

Space Standards

Practice Note

July 2011



This Practice Note is currently being updated. The policy will continue to apply, but the residential space standard sought will be the new nationally described space standard rather than the HCA standard referred to.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-housing-standards-nationally-described-space-standard>





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1. Introduction

The council has established the principle of applying space standards to new residential development through the Bristol Development Framework.

The provision of sufficient living space within new homes is an important element of good housing design and a pre-requisite for basic living. Potential residents of new homes should be provided with sufficient space for basic daily activities and needs. This will include space for the furniture they need, to store personal possessions, to prepare food conveniently or to socialise with friends and family. If homes are to have a long life, they must offer functional and adaptable spaces that meet the needs of families, children, older people and disabled residents.

This practice note sets out the local policy context and the standards that will be applied.

2. Local Policy Context

BCS18: Housing Type

In accordance with Adopted Core Strategy policy BCS18: Housing Type, all new residential development will now need to meet appropriate space standards.

The relevant section of policy BCS18 states:

‘Residential developments should provide sufficient space for everyday activities and to enable flexibility and adaptability by meeting appropriate space standards’

The relevant explanatory text to policy BCS18 (para. 4.18.8) states:

‘Building to suitable space standards will ensure new homes provide sufficient space for everyday activities. Homes can also be used more flexibly and adapted more easily by their occupants to changing life circumstances. The council will apply to all residential development the same standards used by the Homes and

Communities Agency in the delivery of its projects and programmes.’

To meet policy requirements the Homes and Communities Agency’s (HCA’s) **Design and Quality Standards**¹, inherited from the Housing Corporation, are relevant. The HCA’s National Affordable Housing Programme continues to operate according to the standards set out in this document. The standards relevant to the policy relate to **unit size** and **unit layout – storage requirements**². Specifications for these standards are set out in the HCA’s **Housing Quality Indicators (HQIs)**³.

Other Core Strategy Policies

Policy BCS18 is supported by other Core Strategy policies that seek the delivery of flexible and adaptable accommodation.

Policy BCS15: Sustainable Design and Construction sets out broad criteria to be considered in the design and construction of new development. A key issue that should be addressed by development includes:

‘Flexibility and adaptability, allowing future modification of use or layout, facilitating future refurbishment and retrofitting;’

Policy BCS21: Quality Urban Design sets out criteria for the assessment of design quality in new development and sets standards against the established national assessment methodology ‘Building for Life’. Development will be expected to:

‘Safeguard the amenity of existing development and create a high-quality environment for future occupiers.’

and

‘Create buildings and spaces that are adaptable to changing social,

¹ Design and Quality Standards – April 2007 – Housing Corporation

² Size and layout are performance measures stipulated for the *internal environment core performance standard* set out in the Design and Quality Standards

³ Housing Quality Indicators (HQI) Form: Version 4 (For NAHP 08-11). Published May 2007 – Updated April 2008

technological, economic and environmental conditions.'

The assessment against 'Building for Life' includes criteria relating to flexibility, adaptability and good space standards. Specific criteria include.

Criterion 18: Do internal spaces and layout allow for adaptation, conversion or extension?

Criterion 20: Do buildings or spaces outperform statutory minima, such as building regulations?

The full 'Building for Life' criteria and explanatory text can be found at www.buildingforlife.org.

3. The Standards

The standards applied by the council are taken from the Housing Quality Indicators (HQI) Form Version 4 updated April 2008. The council will only apply those standards that relate to the relevant policy requirements set out in section 2. This will include standards relating to *unit size* and to *unit layout – storage requirements*. The original standards are set out in sections 5 and 6 of the Housing Quality Indicators Form.

The Housing Quality Indicators Form can be viewed and downloaded from the Homes and Communities Agency website: www.homesandcommunities.co.uk.

The standards are not intended to be applied to student cluster flat accommodation but can be used as a useful guide.

The standards to be applied, together with their HQI sources are set out below.

