County Durham and Darlington
**Fire and Rescue Service**

# FIRE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

# IN

# HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

## In association with

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Durham County Council

## INTRODUCTION

Research indicates that certain types of HMOs present significantly greater health and safety risks to tenants than comparable single occupancy dwellings. Risk assessment carried out by ENTEC on fire safety in HMOs concluded that in all houses converted into bedsits, the annual risk of death per person is 1 in 50,000 (six times higher than in comparable single occupancy houses). In the case of bedsit houses comprising three or more storeys the risk is 1 in 18,600 (sixteen times higher).

This document has been developed by County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service with the co-operation of Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council. The objective of this document is to provide owners, managers, letting agents and contractors with the necessary information which will help them provide their tenants with safe and high quality accommodation, and reduce the need for intervention from local authorities.

The standards referred to in this document are based on typical 2 or 3 storey shared houses in multiple occupation, whether they are subject to mandatory licensing or not.

"**Shared houses**" mean, for the purposes of this standard, HMO's where the property has been rented out by an identifiable group of sharers such as students, work colleagues or friends as joint tenants. In deciding on whether the property is shared, the following factors will be considered and a balanced view taken of the particular state of affairs:

(i) The extent, or otherwise, to which each occupier shares facilities such as dining rooms, kitchens, bathrooms and other parts of the property, and whether all parts of the property are accessible to all occupiers;
(ii) The degree of co-operation and social interaction amongst the occupiers;
(iii) The terms and conditions contained in the tenancy agreement(s);
(iv) Payment arrangements for rent, utility bills, food and other such items;
(v) The extent, or otherwise, of related occupiers;
(vi) Features present in the property, such as locks on individual units of accommodation and to what extent facilities are shared;
(vii) Any factors affecting the likely fire safety risks e.g. occupiers with limited mobility, drug / alcohol dependency etc.

Assistance must be sought from County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, Durham County Council or Darlington Borough Council in all other cases, or where there are particular concerns.

For completeness, Appendix 3 contains standards relating to typical Bedsit Type HMO's:

**"Bedsits"** mean, for the purpose of this standard, HMO's which comprise a number of separate non-self-contained bedsit lettings or floor-by-floor lets. Typically there will be individual cooking facilities within each bedsit, although not always, and toilets and bathing / washing facilities will mostly be shared. There is unlikely to be a communal living or dining room and each bedsit or letting will be let to separate individuals with a degree of independence to each other.

In deciding upon whether a property is a bedsit or not, the following factors will be considered and a balanced view taken of the particular state of affairs, namely:

(viii) The extent, or otherwise, to which each occupier shares facilities such as dining rooms, kitchens, bathrooms and other parts of the property, and whether all parts of the property are accessible to all occupiers;
(ix) The degree of co-operation and social interaction amongst the occupiers;
(x) The terms and conditions contained in the tenancy agreement(s);
(xi) Payment arrangements for rent, utility bills, food and other such items;

(xii) The extent, or otherwise, of related occupiers;
(xiii) Features present in the property, such as locks on individual units of accommodation and to what extent facilities are shared;
(xiv) Any factors affecting the likely fire safety risks e.g. occupiers with limited mobility, drug / alcohol dependency etc.

## MEANING OF HOUSE IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

The Housing Act 2004, Sections 254 – 259 gives a full explanation of the meaning of house in multiple occupation. A brief outline is shown below;

**"House in Multiple Occupation" means a building, or part of a building (e.g. a flat):**

- which is occupied by more than one household and in which more than one household shares an amenity (or the building lacks an amenity) such as a bathroom, toilet or cooking facilities; or,
- which is occupied by more than one household and which is a converted building which does not entirely comprise self contained flats (whether or not there is also a sharing or lack of amenities); or
- which comprises entirely of converted self contained flats and the standard of conversion does not meet, as a minimum, that required by the 1991 Building Regulations and more than one third of the flats are occupied under short tenancies.

The terms "occupied" and "household" are further defined within the Housing Act 2004.

## ENFORCEMENT POWERS

### Local Authority Powers

### Housing Act 2004

A range of powers has been introduced by the Housing Act 2004 and some associated Regulations have replaced earlier legislation under the Housing Act 1985;

- Part 1 – deals with housing conditions and replaces the fitness standard with a new Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Hazards and defects are now given a numerical score and this will be used to determine the effect on occupiers using a series of categories. Hazards in categories A – C indicate situations where the local authority must take action. Those in categories D – J are those where the local authority has discretion to act. The range of powers available under the Housing Act include, closing orders, demolition orders, prohibition orders, improvement notices and hazard awareness notices. In extreme cases emergency action is available.
- Part 2 – deals with the licensing of houses in multiple occupation.
- Part 4 – deals with control provisions including interim and final management orders.

