

7 June 2019
Our ref: 5314528

Thank you for your request received on 10 May 2019, for the following information:

I would like to know, when one of your officers visits a property to make an inspection of a suspected HMO, what are the written regulations and guidelines that they should follow whilst on the premises.

Can you please provide me with a copy?

We have processed this request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Response

The council holds the information requested and the answers to your questions are below

I would like to know, when one of your officers visits a property to make an inspection of a suspected HMO, what are the written regulations and guidelines that they should follow whilst on the premises.

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There are no particular written guidelines for visiting a previously unknown HMO and this will of course depend upon whether we have access at the time and the particular circumstances of the case.

The investigating officer will use their skills, knowledge and experience in order to ascertain the necessary information and to determine the most appropriate way forward if a resolution cannot be reached immediately, including whether further investigation is required and the nature of that investigation. Where inspected in connection with an application for licensing, there is an element of prescription involved.

If access/partial access is obtained, we will usually collect some or all of the following information as may be appropriate: -

Names and contact details of relevant persons

The occupancy of the premise

The number and size of bedrooms/units of accommodation and any shared accommodation

The presence of the basic amenities (bathroom, toilet and kitchens), whether shared or otherwise

The presence, nature and extent of any automatic fire detection and alarm system

The presence, nature and extent of any emergency escape lighting

Structural fire precautions

The nature and condition of the means of escape

The presence and condition of any fire fighting equipment

The general management of the premise

Security and heating provisions

Regard is had to the Council's adopted standards for HMOs which can be found at <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/housing/private-housing/houses-multiple-occupation> as a document among others available to download.

In addition inspections are carried out in accord with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) following the Operating and Enforcement Guidance issued by the government and which can be found at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/15810/142631.pdf and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-health-and-safety-rating-system-enforcement-guidance-housing-conditions> respectively. The HHSRS is a system of assessing conditions in domestic premises according to the risk presented by any deficiencies with the building and / or its mode of occupation in some instances

Enforcement decisions are made in accord with the Council's Development and Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy which can be found as a download also at <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/housing/private-housing/houses-multiple-occupation>

Further information

If you are interested in the data that the council holds you may wish to visit Open Barnet, the council's data portal. This brings together all our published datasets and other information of interest on one searchable database for anyone, anywhere to access. <http://open.barnet.gov.uk/>

Advice and Assistance : Direct Marketing

If you are a company that intends to use the names and contact details of council officers (or other officers) provided in this response for direct marketing, you need to be registered with the Information Commissioner to process personal data for this purpose. You must also check that the individual (whom you wish to contact for direct marketing purposes) is not registered with one of the Preference Services to prevent Direct Marketing. If they are you must adhere to this preference.

You must also ensure you comply with the Privacy Electronic and Communications Regulations (PECR). For more information follow this Link www.ico.org.uk

For the avoidance of doubt the provision of council (and other) officer names and contact details under FOI does not give consent to receive direct marketing via any media and expressly does not constitute a 'soft opt-in' under PECR.

Your rights

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled, you can request a review within the next 40 working days by writing to the Information Management Team at: foi@barnet.gov.uk. Or by post to Information Management Team (FOI) The London Borough of Barnet, North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, London, N11 1NP

If, having exhausted our review procedure, you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you will have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF (telephone: 0303 123 1113; website www.ico.org.uk). There is no charge for making an appeal.