Unit Size

Unit type by area

All new residential units to meet/fall within the internal floor area size standards for each unit size as set out in the table below.

The definitions of bed space and internal floor area are taken from the HQI and are set out in Annex 1.

1 bed space	30 to 35 sq m
2 bed space	45 to 50 sq m
3 bed space	57 to 67 sq m
4 bed space	67 to 75 sq m
5 bed space - 1 storey	75 to 85 sq m
5 bed space - 2 storey	82 to 85 sq m
5 bed space - 3 storey	85 to 95 sq m
6 bed space -1 storey	85 to 95 sq m
6 bed space - 2 storey	95 to 100 sq m
6 bed space - 3 storey	100 to 105 sq m
7 bed space - 2+ storey	108 to 115 sq m
7+ bed space	add 10 sq m per bed space

Source: Housing Quality Indicators (HQI) Form Version 4 updated April 2008 - Section 5, Indicator 5.1, p.27

Units by living spaces

All new residential units to provide at least the number of rooms required for each unit size as set out in the table below.

Required Living Spaces	1 bed space	2 bed space	3 bed space	4 bed space
Bedroom	1	1	2	2
Bathroom	1	1	1	1
WC#	1	1	1*	1*
Kitchen	1	1	1	1
Living Room	1	1	1	1
Dining Space	1	1	1	1

Required Living Spaces	5 bed space	6 bed space	7 bed space	8+ bed space
Bedroom	3	3	4	4+
Bathroom	1	1	1	1+
WC#	2	2	2	2+
Kitchen	1	1	1	1
Living Room	1	1	1	1
Dining Space	1	1	1	1

Separate or within a bathroom

* Two WCs required for 3 bed space or 4 bed space when on two floors.

Source: Housing Quality Indicators (HQI) Form Version 4 updated April 2008 - Section 5, Indicator 5.2.1, p.26/27

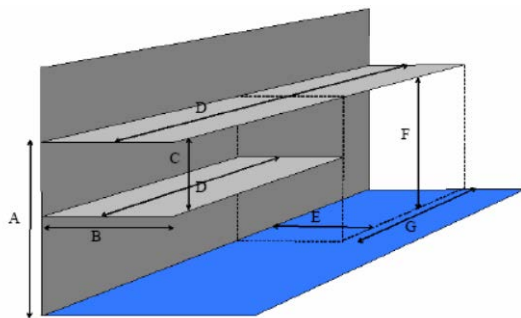
Whilst the *Unit Size* standards set out above include standards for 1 bed space units it is expected that new dwellings will provide at least 2 bed spaces. This is the smallest unit size that could meet the flexibility and adaptability requirements of policies BCS15, BCS18 and BCS21 i.e. accommodate sufficient space for a partner, a child, temporary carer or visiting friends and relatives.

The maximum number of bedspaces forming part of any approved scheme will be recorded as an Advice on the Notice of Decision.

Storage Requirements

Internal storage

All new residential units to meet the internal storage requirements set out below.



General Normal Storage

1. Shelf width (B) should be a minimum of 0.3m.
2. The height between shelves (C) should be a minimum of 0.3m.
3. B x D (D being the total length of shelving in the unit) should be at least the minimum shelf area identified for that number of bed spaces (see table below).

General normal storage minimum shelf areas by bed space (m ²)	1bs	2bs	3bs	4bs
	1.5	1.5	2.25	3.0
General normal storage minimum shelf areas by bed space (m ²)	5bs	6bs	7bs	8+bs
	3.75	4.5	5.25	+0.75 for each additional bed space

4. Height A (i.e. the height of the highest shelf) should be no greater than 1.5m.

Tall Storage - to be provided in addition to General Normal storage.

1. Height F (i.e. the height of the lowest shelf in the area designated for tall storage) should be at least 1.5m.
2. The floor area (E x G) should be at least 0.5m².

