal covenant or planning condition exists on a property specifically requiring planning permission for a change of use.
- The Local Planning Authority has imposed an “Article 4 direction” where a Change of Use from C3 to C4 will no longer benefit from permitted development rights. No area in Sefton has, at the time of writing, been designated as an “article 4 area”.

If you want to be sure whether planning permission is required, you can submit an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness to establish what Use Class your proposal falls into. In this case, it is up to you to provide adequate evidence to prove your case ‘on the balance of probabilities’.

Appendix B

Heritage Assets

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets (including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Historic Parks and Gardens) and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

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Appendix C

Fire Safety

All multi-occupied residential premises require adequate fire precautions to protect the occupants in the event of a fire. The exact requirements will be dependent upon the risks relating to the particular premises and will take into account such matters as the size, layout, construction and usage of the property and also on the nature and level of occupancy.

The following 'benchmark standards' are based upon current National guidance as given in the 'Lacors Guide' and is applicable to existing residential premises of any tenure. It includes buildings that have been converted to HMO's and / or Self-Contained Flats and where the standard of conversion does not meet that of 1991 Building Regulations.

Please note that the standards below only provide an indication of the typical level of fire precautions required but that this might vary particularly in situations that present higher levels of risk.

Obviously, in the case of conversion or new development of flats and bedsits Building Regulations approval will be necessary. Flats and HMO that have been built or converted (and maintained) fully in accordance with 1991 or later Building Regulations, should not require additional fire safety measures unless they are occupied in a manner other than originally intended or where unauthorised alteration or subsequent damage has adversely affected fire safety.

1. Bedsit-type HMO (lets) of no more than two storeys

Recommended Fire Safety Standards in Bedsit HMO's (lets) of up to 2 storeys	
Escape routes	30 minute protected route* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 minute fire resisting construction • FD30S doors to all risk rooms • Travel distances must not be excessive
Fire separation	No requirement for additional fire resistance generally <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walls and floors of sound, traditional construction • If a basement / cellar is present, 30 minute separation between the cellar and the ground floor escape route
Fire detection and Alarm systems	<i>Mixed System</i> Grade D, LD2 system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interlinked mains wired smoke alarms with integral battery

	<p>back-up located throughout the escape route</p> <p>Where cooking facilities are sited within the bedsits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interlinked heat alarms with integral battery back-up located in each bedsit • Additional Grade D non-interlinked smoke alarm with integral battery back-up located in each bedsit <p>Where cooking facilities are sited in shared kitchen, not within bedsits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interlinked smoke alarms with integral battery back-up located in each bedsit • Interlinked heat alarms with integral battery back-up located in each kitchen • Additional interlinked smoke alarms with integral battery back-up located in any cellar
Lighting of escape routes	<p>Emergency escape lighting required only if the route is long or complex or where there is no effective borrowed light</p> <p>Conventional artificial lighting required</p>
Fire-fighting equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire blanket to be provided in each bedsit with cooking facilities and in shared kitchens. • Recommended that simple multi-purpose fire extinguisher be provided on each floor of the common parts.
Fire safety signs and notices	Signage along escape route, if the escape route is complex
Surface finishes and floor coverings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Fire Safety Annex 2
Management and maintenance of fire safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Fire Safety Annex 1

* A full 30 minute protected route is the preferred (ideal) option. However, in certain 2 storey, normal risk HMO's the provision of suitable escape windows from all bedsit rooms may be acceptable in lieu of a full protected route.

2. Bedsit-type HMO (lets) of 3 or 4 storeys

Recommended Fire Safety Standards in Bedsit HMO (lets) of 3 or 4 storeys	
Escape routes	<p>30 minute protected route</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 minute fire resisting construction • FD30S doors to all risk rooms • Travel distances must not be excessive
Fire separation	<p>No requirement for additional fire resistance generally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walls and floors of sound, traditional construction • If a basement / cellar is present, 30 minute separation between the cellar and the ground floor escape route
Fire detection and Alarm systems	<p>Mixed System Grade A, LD2 system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoke detectors located throughout the escape route <p>Where cooking facilities are sited within the bedsits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interlinked heat detectors located in each bedsit • Additional Grade D non-interlinked smoke alarm with integral battery back-up located in each bedsit <p>Where cooking facilities are sited in shared kitchen, not within bedsits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interlinked smoke detectors located in each bedsit • heat detectors located with integral battery back-up located in each kitchen, and • Additional interlinked smoke detectors located in any cellar
Lighting of escape routes	<p>Emergency escape lighting may be appropriate if route is complex or there is no effective borrowed light. Conventional artificial lighting required</p>
Fire-fighting equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire blanket to be provided in each bedsit with cooking facilities and in shared kitchens. • Recommended that simple multi-purpose fire extinguisher be provided on each floor of the common parts.

