

**SUPPLEMENTARY**  
**PLANNING**  
**GUIDANCE**  
**NOTES**

**INTERIM**  
**HOUSING STANDARDS**

NB: This 'Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes' was originally prepared as Unitary Development Plan 'Standards'. The Council is currently reviewing its planning guidance and intends to publish new Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes, which will complement these standards.

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# HOUSING STANDARDS

## Standard 1 : Residential Density Assessment

The Council's residential density requirements (see Policy HO9) will be assessed on a habitable room per hectare/acre basis with reference to the following calculations:

For sites with a nett area less than 0.2 hectares (0.5 acre); add the area within the site curtilage and the area of half the width of one road frontage to a depth of no more than 6 metres.

For sites with a nett area greater than 0.2 hectares (0.5 acre); add the area within the site curtilage and the area of half the width of up to two road frontages to a depth of no more than 6 metres.

For the purpose of the calculation of density a dining/kitchen is not regarded as a habitable room if it measures less than 13 sq. metres.

To calculate residential density per hectare therefore, divide the residential site area in square metres into 10,000 then multiply the product by the number of habitable rooms in the development.

## Standard 2 : Layout and Design of New Self-Contained Accommodation provided through New Build and Conversion Schemes

The Council will require, in the interest of the amenities of occupants and other residents, that all new self-contained residential accommodation will be constructed in accordance with the following standards:

Each house, flat and maisonette must each have their own private entrance doors which lead either directly from the street or off a common entrance hall. Entrance doors must also open into a lobby or hallway. They must also have exclusive use of their own kitchen, bathroom and W.C.

All rooms should lead off a hallway or lobby. It should be possible to enter and leave one room without passing through any other room.

There must be a permanent partition between eating and sleeping areas in all units. In addition, kitchens and living rooms must be permanently separated in all units designed for three or more occupants. For smaller units,

combined kitchen and living areas may be acceptable as long as the floor area is sufficient to take account of the greater range of household activities carried on in them.

Where cooking and eating areas are not provided in the same room, then the relationship between kitchen and dining/living rooms should be close to each other, affording a safe and convenient passage to carry food between the rooms.

All staircases, landings and passages are to be provided, where practicable, with a window.

## Standard 3 : Amenities and Facilities to be provided in all New Residential Accommodation

The Council is empowered, under housing and other legislation to require the provision of basic amenities and facilities in all new residential accommodation. In determining the adequacy of such provision, including room dimensions etc. the Council will have recourse to standards commonly employed by many other local planning authorities as set out below.

For the purpose of ascertaining the adequacy of amenity and facility provision the Council will classify all rooms in new residential accommodation as either habitable or non-habitable rooms which will be required to satisfy the following specified standards as appropriate.

Habitable rooms are rooms used mainly as a living room, dining room, or bedroom and as a kitchen when it is big enough to be considered as a dining kitchen. A dining space which is separated from the kitchen or living room by a moveable partition would also be considered a habitable room. Habitable rooms must be able to function for the purpose for which they are intended. They must have an adequate size, height, shape, natural lighting and ventilation.

A habitable room must have a minimum width of 2.13 metres (7 ft) and a minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.3 metres (7.5 ft). In addition all habitable rooms must be of sufficient size to function adequately for the purpose for which they are intended as detailed in the following tables of specific room dimensions.

## Shape

In addition to the above room dimensions all habitable rooms must be of a sufficiently regular shape so as to permit the effective use of their floorspace area for the purpose for which they are intended. Applicants may be expected to demonstrate the adequacy of proposed habitable rooms through accurate furniture layouts and other means as appropriate.

## Natural lighting and ventilation

All habitable rooms must be provided with a glazed window. The glazed area should be equivalent to at least 1/10th of the floor area unless the wall in which the window is located does not extend 0.6 metres (2 feet) on each

side of the window opening. In this case the glazed area shall be equivalent to 1/7th of the floor area.

All habitable rooms must be so positioned as to be capable of receiving unobstructed daylight through an upward angle of thirty degrees.

All habitable rooms must be ventilated directly to the external air by a window which has an openable area equivalent to 1/20th of the floor area.

