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Tower Hamlets has agreed a set of minimum standards in relation to rented properties in the borough. These were approved by Cabinet and are legally binding.

1. Space Standards for Sleeping Accommodation

In this guidance, a bedsit or studio is defined as a room, or rooms, used for sleeping within a building, where some of the basic facilities or amenities for food preparation and hygiene are provided within the accommodation, or in a separate room and for the exclusive use of the occupiers of the bedsit or studio.

A bedroom is a room within a building used for sleeping, and which does not contain any of the basic facilities. The facilities are either provided in separate rooms and are shared with other people living in the HMO, or are provided in separate rooms but for the exclusive use by the occupiers of the bedroom.

A self-contained bedsit/studio or flat is one that contains all of the facilities and amenities for

food preparation and hygiene within the accommodation.

A maximum of two people are permitted to share a room for sleeping irrespective of age. If there are two occupiers, they must be living together as partners, family members or consenting friends. A room shared by more than two people is overcrowded, and may be subject to enforcement action by the local authority.

A room used for sleeping must not be shared by people of the opposite sex who are 10 years old and over, unless they are married or cohabiting / living together in a relationship as husband and wife or in an equivalent relationship in the case of persons of the same sex.

When measuring the size of the room and assessing usable space, the shape of the room should be taken into account as well as the total floor area.

Space taken up by fitted units are counted in the floor area calculation, but chimney breasts, lobbies and en-suite bathroom or shower rooms or other significant obstructions that can reduce the floor area are not. Rooms must have a minimum floor to ceiling height of at least 2.14 m over 75% of the floor area. Any floor area where the ceiling height is less than 1.53 m is disregarded but may be considered as possible storage space

Table 1 Room Sizes

Number of occupiers	Minimum bedroom size for sleeping Kitchen facilities in a separate room m ²	Minimum bedroom size for sleeping Kitchen facilities within the room m ²
One	8.5	13
Two	13	18

Any rooms below the minimum space standard above will not normally be considered suitable for sleeping accommodation although discretion may be granted if there is sufficient other communal space available to the occupier (see below) and/or the room is well set-up and provides a decent unit of accommodation. No rooms below 6.5m² will be considered as suitable for sleeping rooms. No room can be considered suitable for occupation by more than one person or two persons co-habiting.

2. Living and dining rooms

A landlord may provide a communal living room in addition to any space that is required for shared kitchen and dining facilities. As a guide, a communal living room should be at least 13

square meters for 3 people, plus 1 square meters for every additional person. For example, a living room for 5 people should be 15 square meters.

If dining facilities are combined with the living room, the room should be at least 14 square meters for 3 people, plus 1 square meters for every additional person. For example, a combined living/dining room for 5 people should be 16 square meters.

3. Kitchen Facilities

Kitchen facilities should be no more than one floor away from the letting. Where this is not practicable, a dining area of a size suitable for the number of occupiers should be provided on the same floor as, and close to, the kitchen. Kitchens must be of an adequate size and shape to enable safe use of food preparation by the number of occupiers and the following guidelines for shared kitchens apply:

Table 2 Number of Sharers

Number of sharers	Room size m²
Up to 3	5.5
4-5	7.5
6-7	9.5
8-10	11.5

Where all or some of the lettings within the HMO do not contain cooking facilities, such facilities must be provided for sharing with other households. There should be one full set of facilities per 5 persons, irrespective of age. Some flexibility may be considered in well-managed properties where there are 6 or 7 persons, subject to a risk assessment carried out by the local authority.

Where there are up to 10 persons, either an additional full set of cooking facilities must be provided, or additional facilities must be provided in an appropriate number of individual lettings where the room is large enough. If two sets of facilities are in the same room, each set must be separated and in distinct areas of the room.

The kitchen size and layout must enable the practical, safe and hygienic use of the kitchen for storage, preparation and cooking of food.

The wall, floor and ceiling surfaces shall be smooth, impervious and capable of being cleaned.

A set of cooking facilities is comprised as follows:

Table 3 Kitchen Facilities

Facility	Number of Occupants	Requirement
Cookers	One	In one-person bedsits only, a cooker with a 2- ring hob, oven and grill. Must be permanently and safely installed on a fixed worktop.
	Up to 5	Four-ring hob, oven and grill.
	6 to 7	Four-ring hob, oven and grill and an additional combined microwave oven and grill.
Sink/Drainer	Up to 5	1000 mm sink/drainer set on base unit, provided with a constant supply of hot and cold water and properly connected to the drainage system.
	6 to 7	A double sink/drainer installed as above or A single sink/drainer plus a dishwasher.
Worktops	One household	1000 mm x 600 mm. Worktop must be fixed, and made of suitable impervious material.
	Up to 5	2000 mm x 600 mm provided and fitted as above
	6 – 7	2000 mm x 600 mm provided and fitted as above, plus additional space for extra appliances.
Splashback	All	Splashback 300 mm tiled splashback or its equivalent to be provided to the sink/drainer, worktop and any cooker without an integral splashback.
Electrical Sockets	Up to 5	One suitably located electrical socket for each dedicated appliance such as a cooker, refrigerator and washing machine. In addition, 4 sockets (in either double or single combinations) to be provided above the worktop.
	6-7	An additional 2 sockets as above.
Floor Covering	All	Impervious and washable floor covering to cover the floor area of the kitchen.
Storage Cupboards	Per household	One double wall cupboard or One single base cupboard. May be provided within individual lets. The base unit below the sink/drainer is not acceptable for food storage.
Refrigeration		Where provided in individual lettings, a small fridge freezer.
	Up to 5	Where provided in a shared kitchen, equivalent of 2 worktop height refrigerators both with freezer compartments, or 1 worktop height fridge and 1 worktop height freezer.
	6 to 7	Where provided in a shared kitchen, the equivalent of an additional

		worktop height refrigerator with freezer compartment.
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- Kitchen facilities where provided in a bedsit should be sited remote from the entrance door.
- The cooker should not be situated below a window.
- A kitchen must not be the sole access to a room used for sleeping.
- Kitchen facilities must not be installed in a hallway.
- A humidistat-controlled mechanical extractor must be provided where there is inadequate ventilation by means of a window. Newly converted kitchens must have a mechanical extractor regardless of whether there is an openable window.
- Apart from an extractor hood, fixtures and fittings are not to be directly above cooking appliances.
- Sufficient refuse storage to be provided adequate for the number of occupiers.