Fire safety signs and notices	Final exit sign Signage along escape route if the escape route is complex
Surface finishes and floor coverings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• See Fire Safety Annex 2
Management and maintenance of fire safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• See Fire Safety Annex 1

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3. Bedsit-type HMO (lets) of 5 or 6 storeys

Recommended Fire Safety Standards in Bedsit HMO (lets) of 5 or 6 storeys	
Escape routes	<p>30 minute protected route</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 minute fire resisting construction • FD30S doors to all risk rooms • Travel distances must not be excessive <p>5 Storey Lobby protection to all floors except the top floor <u>or</u> secondary means of escape from top floor</p> <p>6 Storey Lobby protection to all floors except the top floor <u>and</u> secondary means of escape from top two floors</p>
Fire separation	<p>30 minute fire separation between units of accommodation throughout</p> <p>30 minute fire separation across the stairway between second and third floors <u>and</u> between fourth and fifth floors</p>
Fire detection and Alarm systems	<p>Mixed System Grade A, LD2 system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoke detectors located throughout the escape route <p>Where cooking facilities are sited within the bedsits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heat detectors located in each bedsit • Additional Grade D, non-interlinked smoke alarm with integral battery back-up located in each bedsit <p>Where cooking facilities are sited in shared kitchen, not within bedsits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoke detectors located in each bedsit • Heat detectors located in each kitchen, and • Additional interlinked smoke detectors located in any cellar
Lighting of escape routes	<p>Emergency escape lighting required Conventional artificial lighting required</p>

Fire-fighting equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire blanket to be provided in each bedsit with cooking facilities and in shared kitchens • Recommended that simple multi-purpose fire extinguisher be provided on each floor of the common parts.
Fire safety signs and notices	Final exit sign Directional signage along escape route
Surface finishes and floor coverings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Fire Safety Annex 2
Management and maintenance of fire safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Fire Safety Annex 1

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4. 2 storey building converted into self-contained flats

Recommended Fire Safety Standards in 2 storey Building converted into self-contained flats	
Escape routes	<p>30 minute protected route**</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 minute fire resisting construction • FD30S doors to rooms opening onto escape route • No requirement for fire doors within flats but sound, well constructed and close fitting, conventional doors are required • Travel distances must not be excessive
Fire separation	<p>30 minutes between flats throughout is the ideal, but on risk assessment there may be no requirement for additional fire-resisting separation between units providing the walls and floors are of sound, traditional construction and additional compensatory detection is fitted</p>
Fire detection and Alarm systems	<p>A mixed system*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade D: LD2 coverage in the common areas and a heat detector in each flat in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route (interlinked); and • Grade D: LD3 coverage in each flat (non-interlinked smoke alarm in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route) to protect the sleeping occupants of the flat • Subject to fire separation as above
Lighting of escape routes	<p>Emergency escape lighting required if the route is long or complex or where there is no effective borrowed light. Conventional artificial lighting required</p>
Fire-fighting equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire blanket to be provided in each flat kitchen • Recommended that simple multi-purpose fire extinguisher be provided on each floor of the common parts (ground floor hallway only if no first floor

	common parts)
Fire safety signs and notices	No requirement
Surface finishes and floor coverings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Fire Safety Annex 2
Management and maintenance of fire safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Fire Safety Annex 1

**In certain 2 storey, normal risk HMO's the provision of suitable escape windows from all bedrooms may be acceptable, in lieu of a full protected route.

