

Informal Planning Guidance

Large-Scale Shared Living Accommodation (Co-living)



March 2026

Quick Guide to the Large-Scale Shared Living Accommodation Informal Planning Guidance document

This guidance document provides an interim policy framework to address the emerging trend of Large-Scale shared living accommodation (co-living) developments as this is not yet fully addressed by national policy or the adopted Nottingham City Local Plan Part 2.

Its purpose is to ensure clarity and consistency in decision-making by outlining expectations, design standards, and assessment criteria for these new forms of emerging residential developments. This guidance supplements Policies 2 and 8 of the Aligned Core Strategy (ACS) and Policies DE1, DE2, HO1, HO3, HO4, and IN4 of the Land and Planning Policies Document (LAPP, 2020). It clarifies that co-living schemes, as residential developments, are subject to Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) under Policy DE1, but deviations may be considered where justified by viability or technical feasibility evidence, ensuring a satisfactory standard of accommodation. The guidance will remain in place until the 2020 Local Plan Part 2 is formally revised. Other policies within the Local Plan may also be applicable depending on the specific nature of the proposed scheme.



Contents

1.	Purpose and Status of the Document	1
2.	Consultation	3
3.	Introduction	4
4.	Planning Policy Context	6
	<i>National Legislation, Policy and Guidance</i>	6
	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	6
	Emerging Draft NPPF December 2025	6
	<i>Local Policy Context</i>	8
	Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan (GNSP) Publication Version	9
	Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	9
5.	Co-living Developments in Nottingham	10
6.	Assessment of Need	12
7.	Design of Co-living developments	13
	Private and Communal Amenity Space	13
	Unit Mix and Diversity.....	13
	Co-Living Space Standards.....	13
	Designing Effective Internal/External Communal Space.....	15
	Accessibility Standards	17
	Washing and Drying Amenities	17
	Occupancy Profile	17
	Shared Living for Older Persons	18
	Change of use of existing buildings including Purpose Built Student Accommodation.....	18
	Part-conversion of existing PBSA schemes.....	19
	Waste and Recycling facilities	20
8.	Planning Obligations and Viability	21
9.	Pre-application Advice	23
	Glossary	24
	Appendix A: Illustrative Designs	26

1. Purpose and Status of the Document

- 1.1 Large-Scale shared living accommodation (referred to as Co-living throughout this document) is an emerging housing model with no standard definition in adapted national planning policy. Nottingham City Council does not currently have a dedicated policy for co-living schemes within its adopted Local Plan, creating a need for this interim guidance to inform planning decisions.
- 1.2 This guidance adopts a clear and consistent decision-making approach by setting out measurable expectations for the design, quality and appropriateness of co-living schemes. It provides a transparent framework for assessing proposals in accessible and sustainable locations, ensuring high-quality accommodation and efficient use of land.
- 1.3 This document serves as a position statement, setting out how existing Local Plan policies will be interpreted when assessing co-living proposals. It outlines expectations around design, amenity, sustainability, occupancy, and developer contributions. While not carrying the statutory weight of policies within an adopted Local Plan or Supplementary Planning Document, it will be treated as a material consideration in planning decisions until a specific co-living policy is adopted in the revised Local Plan.
- 1.4 In the absence of national or local policy on co-living, this guidance provides a consistent framework for interpreting relevant policies. Nottingham City Council recognises the varied approaches taken by other authorities and aims to ensure transparency and consistency in its own decision-making.
- 1.5 The guidance supplements policies in the Nottingham City Aligned Core Strategy (ACS, 2014) and the Land and Planning Policies Document (LAPP, 2020), particularly those relating to housing mix, design quality, sustainability, and infrastructure. It is intended to bridge the current policy gap until the Local Plan is formally updated.
- 1.6 Co-living proposals will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. In general, well-designed schemes that meet the standards set out in this guidance and are located in accessible locations with good access to services and employment via walking, cycling, and public transport will be supported.
- 1.7 Rather than prescribing specific design formats, the guidance establishes minimum standards to ensure quality, functionality, and resident wellbeing. It encourages flexibility and innovation in response to the unique characteristics of emerging co-living developments.
- 1.8 This guidance does not introduce new policy requirements but clarifies how existing local plan policies will be applied to co-living schemes to support consistent and transparent decision-making.