## Sunlight and daylight

All habitable rooms should receive adequate daylight and sunlight, and developments will be expected to meet the standards

## Requirements for Self-Contained Accommodation

Minimum room areas in square metres (square feet in brackets)

No of persons	1P	2P	3P	4P	5P	6P	7P	8P
Room Description								
Main bedroom	8.5 (90)	11 (120)	11 (120)	11 (120)	11 (120)	11 (120)	11 (120)	11 (120)
Other double bedrooms	-	10.5 (110)	10.5 (110)	10.5 (110)	10.5 (110)	10.5 (110)	10.5 (110)	10.5 (110)
Single bedroom	-	6.5 (70)	6.5 (70)	6.5 (70)	6.5 (70)	6.5 (70)	6.5 (70)	6.5 (70)
Living room (with dining kitchen)	11 (120)	12 (130)	13 (140)	14 (150)	15 (160)	16 (170)	17 (180)	18 (190)
Dining/kitchen	8.5 (90)	9.5 (100)	11 (120)	11 (120)	12 (130)	13 (140)	14 (150)	15 (160)
Living room (without dining kitchen)	14 (150)	15.5 (165)	17.5 (185)	17.5 (185)	19.5 (210)	21.5 (230)	21.5 (230)	23.5 (250)
Galley kitchen	5.5 (60)	6.0 (65)	6.5 (70)	7.5 (80)	7.5 (80)	7.5 (80)	9.5 (100)	9.5 (100)
Living room				14 (150)	15 (160)	16 (170)	17 (180)	18 (190)
Dining room				6.5 (70)	7.5 (80)	8.5 (90)	9.5 (100)	10.5 (110)
Kitchen				7.5 (80)	7.5 (80)	7.5 (80)	9.5 (100)	9.5 (100)
Combined living/ dining/kitchen area	(18.5) (200)	(18.5) (200)						

## Requirements for Houses in Multiple Occupation (see Policy HO14)

Minimum room areas in square metres (square feet in brackets)

No of Persons	1P	2P
Room description		
Cooking facilities provided within the room	11 (120)	14 (150)
Cooking facilities provided in a separate room/kitchen of not less than 5.5 sq.m. (60 sq. ft.)	8.5 (90)	11 (120)

(In no case shall a room be occupied by more than two persons)

## Requirements for Residential Hostels (see Policy HO15)

(In no case shall a room be occupied by more than four persons)

Minimum room areas in square metres (square feet in brackets)

No of Persons	1P	2P	3P	4P
Room description				
Cooking facilities provided within the same room	10.5 (110)	14 (150)	18.5 (200)	23.5 (250)
Cooking facilities provided in a separate room/kitchen of not less than 5.5 sq.m. (60 sq. ft.)	6.5 (70)	10.5 (110)	15 (160)	19.5 (210)

recommended by the Department of the Environment in "Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice" Building Research Establishment 1991.

The proposed development should not restrict unduly the daylight to adjacent buildings and open spaces, including those outside the boundaries of the site. The effect of the proposal on sunlight to adjacent buildings, particularly residential properties and open spaces, will also be a material consideration in judging the acceptability of proposals.

### Non Habitable Rooms

Non habitable rooms are rooms used mainly as bathrooms, water closets and kitchens (where they are insufficiently large enough to be considered as a dining kitchen). Non habitable rooms must be able to function for the purpose for which they are intended. They must have an adequate size, height, shape, lighting and ventilation as detailed below:

### Size, Height and Shape

The adequacy of bathrooms and water closets is not determined by floor area alone. Their consideration is a matter as to whether or not they would be fit for the function in terms of arrangement of fittings and shape and size of the rooms themselves. The size of kitchen must comply with the dimensions specified in the requirements for self contained accommodation table, and also be of a sufficient regular shape so as to permit the effective use of their floorspace area for the purpose for which they are intended.

### Lighting and Ventilation

All bathrooms, water closets and kitchens (non habitable) should be ventilated directly to the external air by a window (bathrooms and water closets to be glazed with obscured glass). The openable area of which shall be equivalent to at least 1/20th of the floor area of the room. Where this is not practicable mechanical ventilation providing a minimum of three air changes per hour shall be provided.

## Stacking Arrangements

The layout of all units should be designed so that rooms in different units on different floors which are intended for similar purposes are in vertical alignment and represent an acceptable stacking arrangement (bedrooms above bedrooms, living rooms above living rooms. Bathrooms and water closets should also be located above each other so as to reduce pipe noise transmission).

### **Standard 4 : Reduction of External Noise Disturbance to Adjacent Residential Buildings**

Where adjacent road or rail traffic generates noise disturbance in excess of the ambient noise levels all new residential windows fronting onto the noise source should be double glazed.

The Council will have regard to its Noise Guidelines in considering any proposed residential development.

### **Standard 5 : Privacy and over-looking**

Careful consideration should be given to the layout and design of developments, to prevent over-looking of adjoining properties.

Habitable room windows directly opposite each other should be at least 21 metres apart, with a distance of 12 metres separating windows of habitable and non-habitable rooms.

Suitable boundary treatment and landscaping can also minimise the effects of over-looking and protect privacy.