### Associated Regulations made under the Housing Act 2004

- The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (England) Regulations 2005
- The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Prescribed Descriptions) (England) Order 2006
- The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006
- The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007

**Building Act 1984 Section 72**

This power may be used in respect of certain buildings, including HMO's where means of escape from fire are deemed to be insufficient and there is a floor in the building of more than 6 metres from ground level. This is concerned only with means of escape and does not cover other fire precautions. The Local Authority has to consult with the Fire and Rescue Authority before serving a Section 72 notice.

**Building Regulations 2000 (As Amended)**

New purpose-built HMO's must comply with current Building Regulations and satisfy the relevant guidance (see below). Where dwellings are converted or there are structural alterations or any internal alterations in an existing HMO which affect the means of escape, the Building Regulations, Housing Health and Safety Rating System guidance, and DCLG fire safety guidance must be satisfied. In such cases a Building Regulation application should be submitted and consultation with the BCO, EHO and Fire and Rescue Authority is essential. All means of escape from fire in the house should be compliant with the latest release of Approved Document B of the Building Regulations currently in force.

**Foam Filled Furniture**

The supply of such furniture as part of a letting is controlled by the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended).

**Fire and Rescue Authority Powers**

**Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the Order) prohibition notice procedures under this section will only be used by the Fire and Rescue Authority if the EHO is unable to use the powers conferred on them by the Housing Act 2004.

- A tenant displaced by a prohibition notice may not necessarily be considered by the Local Authority to be legally homeless. The Homelessness Officer of the Local authority should be forewarned by the EHO that a prohibition notice is being considered so that appropriate arrangements for tenants can be made.

- Enforcement procedures under the Order preclude enforcement in, among others, "domestic premises". However the definition of "domestic premises" does not extend to those areas such as stairways, entrance foyers and lifts etc that are "used in common by the occupants of more than one private dwelling".

It is inferred that in addition to HMOs the order will apply to any areas of "like premises" that are used in common by the occupants. As such the common parts of blocks of flats will fall within this category. The introduction to The Fire Safety Guide to Sleeping Accommodation provides a list of premises, or parts of premises, to which the order applies.

**General Reminder**

This document is intended to offer general guidance, however relevant officers should be consulted if any concern exists relating to the safety of any premises. The guidance offered in this document is restricted to typical houses in multiple occupation; assistance should be sought from the aforementioned authorities in all other cases.

## CONSIDERATION OF FIRE SAFETY MEASURES

An Officer from Durham County Council or Darlington Borough Council will carry out an initial assessment of fire precautions in houses and hostels of multiple occupation.

Where issues of concern are found, the matters will be brought to the attention of the person in control of the property. This will be in writing, in one or more of the following ways:

- A letter advising of the minimum works required to bring the property up to the appropriate fire safety standard and details of the time scale considered to be reasonable in the circumstances;
- A letter advising the same, together with a schedule of additional licence conditions and time scales, for those properties that require a licence; or
- A letter advising the same, together with a relevant enforcement notice in line with Durham County Council's Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy (June 2010).

The Officer will take into account the type of accommodation, its method on occupation e.g. shared house or bedsit type, any unusual features and general restrictions such as listed building or architectural features. If appropriate, the Durham County Council Officer will consult the Fire and Rescue Authority, and, if necessary, a joint inspection will be arranged prior to informing the person in control of the property of any findings.

In exceptional cases, where the officer considers that the property presents an imminent risk to the health of the occupants, then emergency action may be taken.

This document sets down the general fire precautions to be applied to **all** 2-storey and 3-storey shared houses in multiple occupation in Appendices 1 and 2. Appendix 3 sets down the standards to be applied for bedsit type houses in multiple occupation. Further advice can be sought from the HMO Team for other property types.

Included within this document are specifications for elements of the building fabric and the following appendices:

- standards for 2 - storey shared house HMO's - **APPENDIX 1**
- standards for 3 - storey shared house HMO's - **APPENDIX 2**
- standards for 3 – storey bedsit type HMO's - **APPENDIX 3**
- fire alarm system definitions - **APPENDIX 4**
- typical layout of 3 – storey shared house HMO's - **DIAGRAM 1**

## STANDARDS TO BE APPLIED

The basis for these standards is set out in the LACORS (now Local Government Regulation) Housing – Fire Safety Guidance - ISBN – 978-1-84049-638-3 published in August 2008 and revised March 2009.