* Where the fire risk assessment identifies higher than normal risk, the BS 5839:Part 6, LD2 interpretation of 'rooms or areas that present a high fire risk to occupants' may include living rooms, bedrooms and kitchens within the flats, thereby providing automatic detection in these rooms in addition to the common parts and internal entrance hall/lobby within flats. Where this is the case, this additional detection would be an additional Grade D system within the flat (i.e. mixed system overall) so as to avoid whole-house false alarms.

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5. 3 or 4 storey building converted into self-contained flats

Recommended Fire Safety Standards in a 3 or 4 storey building converted into self-contained flats	
Escape routes	<p>30 minute protected route</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 minute fire resisting construction • FD30S doors to rooms opening onto escape route • No requirement for fire doors within flats but sound, well constructed and close fitting, conventional doors are required • Travel distances must not be excessive
Fire separation	<p>30 minutes between flats throughout is the ideal, but on risk assessment there may be no requirement for additional fire-resisting separation between units providing the walls and floors are of sound, traditional construction and additional compensatory detection is fitted</p>
Fire detection and Alarm systems	<p>A mixed system*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade A: LD2 coverage in the common areas and a heat detector in each flat in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route (interlinked); and • Grade D: LD3 coverage in each flat (non-interlinked smoke alarm in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route) to protect the sleeping occupants of the flat <p>Subject to fire separation as above</p>
Lighting of escape routes	<p>Emergency escape lighting required if the route is long or complex or where there is no effective borrowed light. Conventional artificial lighting required</p>
Fire-fighting equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire blanket to be provided in each flat kitchen • Recommended that simple multi-purpose fire extinguisher be provided on each floor of the common parts
Fire safety signs and notices	<p>Final exit sign Signage along escape route if the</p>

	escape route is complex
Surface finishes and floor coverings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Fire Safety Annex 2
Management and maintenance of fire safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Fire Safety Annex 1

* Where the fire risk assessment identifies higher than normal risk, the BS 5839:Part 6, LD2 interpretation of 'rooms or areas that present a high fire risk to occupants' may include living rooms, bedrooms and kitchens within the flats, thereby providing automatic detection in these rooms in addition to the common parts and internal entrance hall/lobby within flats. Where this is the case, this additional detection would be an additional Grade D system within the flat (i.e. mixed system overall) so as to avoid whole-house false alarms.

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6. 5 or 6 storey building converted into self-contained flats

Recommended Fire Safety Standards in a 5 or 6 storey building converted into self-contained flats	
Escape routes	30 minute protected route <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 minute fire resisting construction • FD30S doors to rooms opening onto escape route • FD30 doors (self closers not required) to risk rooms within flats • Travel distances must not be excessive
Fire separation	30 minute fire separation between units of accommodation throughout 30 minute fire separation across the stairway between second and third floors <u>and</u> between fourth and fifth floors
Fire detection and Alarm systems	A mixed system*: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade A: LD2 coverage in the common areas and a heat detector in each flat in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route (interlinked); and • Grade D: LD3 coverage in each flat (non-interlinked smoke alarm in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route) to protect the sleeping occupants of the flat
Lighting of escape routes	Emergency escape lighting required Conventional artificial lighting required
Fire-fighting equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire blanket to be provided in each flat kitchen • Recommended that simple multi-purpose fire extinguisher be provided on each floor of the common parts
Fire safety signs and notices	Final exit sign Directional signage along escape route
Surface finishes and floor coverings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Fire Safety Annex 2
Management and maintenance of fire safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Fire Safety Annex 1

* Where the fire risk assessment identifies higher than normal risk, the BS 5839:Part 6, LD2 interpretation of 'rooms or areas that present a high fire risk to occupants' may include living rooms, bedrooms and kitchens within the flats, thereby providing automatic detection in these rooms in addition to the common parts and internal entrance hall/lobby within flats. Where this is the case, this additional detection would be an additional Grade D system within the flat (i.e. mixed system overall) so as to avoid whole-house false alarms.

