

# Reading Borough Council

## Reading Borough Council Additional Licensing for Housing in Multiple Occupation Designation 2025.

### **Notification of Designation for Additional Licensing for Houses and Flats in Multiple Occupation**

Reading Borough Council has, in exercise of its powers under section 56 of the Housing Act 2004, designated the area of the district for additional licensing. The designation shall apply to the whole Of the Borough of Reading.

Reading Borough Council considers that a significant proportion of the HMOs covered by the designation are being managed sufficiently ineffectively as to give rise, or to be likely to give rise, to poor property conditions, which can affect the safety and welfare of the occupants.

Reading Borough Council has consulted persons who are likely to be affected by it under section 56(3)(a) of the Act for not less than 10 weeks and considered representations made.

#### COMMENCEMENT AND DURATION

1. The Designation was made on 17 November 2025 and shall come into force on 1 March 2026.
2. The Designation shall cease to have effect on the 28 February 2031, or earlier if the Council revokes the scheme under section 60 of the Act.

#### PROPERTIES TO WHICH THE DESIGNATION APPLIES

1. The Designation applies to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) defined in section 254-257 of the Housing Act 2004, within the entire area of the district of the Reading Borough Council.

The designation applies to all properties, including flats, which are occupied by 3 or more persons comprising of 2 or more households. This is irrespective of the number of storeys. This also includes single storey flats and two, three or more storey properties

A building or a part of a building is a “house in multiple occupation” under the designation if—

- (a) it meets the conditions in section 254(2) (“the standard test”);
- (b) it meets the conditions in section 254 (3) (“the self-contained flat test”);
- (c) it meets the conditions in section 254 (4) (“the converted building test”);
- (d) an HMO declaration is in force in respect of it under section 255

2. The following properties are excluded

- a) Properties subject to schedule 14 of the Housing Act 2004, buildings that are not HMOs for the purposes of the Act.
- b) Properties subject to mandatory licensing under section 55(2)(a) of the Housing Act 2004.
- c) a temporary exemption notice is in force in relation to it under the Housing Act 2004 – section 62 or
- d) an interim or final management order is in force in relation to it under the Housing Act 2004 Chapter 1 of Part 4.
- e) Buildings or parts of buildings which are converted block of flats to which section 257 applies (flats converted pre 1991 without building control approval) are not subject to the designation. However please note that individual flats or parts of the building are subject to the designation and require a licence where criteria in paragraph 1 apply to those parts.

## THE EFFECT OF THE DESIGNATION

- 3. Subject to the exemptions above and any further exemptions specified in law, every house in multiple occupation of the description specified in paragraph 5 and in the district of the Borough of Reading shall be required to be licensed under section 61 of the Act:
- 4. An application for a licence must be made to the local housing authority under section 63 of the Act, made in accordance with such requirements as the Council may specify and accompanied by a fee fixed by the Council.
- 5. The Reading Borough Council will comply with the requirements of Part 2 of the Act and shall maintain a register of all houses registered under this designation, as required under section 232 of the Act.
- 6. Upon this Designation coming into force, any person who:

- a) manages or has control of a licensable HMO which is not so licensed;
- b) manages or has control of a licensed HMO and knowingly permits the HMO to be occupied by more persons or households than is authorised under the licence;
- c) is the licence holder and has obligations or restrictions imposed upon them by the licence and fails to comply with any condition of the licence,

commits a criminal offence and is liable to prosecution under section 72 of the Act. At the time of designation maximum penalty on summary conviction is an unlimited fine.

Alternatively, a Civil Penalty Notice may be issued by the Council. At the time of designation the maximum penalty is up to £30,000.00.

In addition, any person managing or having control of an unlicensed HMO which is required to be licensed may, on the application of a tenant or the Council, be ordered by the First-tier Tribunal to repay up to 12 months' rent to the tenant or, in the case of certain benefits, the Council (a rent repayment order).

No notice under section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 may be given in relation to an assured shorthold tenancy of the whole or part of an unlicensed house so long as it remains an unlicensed house.

The designation is published on the Council's website and is available for inspection by appointment at Reading Borough Council, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU and at [www.reading.gov.uk/hmo](http://www.reading.gov.uk/hmo)

Signed:



Matthew Golledge  
Acting Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection

Dated: 17 November 2025

Reading Borough Council, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU  
[hmo@reading.gov.uk](mailto:hmo@reading.gov.uk)  
0118 937 3787