



### **Guidance for Resident landlords who let rooms in Cambridge.**

There is ongoing high demand from students and professionals who are in need of good quality accommodation that is available at a reasonable level of rent in Cambridge. A resident landlord who rents out spare rooms to students and professionals can help fill this gap in the short and longer term.

In law, a *resident landlord* letting is one where the landlord and the person he or she lets to live in the same building.

Resident landlords who take in tenants and lodgers into their own home need to be aware that they have ongoing responsibilities as especially as their house may be defined as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) depending on the number of lodgers or tenants they let rooms to. The accommodation must be safe and suitable, allowing proper access to appropriate cooking facilities and sanitary facilities. All houses where rooms are let out will need to have adequate mains-operated fire alarm systems installed.

Resident landlords who let rooms to more than three lodgers or tenants will also have additional management responsibilities, as the house will be defined as a House in Multiple Occupation. Some larger HMOs will need a mandatory licence under Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004.

A resident landlord will only need a mandatory licence if the house is three storeys or more and there are at least four lodgers as the resident landlord and family members are considered as one person.

Lodgers or tenants can either rent a room for short or long periods of time depending on their own personal circumstances and either share the main kitchen, have individual bedsit cooking facilities in the room or be provided with meals.

This guidance is designed to help Resident Landlords who rent out rooms to provide safe and suitable accommodation.

### **Other national guidance**

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has published some useful guidance, *Letting rooms in your home -A guide for resident landlords* which can be found on the website link.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/151564.pdf>

### **Amenity standards**

A lodger/tenant can either share the main house kitchen or use cooking facilities provided in the bedroom as a bedsit type arrangement.

Adequate provision for bathroom, toilet and cooking facilities must be made.

### **Cooking Facilities**

Adequate provision must be made for cooking, dry food storage, refrigeration and washing up. Provision can be for example

- Individual cooking facilities in the bedrooms.
- Shared use of the main kitchen.
- Combination of basic facilities in room and use of kitchen
- Providing meals on a catered basis.

### **Individual cooking facilities in the bedrooms (bedsit arrangements)**

The minimum provision within bedsit rooms should be

- Two ring cooker with oven and grill or a combination microwave oven. A regular microwave only is not adequate.
- Refrigerator
- Kettle
- Adequate dry food storage
- Adequate fixed food preparation space. Food preparation surface should be in good condition, easy to clean and firmly fixed to the wall or floor. A dedicated table may be adequate.
- A sink in the room with adequate hot & cold water supply or unfettered access to a sink in main kitchen for food preparation and washing up.

### **Shared use of main kitchen**

Any agreement with the lodger or tenant should make it clear exactly what kitchen facilities and equipment they are entitled to use. The use of the main kitchen should be permitted at all times.

Adequate cooking facilities and food storage (including use of the refrigerator) should be provided in the kitchen for the lodgers/ tenants use.

### **Basic facilities.**

If the tenant/lodger is satisfied with a basic provision for snack making only in the room this can only be acceptable on the basis that arrangement is for a short duration, which is likely to be no more than six weeks and the occupier receives meals at College as part of their course for example a short course at a catered language school. The tenant must also be allowed unfettered access to the kitchen if they are unable to eat at college, or wish to make a meal. The lodger must be satisfied with this arrangement.

- Combination (not regular) microwave oven
- Kettle
- Access to the main house refrigerator, or refrigerator in the bedroom
- Adequate worktop or table
- Unfettered access to hot and cold water and sink in main kitchen

### **Providing meals on a catered basis**

If accommodation is offered on a catered basis, the resident landlord must provide good quality and nutritious meals. The resident landlord should allow the lodger/ tenant access to the kitchen to make drinks and snacks. An agreement should specify any restrictions on times when the kitchen will be unavailable and should make it clear exactly what kitchen facilities and equipment the tenant is entitled to use.

### **Sanitary facilities.**

The lodgers should have unfettered access to bathroom/WC. Alternatively you can discuss times when lodgers can use the bathroom to avoid inconvenience for both sides during any busy times.

### **HMO management regulations**

Owner-occupiers who take in any more than two lodgers will need to comply with HMO management regulations. There are further details on the Councils website on the following page.

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/advice-for-landlords/houses-in-multiple-occupation.en>

### **Adequate room heating**

The lodgers/tenants room must be adequately heated; secondary space heating may be required in colder months.

### **Fire precautions.**

The national fire safety guidance contains requirements, recommendations and examples of good practise, which can be found on the following link.

<http://www.lacors.gov.uk/lacors/NewsArticleDetails.aspx?id=19844>

Fire precautions required generally depend on the risks within the house. In general an interlinked electrically operated fire alarm system with 10-year battery backup comprising a smoke detector in the hallway and one on the first floor landing will be adequate.

If there is an increased use of the kitchen by lodgers a heat alarm is also recommended. A fire blanket is also recommended in the kitchen.

If there are individual cooking facilities in any bedrooms a 30-minute fire door set will be required along with a heat alarm in the bedroom, due to the elevated risk of fire associated with the cooking facilities. A fire blanket is also required in the bedsit room.

All doors should be of sound traditional construction that contain no glazing. If bedrooms doors have locks they should be open able from the inside without the use of a key, for example thumb turn or night latch.

### **Furniture and Furnishing (fire safety) Regulations 1988**

Owners are responsible for ensuring that all the furniture provided to a tenant or lodger complies with this legislation. Items covered include beds, headboards, mattresses and bases, sofa beds, futons, settees, armchairs, padded upright chairs, scatter cushions, seat pads and pillows, loose and stretch sofa covers. Landlords may wish to contact Trading Standards at the County Council for further details.

### **Annual gas safety check**

Landlords are responsible for ensuring that gas appliances (gas hobs and boilers etc) are maintained in good order and checked for safety at least every 12 months by a registered Gas Safe engineer.

Further advice can be found on the Gas Safe Register website <http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/> or by phoning 0800-408-5500

### **Cambridge Property Accreditation Scheme**

Property accreditation is a code of standards relating to the management and physical condition of privately rented accommodation. This can include rooms in homes let by resident landlords.

Landlords who join the voluntary scheme and abide by the standards are 'accredited'. If you would like to be part of the Cambridge Property Accreditation Scheme and have any questions please email Emma Barker at [emma.barker@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:emma.barker@cambridge.gov.uk) or telephone 01223 457916.

If you need any further advice on renting rooms in your home to lodgers please contact the Housing Standards team at the Council [env.health@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:env.health@cambridge.gov.uk) or 01223-457000