7. Flat in Multiple Occupation occupying a single storey

Recommended Fire Safety Standards in a Flat in Multiple Occupation occupying a single storey	
Escape routes	<p>No requirement for full 30-minute protected route within flat *, but the escape route should have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound, traditional construction • Travel distances should not be excessive • Should not pass through risk rooms <p>No requirement for fire doors within flat, but</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound, well constructed and close fitting, conventional doors required • FD30S door to flat entrance door (self-closer and smoke seals required) <p>Note: in converted or purpose built flats, 30-minute construction and fire doors are likely to be in place</p>
Fire separation	
Fire detection and Alarm systems	<p>Grade D: LD3 coverage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interlinked mains wired smoke alarms with integral battery back-up located in the flat internal hallway; and • Additional interlinked heat alarm with integral battery back-up located in kitchen
Lighting of escape routes	Conventional artificial lighting required
Fire-fighting equipment	Fire blanket to be provided in the shared kitchen
Fire safety signs and notices	No requirement
Surface finishes and floor coverings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Fire Safety Annex 2

Management and maintenance of fire safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• See Fire Safety Annex 1
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*Where construction standards are poor, travel distances are long or other higher risk factors are present, a 30 minute protected route may be required and / or LD2 fire detection may be appropriate.

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8. Flat in Multiple Occupation occupying two storeys

Recommended Fire Safety Standards in a Flat in Multiple Occupation occupying two storeys	
Escape routes	<p>No requirement for full 30-minute protected route within flat *, but the escape route should have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound, traditional construction • Travel distances should not be excessive • Should not pass through risk rooms <p>No requirement for fire doors within flat, but</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound, well constructed and close fitting, conventional doors required • FD30S door to flat entrance door (self-closer and smoke seals required) <p>Note: in converted or purpose built flats, 30-minute construction and fire doors are likely to be in place</p>
Fire separation	-
Fire detection and Alarm systems	<p>Grade D: LD3 coverage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interlinked mains wired smoke alarms with integral battery back-up located in the escape route at each floor level • Additional interlinked heat alarm with integral battery back-up located in kitchen; and • Additional interlinked smoke alarm with integral battery back-up located in any communal lounge
Lighting of escape routes	<p>Conventional artificial lighting required</p> <p>Emergency escape lighting required if there is no effective borrowed light</p>
Fire-fighting equipment	Fire blanket to be provided in the shared kitchen
Fire safety signs and notices	No requirement
Surface finishes and floor coverings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Fire Safety Annex 2
Management and maintenance of fire safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Fire Safety Annex 1

Fire Safety Annex 1

Management and maintenance of fire safety

Whatever physical fire safety measures are provided in residential accommodation, their effectiveness will only be as good as their management and maintenance.

While single household dwellings will generally be self-managing, HMO accommodation will require ongoing attention to ensure fire safety measures remain effective.

This section outlines management and maintenance measures applicable to HMOs. The responsible person (the licensee, landlord or managing agent) has a duty to ensure that the day-to-day management of fire safety in the premises is properly undertaken and that essential routine maintenance and emergency repairs are properly carried out. This is not only common sense and good practice, but also an obligation in law for those premises to which The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations 2006 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 apply.

The level of management attention required will be determined as part of the fire risk assessment. Detailed recommendations are to be found in the HM Government Fire Safety Risk Assessment Sleeping Accommodation Guide. These recommendations may be appropriate in very large and complex buildings, but not all will apply fully for the average residential accommodation of normal risk covered by this guide.

Guidance on best practice in fire safety management can be found in BS 5588, part 12: 2004 Fire Precautions in the Design, Construction and use of Buildings – Managing Fire Safety, but the points outlined below should be expected in any acceptable fire risk assessment as a minimum.

Escape routes

- must be free from obstruction at all times, and regular checks should be made to guarantee this;
- there should be no free storage on the escape routes;
- there should be no trip hazards such as trailing electrical leads or worn carpets;

- in most cases fire-resisting doors should be effectively self-closing to engage their latches with no obstructions or hindrances such as catching carpets.

This will always be the case in bedsit-type HMOs. However, the requirement for self-closers is considered unnecessary in some situations, such as individual room doors within flats (the flat entrance door will still require one), within single household occupancies, and in smaller low-risk shared houses. The use of self-closers in these situations has proved impracticable and has often rendered the doors ineffective;

- all doors should be close fitting as designed.

Fire doors should never be propped or wedged open. Any damage to fire doors should be noted and repaired. Any damaged or missing smoke seals must be replaced like-for-like.