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council will generally base fire safety decisions for individual HMOs in line with this guidance. However, there may be certain characteristics relating to either the structure / layout of the HMO or its manner of occupation, which result in variations in decisions on fire safety matters.

### Means of Escape

The inter-relationship between means of escape and other fire precautions should always be borne in mind and a degree of flexibility should be exercised. Nevertheless, although the presence of effective means of giving early warning in the event of fire may greatly influence the ability of occupants to escape safely, the basic provision of means of escape in case of fire will always be necessary.

## Fire Risk Assessment

Prior to a property being occupied, a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment should be carried out. Whether or not this risk assessment is recorded will be dependent upon the requirements of the Registration Authority. The assessment should be carried out on behalf of the Responsible Person (generally the owner or premises manager – or licence holder in respect of licensed HMOs) by a competent person. The assessment must consider all fire risks within the particular property. **Bedrooms containing numerous electrical appliances should be considered as risk rooms as should kitchens.**

### Note

It is important to note that stairway enclosures must not contain any of the following:

1. Portable heaters of any type.
2. Heaters which have unprotected naked flames or radiant bars.
3. Fixed heaters using a gas supply cylinder.
4. Oil-fuelled heaters.
5. Cooking appliances.
6. Upholstered furniture.
7. Wardrobe or other storage furniture.
8. Coat racks.
9. Storage of any kind (unless it is kept in a locked cupboard, which is constructed to the same standard of fire resistance as the enclosure stairway).
10. Lighting involving the use of naked flames.
11. Gas meters other than those installed in accordance with appropriate Gas Safety Regulations. Gas pipes must be made of a material with a high melting point in order to comply with Gas Safety Regulations.

## Building Works Specifications

## Protected Route

The protected escape route is designed to allow for residents from all parts of the building to reach the outside without passing through a higher fire risk area. The protected route MUST be kept clear of obstructions and combustible materials. The walls and ceilings to all parts of the protected route MUST be free of highly flammable materials i.e. polystyrene tiles or

heavy flock wallpaper. You must ensure that a protected route to a final exit door is provided. This must incorporate half hour fire resisting walls, ceilings and fire doors. Advice on means of compliance may be obtained from the HMO team.

Any cupboard within the means of escape must not be used for the storage of combustible materials unless the access door meets the 30 minute standard and is kept locked. Any gas installations with lead pipe work on the escape route will require that the lead pipe-work is replaced.

The mortice deadlocks to the final exit door/s to be of a type capable of being operated without keys from the inside (e.g. thumb turn locks)

**Walls**

Should be constructed or upgraded to achieve 30 minutes fire resistance. Every wall which forms part of the protected route of escape, (highlighted in red in the diagrams attached in Diagram 1) must be 30 minutes fire resisting.

Existing lath and plaster walls must retain their integrity and be in sound condition and be upgraded to achieve 30 minutes Fire Resistance. Where upgrading is necessary it is important to ensure that walls achieve the necessary fire resistance from both sides and that the sub structure is in sound condition in all cases, 12.5mm plasterboard and skim coat can in most cases be used to upgrade to 30 minutes fire resistance.

**Ceilings**

A 30 minutes fire resisting ceiling must separate any accommodation in the floor above. Existing ceilings constructed with lath and plaster must be in sound condition and upgraded as necessary (see above).

**Floors**

For separation between an occupied basement or commercial premises and the floor above, the fire resistance must be increased to 60 minutes. To achieve this, in most cases existing ceilings can be over boarded with two layers of 12.5 mm plasterboard, fixed with staggered joints and skim coated.

**Fire Doors**

Fire doors must be provided to protect the means of escape, must have 30 minutes fire resistance and be fitted with smoke seals and self-closing devices (FD30S). Fire doors should never be wedged open, locked or fastened in any way that prevents easy and immediate opening.

Existing doors may be capable of being upgraded to provide appropriate fire resistance. Any upgrading must be in accordance with the appropriate British Standard or European equivalent standard, and evidence provided to verify the conversion.

Fire door(s) must be fitted to all risk rooms. These include all rooms identified in the fire risk assessment.

In shared accommodation door sets must comprise of a 30 minute fire resisting door hung on three high melt point hinges and be complete with intumescent strips and cold smoke seals. All doors must fit correctly into the frame.