### **Standard 6 : External Amenity Space**

All new residential units should be provided with external amenity space (gardens, patios, balconies and terraces) appropriate to the needs of their intended occupants whenever practicable and in particular in accordance with:

#### **Gardens for Family Units**

The Council will require access to a garden for every dwelling suitable for occupation by households with children. This should be a minimum of 30 sq.m. (320 sq. ft.) which should be regularly shaped and suitably enclosed as a private amenity space. This figure should be for rear gardens only. Access

through bedrooms would not normally be acceptable since it may not necessarily be desirable at all times.

#### **Garden Access Stairs**

Where a three or more bedroom flat cannot be accommodated on the basement/ground floor of the building, an external staircase may be provided. Such staircases need to be carefully designed to avoid the problems of loss of privacy and loss of outlook and should not create a problem of security for other residents. Staircases should be no more than 1 storey in height and should be constructed in materials which complement the existing building.

### **Standard 7 : Domestic Refuse Storage**

Proper provision must be made for the storage of domestic refuse in the interest of amenity and hygiene.

Each new residential unit must be provided with satisfactory refuse storage areas and facilities. These are best located within a suitable enclosure at the rear of the property. However, where no rear access exists it is preferable that enclosures are located behind the front boundary wall. A location close to the ground floor windows should be avoided. The enclosure should be constructed in materials which match the existing building.

Particular attention must be given to the satisfactory provision and location of refuse storage facilities for new residential units located above retail and other commercial premises (see Policy HO6).

### **Standard 8 : Housing for People with Disabilities**

Strategic Guidance requires the Council to make adequate provision for housing for people with disabilities who need accommodation constructed to either mobility or wheelchair housing standards dependent on the nature of their physical disability.

#### **Mobility Housing**

Mobility Housing is ordinary housing built to a certain basic standard so that it can be adapted to be lived in by most people with disabilities. Even amongst those who use wheelchairs 50-75% can manage without them inside their homes. Mobility Housing is also suitable for visitors in wheelchairs.

All new build houses and flats and ground floor flats with level access created through conversion are to be built to Mobility Standards in accordance with the publication "Mobility Housing" (DoE Housing Directorate Occasional Paper 2/74).

The principle requirements of Mobility Housing are:

- (i) A level or ramped approach and flush threshold at the main entrance.
- (ii) Corridors and doorsets to the principal rooms (including a bedroom) wide enough for wheelchair use.
- (iii) A bathroom, W.C. and at least one bedroom at entrance level.

Houses on two storeys are suitable if they have a downstairs W.C. and a straight flight staircase for the installation of a stairlift. Overall space standards are the same as for ordinary housing, and Mobility Housing need cost no more to construct. Indeed the particular design features of mobility housing are desirable and convenient for any potential occupier, not just people with disabilities.

#### **Wheelchair Housing**

Wheelchair Housing is housing needed by people permanently confined to wheelchairs (estimated to be about 2-3% of all people with disabilities). It generally needs to be on one level, and in addition to easy access it has above average space standards in order to allow for full wheelchair manoeuvre throughout.

Wheelchair units should be built in accordance with the publication "Wheelchair Housing" (DoE Housing Directorate Occasional Paper 2/75).

The principle requirements of Wheelchair Housing are:

- (i) A level or slightly ramped approach and flush threshold at the main entrance.
- (ii) Internal planning for wheelchair manoeuvre in all principal rooms, with 1200mm passageways and 900mm doorsets or sliding doors.
- (iii) A downstairs bedroom and bathroom, or in a two storey house, a downstairs W.C. and a straight flight staircase suitable for installation of a stair or chair lift.
- (iv) Bathrooms and toilets large enough to permit lateral transfer from wheelchair to W.C./bath.

Households containing people with disabilities cover the entire range of household sizes and tenurial requirements. The Council will expect Mobility and Wheelchair housing provision to reflect this. In addition people with disabilities often have lower than average incomes and are therefore particularly dependent on social housing provision.

#### **Standard 9 : Children's Playspace**

The Council wishes to ensure that the needs of children are fully considered at the initial design stage in order to provide a safe, secure and supervised environment.

On all sites larger than 0.4 hectares (1 acre) or in schemes which have 40 child bedspaces or more (whichever is the smaller) the Council will require that specific communal play areas are provided.

Each play area should be a minimum of 200 sq.m. in size to enable a range of functions to be provided to suit the needs of the under 10s playing close to home and should be provided at the level of 5-10 sq.m. of playspace per child bedspace depending on the location of the development site.

Whilst the playspace itself, and access to it, should be overlooked by as many of the dwellings as possible in order to give maximum degree of 'passive supervision', consideration needs to be given to ensuring that residents' privacy is not unduly disturbed by the activities within the playspace. Locations next to elderly persons units should therefore normally be avoided.

It is desirable that the responsibility for the future management and maintenance of play areas should be met by the developer to the satisfaction of the Council.

Also refer to the Supplementary Planning Guidance Note : 'Children's Play' for advice on location and design.