Automatic fire detection (AFD) and warning systems

BS 5839: part 1, section 6 contains recommendations for regular, routine testing of AFD systems as follows: Grade A systems

- Routine testing – at least one detector or call point in each zone should be tested weekly to ensure correct operation of the system. Any defect should be recorded in the log book and action taken to correct it.
- Routine maintenance – a six-monthly service should be carried out by a competent person, usually a specialist alarm engineer, under a maintenance contract. It entails a full test to ensure compliance as specified in with BS 5839: part 1, section 6. It should be recorded in the log book and a periodic inspection and test certificate issued.

Grade D and E systems

- Routine testing – these systems should be tested every month by use of the test button on the smoke alarm.
- Routine maintenance – all alarms should be cleaned periodically in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

All systems

- It is recommended that all detectors should be tested at least once a year to ensure that they

respond to smoke. Tests should not involve the use of open flame or any form of smoke or non-specific aerosol that could contaminate the detection chamber or the electronics of the detector. Suitable specific test aerosols are available. The test is usually carried out by a specialist alarm engineer under a maintenance contract and should be recorded in the log book, with a periodic inspection and test certificate issued.

It is recognised that the above arrangements represent the ideal. While they may be possible in buildings with a resident landlord or a dedicated caretaker or housekeeper, in most situations for premises covered by this guide such arrangements may be impracticable.

Where this proves to be the case tenants should be given clear instructions on how to test grade D or E alarms within their dwelling using the test button, along with clear recording and reporting instructions for any faults or false alarms on the system.

Grade A systems are more specialist and resident testing will be inappropriate unless there is a trained individual in the property. Clear fault and false alarm reporting arrangements should be put in place, and the responsible person or his/her agent should respond to reports at the earliest opportunity.

Fire blankets and extinguishers

- where provided, these should be checked periodically to make sure they are in place and available for use. Extinguishers must be tested and maintained on an annual basis in accordance with BS 5306-3 and with the manufacturer's instructions.

Artificial lighting:

- conventional staircase lighting must be working properly at all times. Any blown bulbs should be replaced and all switches should be working. If timer switches are fitted then the duration should be checked and adjusted if necessary; and
- any emergency escape lighting should be serviced and maintained in accordance with BS 5266-8: 2004 (BS EN 50172: 2004) Emergency escape lighting systems. This contains detailed recommendations which include inspections and tests to be carried out, down to a daily basis. For large, complex HMOs (such as those with five or six storeys) or premises with a

specific high-risk factor (persistent vandalism problems, for example, or complex escape routes and no effective borrowed light), the full recommendations may be appropriate. However, in most average sized premises with normal risk, the following regime with a procedure for responding to reports of defects, should be adequate:

- an annual discharge test in accordance with the requirements of BS 5266: part 8. This must be carried out by a competent person, usually a lighting engineer under a maintenance contract. It entails a full test to ensure compliance with the standard and should be recorded in the log book, with a periodic inspection and test certificate issued.

Water suppression systems

- where provided, the responsible person must ensure that any water suppression system is fully maintained and ready for use at all times. The landlord should enter into a maintenance contract with a competent person or company to maintain the system in accordance with clause 7 (maintenance) of BS 9251;
- the responsible person must ensure that the system is fully functional at all times and that any defects are rectified as soon as possible;
- the responsible person should check the pressure gauge readings monthly and record these readings in the systems log book. Any significant fluctuations or pressure readings below the agreed system design must be rectified immediately; and
- the system log book must be used to record all actuations, testing, maintenance, system faults and any remedial action.

Gas installations

- The Gas Safety (Installation and use) Regulations 1998 require that gas installations and appliances are maintained in safe condition and good working order and receive a gas safety check annually. The gas safety check and any other work to the installation may only be carried out by a competent and registered engineer. The findings must be recorded and the records kept for at least two years.

Electrical installations

- the electrical installation should be installed and maintained by a competent person and should be inspected periodically by a competent electrical engineer. An inspection every five years is recommended for all types of premises and is a legal requirement in HMOs under the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006.

Electrical appliances:

- letting agents and landlords should check all electrical appliances at the start of each new tenancy for defects (for example frayed wiring or badly fitted plugs) and remove any unsafe items;
- it is good practice to have the equipment checked at regular intervals thereafter, but there is no legal requirement to do so unless appliances are used by employees;
- records should be kept of the checks carried out;
- instruction booklets should be available at the property for all appliances and any necessary safety warnings should be given to tenants; and
- second-hand electrical appliances should not be supplied, but if they are then they should be checked by a competent electrical engineer.