Conversion of Existing Buildings Including PBSA

- 1.9 In addition to guiding new co-living developments, this document also provides a framework for assessing proposals involving the conversion of existing buildings, particularly Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA).
- 1.10 PBSA schemes, typically designed for short-term student occupancy, differ significantly from co-living in terms of layout, amenity provision, and management. As such,

conversions to co-living use will generally require substantial adaptation to meet the expectations of longer-term residents such as working professionals. Whilst internal works may not require planning permission the change of use of PBSA is likely to represent a material change and in most cases will require planning permission. The guidance outlines the design, policy, and infrastructure considerations necessary to ensure such conversions are feasible, sustainable, and policy compliant. Additional developer obligations (e.g. Section 106 contributions) may also apply and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

1.11 This interim planning guidance document will be kept under review and updated as appropriate. Any new government legislation/guidance or other evidence will supplement the information contained within this document.



2. Consultation

- 2.1 This draft informal planning guidance has been prepared for public consultation, the results of which will help shape the final document.
- 2.2 You can make comments using the [online response form](#) through the consultation period as detailed on the web site. Please use this email address localplan@nottinghamcity.gov.uk to contact the Planning Policy Team initially if you have any questions.

3. Introduction

- 3.1 Co-living is an emerging new form of residential development. Although all schemes vary, they typically comprise large-scale (50 or more beds), purpose-built, and professionally managed accommodation that fosters communal living. Such schemes generally include a combination of private living spaces such as studio units with private ensuite and cooking facilities and shared units, where multiple residents occupy a single housing unit with private bedrooms but share common areas like bathrooms, kitchens, or living spaces within the unit itself, similar to a shared flat or House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).
- 3.2 Co-living is most suited to locations where higher-density residential development can be supported by strong access to public transport, employment and services. This approach aligns with wider national objectives to optimise land use in well-connected urban areas and support high density forms of development.
- 3.3 For the purposes of this guidance, a development will be regarded as co-living (and therefore sui generis) only where all of the following characteristics are present:
- The scheme is purpose-built or results from the conversion of a non-residential building (e.g. office, hotel, or other commercial building) or Purpose-Built Student Accommodation; it does not include the subdivision or change of use of an existing C3 dwellinghouse (including a former single-family house) unless the building has already been in lawful use as a large HMO (7+ occupiers) or PBSA.
 - It comprises 50 or more bedspaces under single professional management.
 - It provides extensive communal amenity facilities that are integral to the concept and operation of the scheme (typically at least 4 m² of internal communal amenity space per bedspace as a benchmark).
 - Private units (studios or bedrooms in shared flats) are predominantly let on individual licences/tenancies with a minimum stay of 3 months and are supported by the communal facilities as the primary means of meeting daily living needs (cooking, dining, socialising, working, recreation).
 - The accommodation is marketed and managed as a co-living product aimed primarily at working young adults rather than families with children.
- 3.4 Proposals that do not meet all of the above criteria will normally be assessed as C3 dwellinghouses, C4 HMOs, or large (sui generis) HMOs as appropriate, and will be expected to comply fully with Nationally Described Space Standards and normal private amenity requirements without recourse to the aggregated amenity approach set out in this guidance.
- 3.5 A key aspect of Co-living developments is the extensive shared communal amenities, such as communal kitchens, lounges, workspaces, gyms, laundry rooms, roof terraces and other social or recreational areas, which are integral to the daily living of the occupiers.
- 3.6 Co-living schemes are operated under a single management regime, with flexible but professionally managed tenancies, usually requiring a minimum stay of three months or more. They are generally aimed at working professionals, graduates, or key workers, but can also include some students. They are not typically designed for families and are intended to support high-density, urban lifestyles in well-connected and accessible locations.

