

What is an HMO?

Under the changes in the Housing Act 2004, if a landlord lets a property which is one of the following types it is a House in Multiple Occupation:

- an entire house or flat which is let to three or more tenants who form two or more households and who share a kitchen, bathroom or toilet (for a definition of household please see below)
- a house which has been converted entirely into bedsits or other non-self-contained accommodation and which is let to three or more tenants who form two or more households and who share kitchen, bathroom or toilet facilities
- a converted house which contains one or more flats which are not wholly self contained (i.e. the flat does not contain within it a kitchen, bathroom and toilet) and which is occupied by three or more tenants who form two or more households
- a building which is converted entirely into self-contained flats if the conversion did not meet the standards of the 1991 Building Regulations and more than one-third of the flats are let on short-term tenancies
- in order to be an HMO the property must be used as the tenants' only or main residence and it should be used solely or mainly to house tenants. Properties let to students and migrant workers will be treated as their only or main residence and the same will apply to properties which are used as domestic refuges

What is a household?

The following are 'households' for the purposes of the Housing Act 2004:

Members of the same family living together including:

- Couples married to each other or living together as husband and wife (or in an equivalent relationship in the case of persons of the same sex)
- Relatives living together, including parents, grandparents, children (and step-children), grandchildren, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces or cousins
- Half-relatives will be treated as full relatives. A foster child living with his foster parent is treated as living in the same household as his foster parent.
- Any domestic staff are also included in the household if they are living rent-free in accommodation provided by the person for whom they are working.

Therefore three friends sharing together are considered three households. If a couple are sharing with a third person that would consist of two households. If a family rents a property that is a single household. If that family had an au-pair to look after their children that person would be included in their household.