Where a room contains no interlinked detection, cold smoke seals are omitted from that room entrance door. A closer must be fitted to the door which is adequate for the size and weight of the door; the closer to be adjusted to ensure the door closes smoothly and quietly into the rebate of the doorframe overcoming any latching device. Any lock or latch must be sleeved in intumescent material.

Existing adequate solid doors may if generally meeting the above description and if correctly fitting, be suitable to be used as fire doors.

Other doors may be capable of being upgraded to provide appropriate fire resistance. Any upgrading must be in accordance with the appropriate British Standard (currently BS476) or European equivalent standard, and evidence provided to verify the conversion.

Where glazing panels (fan lights) are fitted above doors they must be capable of providing at least half hour fire resistance e.g. by fitting Georgian wired glass. Where there are internal doors to an entrance vestibule they should be removed.

Locks on room doors and any other door leading from the unit of accommodation on to the protected route of escape and the final exit door must be accessed without the aid of keys.

Hasp and staple / padlock type of fastening to bedroom doors are not permitted.

**Windows**

Where an inner room (a room where the exit route is through another room) is a bedroom on the ground or first floor then an escape window with an unobstructed opening that is at least 0.33 $m^2$ and at least 450 mm high x 450mm wide and cill between 800-1100 mm from the floor must be provided.

On second floors or higher then escape windows are not acceptable and an alternative route will be required. Further advice can be sought from the HMO team.

**Basements**

Where habitable accommodation is provided in basements there must be an alternative means of escape via a door or suitable escape window to the external ground level in addition to the access route from within the house.

**Fire Precautions**

The Landlord must provide an adequate fire risk assessment, including safety instructions for residents and any employees. It must be brought to the attention of all tenants and must be kept available for inspection at the premises. A copy must be provided to the local authority on demand.

Fire fighting equipment, where required or provided, must conform to the appropriate British Standard or European equivalent standard.

Any proposals to provide alternative means of protection in the event of fire e.g. sprinkler systems will be considered in consultation with the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service.

## APPENDIX 1

## 2 Storey Shared Houses in Multiple Occupation

- **Risk Assessment -** a written fire risk assessment is recommended for the common areas of all HMO's, and all remaining areas of the dwelling. The risk assessment should be periodically reviewed and always reviewed when changes are made to the property. The risk assessment should be brought to the attention of the occupiers of the property.

- **Protected Route -** The protected escape route is designed to allow for residents from all parts of the building to reach the outside without passing through a higher fire risk area. The protected route MUST be kept clear of obstructions and combustible materials. The walls and ceilings to all parts of the protected route MUST be free of highly flammable materials i.e. polystyrene tiles or heavy flock wallpaper.

- **Fire Doors –** FD30S fire doors with self closers should be fitted to all kitchens or rooms containing kitchens. No requirement for FD30S to other rooms on the staircase enclosure, however these doors must be substantial defect free doors with no glazed element.

- **Walls and Ceilings –** should be constructed or upgraded to achieve 30 minutes fire resistance. Every wall which forms part of the protected route of escape, (highlighted in red in the diagrams attached in Diagram 1) must be 30 minutes fire resisting. Existing lath and plaster walls must retain their integrity and be in sound condition and be upgraded to achieve 30 minutes Fire Resistance. Where upgrading is necessary it is important to ensure that walls achieve the necessary fire resistance from both sides and that the sub structure is in sound condition in all cases, 12.5mm plasterboard and skim coat can in most cases be used to upgrade to 30 minutes fire resistance. A 30 minutes fire resisting ceiling must separate any accommodation in the floor above. Existing ceilings constructed with lath and plaster must be in sound condition and upgraded as necessary.

- **Floors -** For separation between an occupied basement or commercial premises and the floor above, the fire resistance must be increased to 60 minutes. To achieve this, in most cases existing ceilings can be over boarded with two layers of 12.5 mm plasterboard, fixed with staggered joints and skim coated.

- **Escape Windows –** where used as a primary or secondary means of escape, must have 0.33$m^2$ openable area with the width and height dimension being a minimum of 450mm. The ground below an escape window must be free from any hazard and be readily accessible. Escape windows must be easily openable from within the room in which it is fitted i.e. any window locks must be capable of being disabled by a responsible adult, without the use of a key.

- **Smoke Detectors –** all equipment and systems must conform to the appropriate British Standard or European equivalent standard. A Grade D LD3 system is required comprising:

    1. Interlinked mains wired or wireless smoke alarms with integral battery back up located in the escape route at all floor levels
    2. An additional interlinked mains wired or wireless heat detector with integral battery back up located in the kitchen
    3. An additional interlinked mains wired or wireless smoke detector with integral battery back up located in the lounge
    4. An additional interlinked mains wired or wireless smoke detector with integral battery back up located in any cellar

    It is recommended that individual battery operated smoke alarms are also installed in each unit of accommodation.