3.7 This document considers the requirements for new-build co-living development as well as the repurposing of existing buildings, including the change of use of established Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA).

Build to Rent (BtR)

3.8 Build to Rent (BtR) developments are another distinct form of residential accommodation within the private rented sector (PRS). They are typically professionally managed, purpose-built rental homes held in single ownership, often including shared amenities similar to co-living such as lounges, co-working spaces, gyms, and concierge services. While BtR and co-living schemes share characteristics such as communal facilities and professional management, BtR developments are generally designed for longer-term occupancy for single households and typically comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS), ensuring adequate internal space and amenity provision. As such, in most cases, this guidance will not apply to Build to Rent schemes, unless the proposal deviates from NDSS or raises specific concerns around amenity, tenure mix, or community integration.

4. Planning Policy Context

National Legislation, Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.1 The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) (2024) does not explicitly address co-living but provides broader guidance that local planning authorities (LPAs) can apply to assess co-living proposals, focusing on meeting diverse housing needs and ensuring quality accommodation.
- 4.2 The NPPF ([paragraph 63](#)) emphasises the need to address the housing needs of specific groups, including young professionals, who are often a target demographic for co-living. LPAs are encouraged to assess local housing needs, which can include demand for co-living arrangements, as part of their development plans
- 4.3 National planning guidance does not explicitly define or directly promote “co-living” (as it does for Build to Rent or HMOs), but local authorities can count co-living schemes towards housing supply targets when justified based on established planning principles and interpretations of the NPPF providing flexibility in housing delivery.
- 4.4 Co-living is likely to be considered ‘Sui Generis,’ as it does not fit within standard residential (C3), houses in multiple occupation (C4), or other use classes. This means full planning permission is generally required for co-living developments or conversions of such schemes, allowing LPAs to scrutinise proposals thoroughly.
- 4.5 Co-living schemes, as residential uses involving self-contained residential units (eg, studios or cluster flats), are still subject to Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) under LAPP Policy DE1 (eg minimum 37m² for a single-person dwelling). However, in accordance with DE1, deviations from NDSS may be permitted where there is clear evidence that full compliance would not be viable or technically feasible, and that a satisfactory standard of accommodation can still be achieved for example, through high-quality communal spaces offsetting reductions in private amenity space. This approach allows for smaller private/shared units in well-designed co-living schemes, provided they meet the policy's evidential requirements.
- 4.6 The NPPF stresses delivering high-quality, well-designed housing that supports residential amenity. Therefore, co-living developments should provide sufficient communal spaces (eg, kitchens, lounges) and private units that meet basic functional needs (eg sleeping, bathroom, storage). LPAs are expected with all residential development to assess the quality of accommodation, including accessibility and integration with local communities.

Emerging Draft NPPF December 2025

- 4.7 The Government released a new draft National Planning Policy Framework¹ (NPPF) in December 2025. Whilst the draft document is not afforded the weight of adopted

¹ [National Planning Policy Framework: Plan-making and national decision-making policies, December 2025 \(MHCLG\)](#)

National Policy, it can still be a material consideration, with weight given depending on the stage of consultation of an emerging plan, the extent of unresolved objections and alignment with adopted local policy.

- 4.8 The glossary to the Draft document includes definition of 'Large-Scale shared living accommodation' as a distinct non-C3 use. This can be considered the term used to describe Co-living developments. The exact NPPF definition of Large-Scale shared living accommodation' is:

'Non-self-contained accommodation which provides private rooms alongside shared communal spaces and facilities. This type of accommodation does not constitute self-contained dwellings (use class C3), HMOs, student accommodation, hotels, or other residential institutions. Tenancies should be for a minimum of 3 months.'