Furniture and furnishings regulations

- all furniture within lettings commencing after 1 January 1997 must meet fire resistance requirements. However, the regulations do not apply to furniture made before 1950 and re-upholstered furniture made before that date;
- all new furniture (except mattresses and bed bases) must carry a permanent label stating that it complies with the fire resistance standards. However, absence of such a label does not mean that the furniture does not comply, as the label may have been removed after the furniture was supplied. Some furniture manufactured before the regulations were applied may comply with the requirements anyway; and
- landlords and managing agents must ensure that the furniture supplied meets the fire resistance requirements, and the only practical way of doing so is to ensure that the furniture is labelled by the manufacturer in this way. If this cannot be ascertained then the furniture should be replaced.

Information and training:

- each occupier should be given specific advice on fire prevention and fire safety in the home. This should be provided at the start of each new tenancy and reviewed periodically. Suitable advice can be found in annex one of BS 5588: part 12, advice to occupiers of domestic residential buildings, and advice is also available from local fire and rescue authorities. Information should include:
 - an explanation of the escape routes, particularly where secondary means of escape is provided;
 - how the fire detection and alarm system operates and what to do if it activates;
 - how and when to re-set the fire alarm system;
 - if extinguishers or fire blankets are provided, training in their application and safe use;
 - avoidance of false alarms;
 - how and when to call the fire brigade;
 - how to report defects;
 - the importance of maintaining clear escape routes, free of storage;
 - the importance of keeping fire doors closed, not propped or wedged open;
 - smoking and cooking safety;
 - gas safety advice;
 - safe storage and disposal of refuse; and
 - the safe use of escape windows where appropriate.

Record keeping:

- it is recommended that a property log book is kept and all routine maintenance and servicing activity (as recommended in this guide) is recorded in it, along with all reported defects and remedial action taken – including false alarms. Model log books may be available from landlords associations or through landlord accreditation schemes.
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Fire Safety Annex 2

Surface Finishes

In the early stages of a fire, the safety of a building's occupants can be affected by the properties of surface linings and the finishes of walls, ceilings and soffits.

Rapid spread of flame across surfaces allows the fire to spread more quickly through the building, thereby reducing the time for escape. This is of particular concern in escape routes, especially in single staircase buildings.

Arson is a particular problem in this respect: fires started deliberately can be particularly dangerous because they generally develop much faster. In multi-occupancy buildings they are often started in escape routes, as access is more easily gained to these areas.

In single household occupancy and some shared houses where the occupiers have exclusive control of the escape route, the risk may be low. No specific measures will therefore be required in respect of surface finishes. However, good practice would be to reduce the risk further by avoiding combustible surface finishes within the escape route.

In multiple-occupancy buildings the risk is usually higher. Combustible surface finishes should not be permitted within the escape route and should, as far as is practicable, also be avoided in other locations.

However, in some HMOs the risk may be lowered by other fire precautions, such as in:

- two-storey buildings with suitable escape windows from all risk rooms (see paragraph 14);
- buildings where there is a second staircase or secondary means of escape which meets certain standards; and
- buildings with additional fire safety measures such as a water suppression system.

In such cases the premises may be considered lower risk and the precautions outlined below in respect of surface finishes and floor coverings could be varied accordingly.

Materials are classified for combustibility and surface spread of flame by BS 476: parts 6 and 7 or under the European system by BS EN 13501-1.

Fire spread across surface finishes is classified as set out in the table below, with class 0 being the most resistant and class 3 the least. Classes 0-3 (or A-D) are suitable in multi-occupied residential accommodation, but should be restricted in some locations.

The following Table outlines their suitability for different locations within a multi-occupied property.

Suitable classes of surface finish in certain locations in multi-occupied residential buildings

Class 0, B s3, d2

These are non-combustible materials and materials of limited combustibility such as brickwork, concrete, plasterboard and plastered finishes.

Acceptable in all locations including protected routes, circulation routes, escape routes and stairways.