- **Carbon Monoxide Detectors –** a suitable detector, conforming to the appropriate British Standard or European equivalent standard, must be provided in any room containing a solid fuel combustion appliance. Such appliances include coal fires and log burning stoves, but would not include non-functioning purely decorative fireplaces.

- **Emergency Lights –** Emergency lighting may be required if the protected escape route is not provided with adequate background lighting either natural or borrowed from street lighting to ensure the safe movement to the final exit door(s). Where emergency lighting is provided it must comply with the appropriate British Standard or European equivalent standard.

- **Fire Blankets –** Generally, the use of fire blankets is discouraged and should not be provided. It is therefore recommended that any already present in the dwelling should be removed, unless the benefit of their retention can be demonstrated within the fire risk assessment. Where a fire blanket is provided, it must be to the appropriate British Standard or European equivalent standard, and must be mounted on the wall 1.5m high adjacent to an exit door away from the cooking facility.

- **Fire Extinguishers –** Generally, the use of fire extinguishers without adequate instruction and training should be discouraged. It is therefore recommended that any already present in the dwelling should be removed, unless the benefit of their retention can be demonstrated within the fire risk assessment. Where provided, the fire extinguisher should be a small dry powder type having a guaranteed shelf life.

- **Periodic Inspection -** A Fire Precautions log book, (example log book can be obtained from **www.ddfire.gov.uk**) should be used to record the periodic inspection checks, testing and maintenance of the

    - alarm and detection system
    - fire fighting equipment
    - and where applicable emergency lighting

  in accordance with the relevant British or European Standard.

  The log book should be maintained and kept available for inspection at the premises. If the property is to be left vacant for 4 weeks or longer, the systems and equipment must be checked before tenants take up occupancy and always before re-letting the accommodation. Test certificates should be in the format recommended within the relevant British or European Standard.

**APPENDIX 2**

**3 Storey Shared Houses in Multiple Occupation (whether or not an HMO licence is required)**

- **Risk Assessment -** a written fire risk assessment **is required** for the common areas of all licensed HMO's, and is recommended for all remaining areas of the dwelling. The risk assessment should be periodically reviewed and always reviewed when changes are made to the property. The risk assessment must be brought to the attention of the occupiers of the property.

- **Protected Route -** The protected escape route is designed to allow for residents from all parts of the building to reach the outside without passing through a higher fire risk area. The protected route MUST be kept clear of obstructions and combustible materials. The walls and ceilings to all parts of the protected route MUST be free of highly flammable materials i.e. polystyrene tiles or heavy flock wallpaper.

- **Fire Doors –** Fire doors must be provided to protect the means of escape, must have 30 minutes fire resistance and be fitted with smoke seals and self-closing devices (FD30S). Fire doors should never be wedged open, locked or fastened in any way that prevents easy and immediate opening. Existing doors may be capable of being upgraded to provide appropriate fire resistance. Any upgrading must be in accordance with the appropriate British Standard or European equivalent standard, and evidence provided to verify the conversion.

- **Walls and Ceilings –** must be constructed or upgraded to achieve 30 minutes fire resistance. Every wall which forms part of the protected route of escape, (highlighted in red in the diagrams attached in Diagram 1) must be 30 minutes fire resisting. Existing lath and plaster walls must retain their integrity and be in sound condition and be upgraded to achieve 30 minutes fire resistance. Where upgrading is necessary it is important to ensure that walls achieve the necessary fire resistance from both sides and that the sub structure is in sound condition in all cases, 12.5mm plasterboard and skim coating can in most cases be used to upgrade to 30 minutes fire resistance. A 30 minute fire resisting ceiling must separate any accommodation in the floor above. Existing ceilings constructed with lath and plaster must be in sound condition and upgraded as necessary.

- **Floors –** For separation between an occupied basement and the floor above, the fire resistance must be increased to 60 minutes. To achieve this, in most cases existing ceilings can be over boarded with two layers of 12.5 mm plasterboard, fixed with staggered joints and skim coated.

- **Escape Windows –** where used as a primary or secondary means of escape, should have 0.33msq openable area with the width and height dimension being a minimum of 450mm. The ground below an escape window must be free from any hazard. Escape windows must be easily openable from within the room in which it is fitted i.e. any window locks must be capable of being disabled by a responsible adult, without the use of a key. Escape windows are not permitted on second floors and above, except in exceptional circumstances – e.g. to a place of safety via a protected external route.