- 4.9 The Draft document considers that Co-living is not a C3 dwelling, nor an HMO, nor student accommodation. This has implications for housing land supply calculations, affordable housing requirements, space standards and parking and transport expectations.
- 4.10 Therefore, as co-living developments are not considered as a C3 land use it does not count toward housing requirements in the same way as C3 dwellings. The Council will need to clarify how these units/bedspaces contribute to Housing Land supply calculations in the future.
- 4.11 The Draft NPPF continues to strengthen the government's ambition for higher-density, efficient use of land, particularly in sustainable urban locations. It aims to contribute towards a diversified housing offer that meets the needs of different groups, including renters, students, and those seeking non-traditional housing typologies. However, there remains a strong expectation for design quality, management, and living standards, especially for higher-intensity forms of accommodation.
- 4.12 The Draft NPPF sets out specific requirements for large-scale shared living. Regarding location and Accessibility, developments should be located where residents can access everyday services easily and safely by walking, wheeling or public transport. They should demonstrate good connectivity and reduce reliance on private car use.
- 4.13 On Living Standards and Internal/Communal Space the NPPF sets out that schemes must provide adequate private living space, with appropriate storage. They should have sufficient shared kitchens, laundry facilities and communal amenity spaces. Overall living conditions must be appropriate to the needs of residents.
- 4.14 Under the Draft guidance, co-living proposals would be required to demonstrate a robust management plan showing how the building and shared facilities will be managed and maintained long-term. This must be secured by planning condition and form part of the planning submission.

Local Policy Context

Nottingham City Aligned Core Strategy (ACS), adopted in September 2014

- 4.15 [Policy 2 - The Spatial Strategy](#) of the ACS supports a minimum of 17,150 new homes in Nottingham City by 2028, with a focus on regeneration and brownfield sites. Co-living projects, which typically target compact, urban sites, fit within this framework by contributing to housing targets in central and accessible and sustainable locations.
- 4.16 [Policy 8 - Housing Size, Mix and Choice](#) encourages developments to provide a mix of housing sizes and tenures, including affordable housing, to address local needs. It specifically notes the importance of smaller units (eg, one- and two-bedroom homes) in urban areas, which aligns with the typical unit size in co-living schemes. Additionally, the policy supports innovative housing solutions to meet changing demographic needs.

Local Plan Part 2 - Nottingham City Land and Planning Policies Development Plan Document (LAPP) (adopted 2020)

- 4.17 The Nottingham Local Plan does not include specific policies for co-living schemes but includes several relevant policies that will be considered when assessing co-living schemes.
- 4.18 [Policy DE1 - Building Design and Use](#) is relevant to co-living developments as it promotes high-quality design and sustainable development in Nottingham. The policy emphasises creating well-designed, inclusive, and adaptable living spaces that meet diverse housing needs, aligning with the co-living model's focus on shared, flexible, and community-oriented accommodations. The Policy sets out the requirement for residential developments to meet Nationally Described Space Standards (as set out in [table 5](#) of the LAPP). Policy DE1 requires compliance with NDSS for all residential developments, including studios and cluster flats as self-contained dwellings. Many co-living schemes may propose units below NDSS minimum standards, but these can remain policy-compliant if deviations are justified under DE1.1 criteria: clear evidence must demonstrate non-viability or technical infeasibility, alongside assurance of a satisfactory accommodation standard (eg via aggregated private and communal spaces)
- 4.19 [Policy DE2 - Context and Place Making](#) focuses on context and place-making. It requires new developments to respect and enhance the character, context, and identity of their surroundings through high-quality design. Proposals must consider local distinctiveness, topography, heritage, and landscape features, ensuring they create safe, inclusive, and sustainable places. The policy emphasises integrating developments with existing communities, promoting accessibility, and enhancing the public realm to support vibrant urban environments.
- 4.20 [Policy HO1 - Housing Mix](#) requests delivering a mix of housing types, sizes, and tenures to meet diverse community needs. It encourages innovative housing solutions, including those that address affordability and cater to specific groups such as young professionals or students, which aligns with the co-living model's emphasis on shared, flexible, and cost-effective living spaces. For co-living schemes, a mix of types of accommodation should be provided to adhere to the requirements of this policy.
- 4.21 [Policy HO3 - Affordable Housing](#) covers on affordable housing. It requires developments of 15 or more dwellings to provide a proportion of affordable housing, typically 20% in most areas, subject to viability. The policy aims to address local housing needs by

