

Houses in Multiple Occupation and Licensing

What is an HMO?

A HMO describes shared accommodation situations where the occupiers are not a single family group or household, where rent is paid or other considerations (work etc) are done, and where there is some sharing of basic amenities (bathroom, toilet, and kitchen), i.e. non self-contained living.

Risk Factors

It has been shown that there is a significantly higher number of accidents and injuries associated with HMO accommodation, when compared with a dwelling occupied by a single family group or household.

As a result local **Housing Authorities** such as **Hart District Council** are required by law, to apply additional safety requirements and carryout inspections of HMO's, to help minimise potential risks and raise housing standards in shared accommodation.

Licensing

Where 3 or 4 occupants are sharing facilities, forming at least two households, this is classed as a low risk HMO. A Low Risk HMO does not need a licence from the council, however, landlords need to achieve certain minimum fire and safety standards and HMO management regulations will apply. The council are happy to advise landlords regarding these matters.

Where 5 or more occupants are sharing facilities, forming at least two households, this is classed as a High Risk HMO and the landlord or his agent will be required by law to apply to Hart District Council for a HMO licence.

It is an offence to run an un-licensed HMO. This can result in a large fine and no rent will be payable for an un-licensed HMO (the First Tier Property Tribunal may make a Rent Repayment Order for up to 12 months of rent in such circumstances). So, it is important to make contact with the Private Sector Housing team at the council.

How do I apply?

Please contact the Private Sector Housing team on 01252 774420 before you apply for a licence. An officer will then normally arrange a survey, and as a condition of the licence, may require works (relating to its management, use and occupation and its content and condition) to improve the property to a reasonable standard. A reasonable time period for meeting these conditions will be given.

What do I need to do now?

If you own or manage any HMO, you should notify the council via email at housing@hart.gov.uk with your contact details and the full address of the HMO(s).

Alternatively the address to write to is:

Private Sector Housing Team, Hart District Council, Civic Offices, Harlington Way, Fleet, Hants. GU51 4AE

Hart District Council will then acknowledge your notification and send you a HMO Licensing Pack if needed.

What happens if I do not apply?

If you run an un-licensed HMO you run the risk of prosecution, a fine of £20,000 and of having to repay rent you have previously collected.