- **Smoke Detectors –** all equipment and systems must conform to the appropriate British Standard or European equivalent standard. Fire warning and detection conforming to BS 5839 Grade A to be provided in common areas, in individual dwellings / bedsits / study bedrooms, a Grade D LD2 System must be provided. This includes automatic interlinked smoke detectors in all living rooms and bedrooms, on all landings and within the entrance hall (see example in Diagram 1). A Grade D LD2 System only may be used throughout the

HMO where a written fire risk assessment clearly indicates that the protection reaches an equivalent standard to that set down above.

- **Carbon Monoxide Detectors –** a suitable detector, conforming to the appropriate British Standard or European equivalent standard, must be provided in any room containing a solid fuel combustion appliance. Such appliances include coal fires and log burning stoves, but would not include non-functioning purely decorative fireplaces.

- **Heat Detector –**an interlinked heat detector must be installed within the kitchen or any habitable room containing cooking facilities.

- **Emergency Lights –** Suitable emergency lights must be installed in accordance with the appropriate British Standard or European equivalent standard to all escape routes and windowless accommodation. Location of fittings to be decided by a competent installing engineer (see example in Diagram 1). In exceptional cases, the requirement for emergency lighting may be relaxed if the escape route is not complex, there is effective borrowed lighting present and the fire risk assessment adequately deals with such matters.

- **Fire Blankets -** Generally, the use of fire blankets is discouraged and should not be provided. It is therefore recommended that any already present in the dwelling should be removed, unless the benefit of their retention can be demonstrated within the fire risk assessment. Where a fire blanket is provided, it must be to the appropriate British Standard or European equivalent standard, and must be mounted on the wall 1.5m high adjacent to an exit door away from the cooking facility.

- **Fire Extinguishers –** Generally, the use of fire extinguishers without adequate instruction and training should be discouraged. It is therefore recommended that any already present in the dwelling should be removed, unless the benefit of their retention can be demonstrated within the fire risk assessment. Where provided, the fire extinguisher should be a small dry powder type having a guaranteed shelf life

- **Periodic Inspection -** A Fire Precautions log book, (example log book can be obtained from **www.ddfire.gov.uk**) should be used to record the periodic inspection checks, testing and maintenance of the

    - alarm and detection system
    - fire fighting equipment
    - and where applicable emergency lighting

  in accordance with the relevant British or European Standard.

  The log book should be maintained and kept available for inspection at the premises. If the property is to be left vacant for 4 weeks or longer, the systems and equipment must be checked before tenants take up occupancy and always before re-letting the accommodation. Test certificates should be in the format recommended within the relevant British or European Standard.

**APPENDIX 3**

**3 Storey Bedsit Type Houses in Multiple Occupation (whether or not an HMO licence is required) with Kitchen Facilities in each Unit of Accommodation**

- **Risk Assessment -** a written fire risk assessment **is required** for the common areas of all licensed HMO's, and is recommended for all remaining areas of the dwelling. The risk assessment should be periodically reviewed and always reviewed when changes are made to the property. The risk assessment must be brought to the attention of the occupiers of the property.

- **Protected Route -** The protected escape route is designed to allow for residents from all parts of the building to reach the outside without passing through a higher fire risk area. The protected route MUST be kept clear of obstructions and combustible materials. The walls and ceilings to all parts of the protected route MUST be free of highly flammable materials i.e. polystyrene tiles or heavy flock wallpaper.

- **Fire Doors –** Fire doors must be provided to protect the means of escape, must have 30 minutes fire resistance and be fitted with smoke seals and self-closing devices (FD30S). Fire doors should never be wedged open, locked or fastened in any way that prevents easy and immediate opening. Existing doors may be capable of being upgraded to provide appropriate fire resistance. Any upgrading must be in accordance with the appropriate British Standard or European equivalent standard, and evidence provided to verify the conversion.

- **Walls and Ceilings –** must be constructed or upgraded to achieve 30 minutes fire resistance. Every wall which forms part of the protected route of escape, (highlighted in red in the diagrams attached in Diagram 1) must be 30 minutes fire resisting. Existing lath and plaster walls must retain their integrity and be in sound condition and be upgraded to achieve 30 minutes fire resistance. Where upgrading is necessary it is important to ensure that walls achieve the necessary fire resistance from both sides and that the sub structure is in sound condition in all cases, 12.5mm plasterboard and skim coating can in most cases be used to upgrade to 30 minutes fire resistance. A 30 minute fire resisting ceiling must separate any accommodation in the floor above. Existing ceilings constructed with lath and plaster must be in sound condition and upgraded as necessary.