ensuring a mix of tenures, including social rented and intermediate housing, and supports contributions from Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) schemes via commuted sums, as detailed in the associated Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). For clarification, this policy also applies to co-living developments. There may be flexibility on these requirements for co-living, build to rent and other specialist accommodation, but this will be dependent on a viability assessment being submitted to justify any deviation from normal targets.

- 4.22 [Policy IN4 - Developer Contributions](#) sets out managing the impacts of new development on infrastructure, ensuring adequate provision of services and facilities. Co-living developments, which often cater to young professionals, and having shared amenities, require robust infrastructure support, such as improvements to open space, highways, public realm, etc. Policy IN4 supports these developments by requiring contributions to infrastructure improvements, ensuring co-living projects are sustainable and integrated into Nottingham's urban form, enhancing their viability and community benefits. As a starting point it is likely that contributions will be requested for affordable housing, off-site public open space/public realm, and financial contribution to facilitate the delivery of the local employment and training opportunities. Other contributions may also be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.23 In applying local plan policies to co-living proposals, significant weight will be placed on accessibility, design quality, efficient land use and the contribution that such schemes make to meeting identified housing needs. This provides a consistent and transparent basis for assessing proposals in well-connected locations. Other policies within the Local Plan may also be applicable depending on the specific nature of the proposed scheme.

Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan (GNSP) Publication Version

- 4.24 Nottingham City is currently working jointly on this emerging plan with Rushcliffe Borough and Broxtowe Borough Councils. The plan was submitted for examination on 22 December 2025. On adoption, the GNSP will replace Part 1 (ACS) of the Nottingham Local Plan, while Part 2 (LAPP) remains in force.
- 4.25 [Policy 8: Housing Size, Mix and Choice \(extract 8.1\)](#) - Residential development should maintain, provide and contribute to a mix of housing tenures, types and sizes in order to create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. All residential developments should contain adequate internal living space as set out in the Nationally Described Space Standard.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

- 4.26 Sustainability Appraisal is a statutory process that must be undertaken for every new planning document in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004). The purpose of SA is to assess the economic, social and environmental impacts of projects, strategies or plans, so that the preferred option promotes, rather than inhibits sustainable development. A specific SA has not been carried out for this interim guidance note instead the SA of the relevant policies in the Local Plan is relied upon. Please reference the SA for Policies 2 and 8 of the [Nottingham City Aligned Core Strategy – ACS \(2014\)](#) (Part 1 Local Plan) and Policies DE1, DE2, HO1, HO3, HO4 and IN4, of the [Land and Planning Policies Document - LAPP \(2020\)](#) (Part 2 Local Plan).