Class 1, C s3, d2

These include timber, particleboard, hardboard and surfaces covered with heavy flock wallpaper, provided they have been treated with flame retardant materials.

Acceptable in rooms.

Class 3, D s3, d2

These include those specified in class 1 with the addition of thermosetting plastics and surfaces covered with polystyrene wall and ceiling tiles.

Not acceptable on escape routes and stairways.

Acceptable in small rooms and parts of other rooms if the total area does not exceed more than one half of the floor area up to a maximum of 20m².

Not acceptable on escape routes and stairways.

It is very difficult to identify the classification of existing coverings on-site unless the trade name of the product can be traced. The above Table illustrates acceptable locations for materials and products commonly encountered.

Multiple layers of gloss paint: surfaces may be found where multiple layers of gloss paint have been applied. These surfaces may present a risk of fire spread. Therefore it is recommended that the paint is removed from locations requiring a class 1 (or C s3, d2) or class 0 (C s3, d2) classification. Proprietary products may be available which can cover the paint, thereby providing an acceptable classification for the surface. These should only be used subject to a satisfactory fire test report, but may not be suitable for areas subject to heavy wear and tear.

Floor coverings

Floor coverings throughout the protected route (i.e. stairways, hallways, landings and lobbies) of all categories of HMO should conform to low radius of fire spread (up to 35mm) when tested in accordance with BS 4790 or the European equivalent. It is good practice to adhere to this in all categories of HMO, although in lower risk shared houses this requirement may be relaxed. BS 5287 Specification for assessment and labelling of textile floor coverings tested to BS 4790, specifies how these tested floor coverings should be labelled.

It is, of course, difficult to assess existing floor coverings in HMOs unless the supplier/manufacturer can be traced. As a general guide for existing carpets, those comprising a mix of 80% wool and 20% synthetic fibre (commonly referred to as 80/20 carpets) will comply.

Many vinyl, linoleum and laminate floor coverings may not be suitable and will need replacing.

When considering the suitability of new floor coverings for protected routes it is sufficient to ensure they are labelled to BS 5287 or the European equivalent as low radius of fire spread (up to 35mm).

Suppliers/manufacturers will be able to verify this (or otherwise).



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Appendix D

Security

1. The building and each unit of accommodation should have adequate security measures.
2. Ground floor and other accessible windows should be protected by suitable window locks. In the case of key operated window locks, such keys must be so located as to be readily available at all times.
3. The front and rear doors must be of sound construction, be well maintained and fitted with a suitable viewer if the door does not have a useable vision panel.
4. The main front door and that of each individual letting should be provided with a suitable safety chain.
5. Front and rear final exit doors must be provided with a secure lock however as these doors are the final point of exit in the event of a fire, they must be capable of being opened from the inside without the use of a key. Any rear door should in addition be provided with a minimum 200mm barrel bolts at top and bottom (unless the door is of a type already fitted with a shoot bolt mechanism providing 3 or 5 point locking).
6. Where locks are fitted to bedroom doors they must be capable of being opened from the inside without the use of a key to facilitate escape in the event of a fire.
7. Where electronic door entry systems are provided these must be in good working order and regularly maintained.
8. Where necessary, pedestrian routes and approaches to the main entrance of the property should be fitted with adequate security lighting.
9. Where the property is fitted with an intruder alarm, key holder details should be notified to the Council's Environment Team.

Appendix E

Building Regulations

The following are types of building work that may require consent under the Building Regulations:

- Structural alterations to load bearing walls.
- Changes to escape routes and alterations fire detection systems.
- Alterations to fire protection elements within the building.
- Creation of new rooms for residential purposes and conversions.
- Extensions to existing buildings, including extending into roof spaces or basements.
- Sound insulation to party separating walls or separating walls/floors to habitable rooms.
- Any work affecting thermal elements. (New roof coverings, re-plastering external walls and installing new ground floors)
- Any work/alteration to the existing drainage system above or below ground.
- Installation/replacement of windows, doors and roof lights)
- Installation/extending controlled services.(heating & hot water systems)
- Electrical work.
- Alterations which detrimentally affect existing access/use provisions of building by people regardless of their levels of mobility.

The Council's Building Regulations team can help with advice on any of the above matters. Contact details are shown in section 4 (above).