- **Floors –** For separation between an occupied basement and the floor above, the fire resistance must be increased to 60 minutes. To achieve this, in most cases existing ceilings can be over boarded with two layers of 12.5 mm plasterboard, fixed with staggered joints and skim coated.

- **Escape Windows –** where used as a primary or secondary means of escape, should have 0.33msq openable area with the width and height dimension being a minimum of 450mm. The ground below an escape window must be free from any hazard. Escape windows must be easily openable from within the room in which it is fitted i.e. any window locks must be capable of being disabled by a responsible adult, without the use of a key. Escape windows are not permitted on second floors and above, except in exceptional circumstances – e.g. to a place of safety via a protected external route.

- **Smoke Detectors – For bedsits with kitchen facilities sited within the bedsits** all equipment and systems must conform to British Standard BS 5839 Grade A LD2 interlinked throughout the escape route and any cellar, plus an additional Grade D, non-interlinked smoke alarm with integral battery back up, located in each bedsit.

- **Smoke Detectors – For bedsits with shared kitchen facilities** all equipment and systems must conform to British Standard BS 5839 Grade A LD2 interlinked throughout the escape route, any cellar and in each bedsit.

- **Carbon Monoxide Detectors –** a suitable detector, conforming to the appropriate British Standard or European equivalent standard, must be provided in any room containing a solid fuel combustion appliance. Such appliances include coal fires and log burning stoves, but would not include non-functioning purely decorative fireplaces.

- **Heat Detectors –** Fire warning and detection conforming to British Standard BS 5839 Grade A, LD2 System comprising interlinked heat detectors located in each bedsit, where cooking facilities are located in each unit of accommodation, or in each kitchen where cooking facilities are sited in shared kitchens.

- **Emergency Lights –** Suitable emergency lights must be installed in accordance with the appropriate British Standard or European equivalent standard to all escape routes and windowless accommodation. Location of fittings to be decided by a competent installing engineer (see example in Diagram 1). In exceptional cases, the requirement for emergency lighting may be relaxed if the escape route is not complex, there is effective borrowed lighting present and the fire risk assessment adequately deals with such matters.

- **Fire Blankets -** Generally, the use of fire blankets requires careful consideration. It is therefore recommended that the benefit of their retention can be demonstrated within the fire risk assessment. Where a fire blanket is provided, it must be to the appropriate British Standard or European equivalent standard, and must be mounted on the wall 1.5m high adjacent to an exit door away from the cooking facility.

- **Fire Extinguishers –** Generally, the use of fire extinguishers without adequate instruction and training should be discouraged. It is therefore recommended that a small dry powder guaranteed shelf life extinguisher is located in all bedsits and shared kitchens, together with adequate documented instructions given to occupiers. In addition, simple multi-purpose extinguishers may be located on each floor of the common parts, provided that their safe use is documented in the fire risk assessment.

- **Periodic Inspection -** A Fire Precautions log book, (example log book can be obtained from **www.ddfire.gov.uk**) should be used to record the periodic inspection checks, testing and maintenance of the

    - alarm and detection system
    - fire fighting equipment
    - and where applicable emergency lighting

  in accordance with the relevant British or European Standard.

  The log book should be maintained and kept available for inspection at the premises. If the property is to be left vacant for 4 weeks or longer, the systems and equipment must be checked before tenants take up occupancy and always before re-letting the accommodation. Test certificates should be in the format recommended within the relevant British or European Standard.

**APPENDIX 4**

## Definition relating to Fire Alarm Systems and grading

BS 5839 – 6 : 2004

Fire detection and fire alarm systems for dwellings -

Part 6: Code of practice for the design, installation and maintenance of fire detection and fire alarm systems in dwellings.

### System Category:

**Category LD –** Protection of life

**LD1** a system installed throughout the dwelling, incorporating detectors in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape routes from the dwelling, and in all rooms and areas in which fire might start, other than toilets, bathrooms and shower rooms.

**LD2** a system incorporating detectors in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape routes from the dwelling, and in all rooms or areas that present a high fire risk to occupants (following risk assessment). The specification for a type LD2 system should always include details of the areas or rooms of the dwelling that are to be protected.

**LD3** a system incorporating detectors in circulation spaces that form part of the escape routes from the dwelling only.