Airing Cupboard

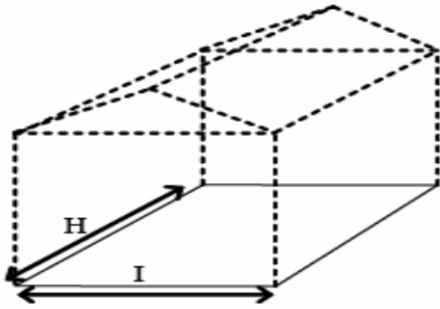
1. There should be shelving located inside an airing cupboard where the shelf area (B x D - where D is the total length of airing cupboard shelving) should be at least 0.4m².
2. This may be counted towards general normal storage.

Source: Housing Quality Indicators (HQI) Form Version 4 updated April 2008 –Section 6, p.32

External storage (not applicable to flats without gardens)

All new residential units to meet the external storage requirements set out below.

1. This storage should be lockable
2. For units with 1-4 bed spaces floor area (H x I) should be equal to or greater than 2.2m²
3. For units with greater than 4 bed spaces the floor area (H x I) should be equal to or greater than 3.0 m²
4. Where a garage is provided the external storage requirement may be deemed satisfied.
5. This cannot be counted towards the internal storage requirements.



Source: Housing Quality Indicators (HQI)
Form Version 4 updated April 2008 –
Section 6, p.33

4. Additional guidance

Whilst all new residential development will need to incorporate sufficient space in line with the identified standards, regard should also be had to the layout and usability of units provided. This includes the capacity of the unit to accommodate typical furniture requirements and to accommodate sufficient activity, access and passing zones.

Suggested supplementary standards relating to the layout and usability of units are set out in section 6, p28-31 of the Housing Quality Indicators (HQI) Form Version 4 updated April 2008.

These standards can assist when considering the detailed design and layout of units.

Annex 1: Definitions

Bedrooms and Bedspaces

The number of bed spaces represents the number of occupants the dwelling was designed to accommodate. For example, a three bedroom house with one double bedroom, one twin bedroom and a single bedroom has 5 bedspaces. A five bedroom house with two double bedrooms, one twin bedroom, and two single bedrooms has 8 bedspaces.

- A single bedroom is a bedroom designed to accommodate one person in a single bed.
- A twin bedroom is a bedroom designed to accommodate two people each in a single bed (with no bunk beds).
- A double bedroom is a bedroom designed to accommodate two people in one double bed.
- A triple bedroom is a bedroom designed to take three people in three single beds, or one double bed and one single bed (with no bunk beds).

Source: Housing Quality Indicators (HQI) Form Version 4 updated April 2008 – p. 9

Internal floor area

The size of the internal floor area is measured from wall finish to wall finish of the unit.

Specifics of what is and is not permitted when undertaking the unit size assessment

Not Permitted

- Perimeter wall thicknesses and external projections;
- Central lobby areas, passageways and other communal areas shared with other units;
- Any space where the height to the ceiling is less than 1.5m (e.g. rooms with sloping ceilings, external dustbin enclosures);
- Porches, covered ways etc;
- Balconies (private, escape and access) and decks
- Voids and air wells;
- Non-habitable basements, attics, thermal buffer zones or sheds;
- External storage space (see unit layout for this requirement);
- All space for purposes other than housing (e.g. garages, commercial premises etc);
- Conservatories not forming an integral part of the habitable space;
- Chimney breasts, bay windows or other features, which, when included, would result in a unit size unrepresentative of the true unit size.

Permitted

- Floor area measured between the inside faces of the finished enclosing walls of each unit and measured over:
 - Private staircases;
 - Partitions;
 - Internal walls;
 - Heating appliances;
 - Internal chimney breast projections;
- Internal porches forming an integral part of the habitable space;
- Internal storage space greater than 1.5m in height;
- Conservatories forming an integral part of the habitable space.

Source: Housing Quality Indicators (HQI) Form Version 4 updated April 2008 – p. 26