4. Personal washing and wc facilities

- Bathrooms and WCs should be within one floor of lettings, and where shared, must be accessible from a common area. WCs and bath/shower rooms must be fitted with a suitable and functioning lock and the surfaces must be impervious and readily cleansable.
- Bath/shower rooms and WCs must be adequately ventilated, and bath and shower rooms must be adequately heated, such as by radiator, wall-mounted convection or fan heater, or underfloor heating. Electric bar heaters are not permitted. In new conversions, a mechanical extractor must be installed in addition to any openable window.
- Where only one bathing facility is provided in the premises, it must be a bath with a suitable seal and a fixed overhead shower. A fixed shower rail and curtain must be installed.
- Ideally wash hand basins in each bedsit sleeping room are required where practicable in houses with 5 or more occupiers, unless the room contains a sink/drain.
- Properties that are not bedsit accommodation may not require wash hand basin's in sleeping rooms at the discretion of the local authority.
- The facilities must be adequate for the number of occupiers, and the following is a guide. External wc's are not counted.

Table 4 Washing and Bathing Facilities

Number of	Facilities	Specifications
1-4	1 bath with wash hand basin WC can be in bathroom	Standard size bath with 450 mm splashback Full-size wash hand basin with tiled splashback. Both to have constant supply of hot and cold water. If the WC is separate, it must have an additional wash hand basin & tiled splashback within the compartment.
5	1 bath with wash hand basin in room 1 WC with wash hand basin 1 wash hand basin in each sleeping room	WC should be separate from the bath/ wash hand basin (If combined numbers may be restricted) wash hand basin's in bedsit rooms where practicable.
6-10	2 bathrooms with wash hand basins in each One of bathrooms must contain bath, and the other a shower which may be fixed over-bath type 2 wc's, one in own compartment with wash hand basin 1 wash hand basin in each sleeping room	As above wash hand basin's in bedsit rooms where practicable.

- Where a shower cubicle is provided, it must be of a sufficient size that the user can bathe and dress without injury.
- All rooms containing baths/showers, WCs and wash hand basins must be adequately lit, ventilated and heated.
- All shower cubicles to be fully tiled (or similar impervious material) or be complete self-standing cubicle.

- The minimum acceptable bath size is 1700mm x 700mm and shower cubicle 800x800mm.
- Every bath, shower and wash hand basin must be provided with an adequate and continuous supply of hot and cold water and be connected to the drainage system in compliance with current Building Regulations.

5. Fire Safety

- Fire safety standards to be based on the final edition of the Lacors LACORS Housing Fire Safety Guidance:
http://www.cieh.org/library/Knowledge/Housing/National_fire_safety_guidance_08.pdf
- As a minimum all properties must have a suitable mains-wired fire detection system and a means of escape that is adequately protected against the smoke and flames should a fire arise in a kitchen, bedroom or other communal room. There should be a Grade D LD2 fire detection systems (BS5839 part 6-2013). This includes a mains wired heat detector(s) in the kitchen and any room containing cooking facilities interlinked to a smoke detector(s) in the hallways and every landing. This can be achieved by finding the case study in Part D of the LACORS guide that closest matches the property and adopting those standards.

6. Heating

- Dwellings must have both effective insulation and efficient heating with reference to current energy efficiency requirements.
- A fixed heating system must be provided to all lets. Radiators must be fitted with thermostatic valves. Fixed storage heaters are preferred where there is no gas supply.

7. Services

- Each room being used as a sleeping room must have at least 3 double electric sockets for the use of the occupiers. Where there is a self contained flat it must have its own exclusive supply of electricity, gas and water.

8. Additional Considerations

- Compliance with these standards does not negate the need for compliance with other statutory provisions, including the Housing Act 2004 and supporting Regulations and guidance.

9. Buildings converted into flats (Section 257 HMOs)

- Section 257 of the Housing Act 2004 defines the circumstance where a building converted into flats is a HMO. This is a building that was not converted in accordance with the 1991 Building Regulations (or later) and which still does not meet those standards and where a third or more of the flats are rented out on short term tenancies.
- The standards detailed below are for units occupied by a single household. Where a flat in a section 257 is occupied by two, or more unrelated persons the standards detailed above for HMOs will apply.
- The table below details the minimum required standards for a section 257 HMO:

Table 5 Required Standards for 257 HMOs

	Minimum floor space
Studio – one person	11m ²
Studio two persons cohabiting as a couple	15m ²
Separate kitchen – single occupancy	5.5m ²
Separate kitchen – two or more occupiers	6.5m ²
Bathroom	Must meet the general requirements above
Separate bedroom – single occupancy	6.5m ²
Separate bedroom - couple	10m ²
Additional bedrooms single person	6.5m ²
Additional bedrooms couple	10m ²

All kitchens must meet the standards detailed above.

All bathrooms must meet the standards detailed above.