### System Grade:

*Grades B and C are included for completeness and to help general understanding*

**A** A fire detection and alarm system which incorporates control and indicating equipment conforming to BS EN 54-2 and which is designed, installed and serviced in accordance with all the recommendations of BS 5839 pt 1 (with certain substituted clauses, see BS5839: pt 6: 2004).

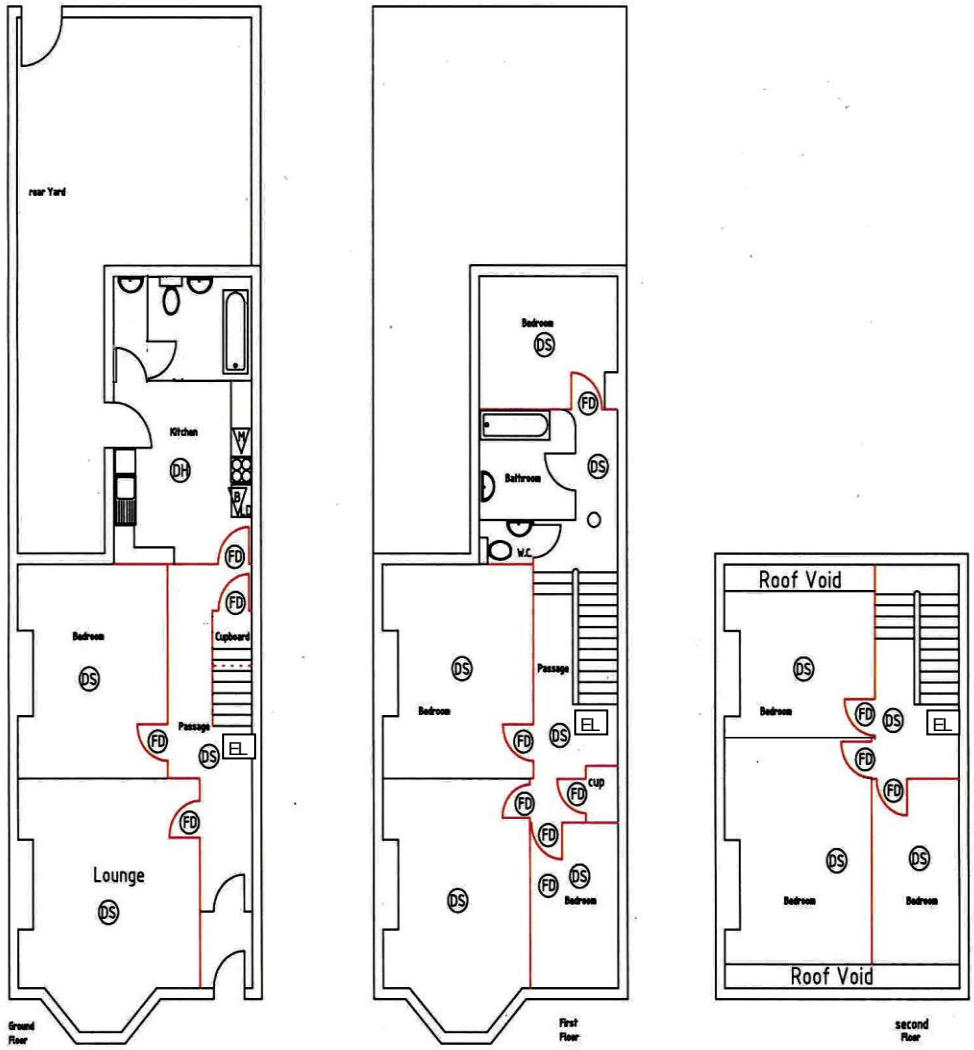
**B** A fire detection and alarm system comprising fire detectors, fire alarm sounders, and control and indicating equipment which either conforms with BS EN 54-2 or BS5839-6: 2004 Annex C.

**C** A system of fire detectors and alarm sounders (which may be combined in one unit) connected to a common power supply, comprising the normal mains and a stand by supply, with an element of central control.

**D** A system of one or more mains-powered smoke alarms, each with an integral power supply (the system may include heat alarms).

**Diagram 1**

# Example of Typical Layout of 3 Storey Shared Houses in Multiple Occupation




Ground Floor | First Floor | Second Floor

DS = SMOKE DETECTOR DH = HEAT DETECTOR FD = FIRE DOOR EL = EMERGENCY LIGHTS

NOTE The drawing does not show fire separation between all occupancies