5. Co-living Developments in Nottingham

- 5.1 A [Housing Needs Update](#)² (HNU) has been prepared for Greater Nottingham (excluding Erewash) and Ashfield area to support the preparation of Local Plans looking at an extended plan period to 2041, and to provide evidence drawing on the latest data including the 2021 Census to support housing market interventions and prospective future funding bids.
- 5.2 Nottingham's demographic profile makes it a suitable candidate for appropriately designed co-living developments. The city has a high proportion of younger adults, particularly those aged 20–34. At least 8,074 individuals aged 20-34 live in one person households (excluding individuals in communal households)³. This is 2.7% of all individuals in NCC who live in households. Additionally, Nottingham is home to a significant student population, alongside a growing number of graduates and young professionals. These groups often face financial constraints that prevent them from achieving home ownership, making co-living an attractive option. Co-living provides flexible, professionally managed tenancies and can foster communal living environments, which align well with the lifestyle preferences and economic realities of these demographics.
- 5.3 The city's housing market is characterised by significant affordability pressures. With a home ownership rate of just 46% and a high proportion of private renters at 29%, many residents face challenges in accessing affordable housing. The affordability gap between lower quartile rents and Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates is particularly pronounced for one-bedroom and four-bedroom properties. Co-living offers a potential solution by providing more affordable rental options compared to traditional private renting. By incorporating shared amenities and smaller private units, co-living schemes can reduce costs while maintaining quality, making them an appealing alternative for some Nottingham's renters.
- 5.4 Nottingham's need for sustainable and accessible housing solutions further supports the case for co-living. The city faces land supply constraints, necessitating higher-density housing to meet demand. Co-living schemes, with their more compact private units and shared facilities, can enable high-density development without compromising liveability or quality. This approach aligns with Nottingham's urban planning goals, particularly in regeneration areas and near key transport hubs, where maximising land use is critical. By focusing development at highly accessible locations, co-living can contribute to sustainable urban growth in sustainable locations while supporting the city's regeneration efforts.
- 5.5 The flexibility of co-living also addresses the evolving needs of Nottingham's housing market. The Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) underscores the demand for adaptable housing models that respond to changing lifestyles and economic conditions. Co-living provides shorter-term tenancies, community-focused living spaces, and amenities tailored to modern needs, such as support for remote working. These features make it well-suited to meet the preferences of younger residents and professionals who value flexibility and community in their living arrangements.

² Greater Nottingham and Ashfield Housing Needs Update Final Report Icen Projects Limited on behalf of The Greater Nottingham Planning Partnership March 2024

³ Census 2021

- 5.6 Nottingham's existing housing stock presents opportunities for co-living through repurposing. The city has a mature Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) market, with an increasing number of vacant bedspaces in recent years, some of which are in older stock. Converting these buildings as well as other suitable properties into co-living spaces with appropriate adaptations could unlock valuable housing resources. With a pipeline of new student accommodation, repurposing underutilised PBSA offers a practical and efficient way to expand co-living options in Nottingham.
- 5.1 The Council will not support the use of co-living standards or the aggregated amenity approach for schemes that are essentially the subdivision or adaptation of existing C3 houses into shared accommodation. Such proposals will continue to be assessed against HMO policies and, where applicable, the full NDSS without offset from communal facilities.
- 5.2 The definition provided in the introduction sets out the characteristics that must be present for a proposal to be considered genuine co-living. Schemes that would result in the net loss of existing or potential family housing (C3) will not normally be accepted as co-living unless they involve the comprehensive redevelopment or non-residential conversion of a site.

Licensing Requirements

- 5.3 Depending on the type of units being created, they may be subject to licensing. Additional licensing would apply to HMOs and the current designation applies City wide until 2028. Selective Licensing of private rented accommodation is only required within a prescribed designated area. For further advice see [Licensing for Landlords](#)

6. Assessment of Need

- 6.1 Developers of co-living schemes are requested to submit a detailed assessment of need with any proposal. This assessment is a critical component when considering the suitability of co-living developments as they fall outside traditional housing typologies. Since co-living is not explicitly defined in the NPPF applicants should demonstrate how the proposed scheme responds to identified housing need within the local Nottingham context.
- 6.2 Developers of co-living schemes will be requested to robustly demonstrate that their proposals respond to an identified local housing need. This will typically be done through the submission of a housing needs assessment or market demand analysis as part of the planning application.
- 6.3 Co-living developments are most suitable in highly accessible locations with excellent public transport connectivity to ensure their sustainability and alignment with the local plan principles. These developments, characterised by high-density accommodation with shared amenities, thrive in areas with robust transport infrastructure, such as those near rail, NET tram stops, or bus hubs and public transport corridors, which facilitate easy access to employment, services, and leisure opportunities, ensuring residents can rely on public transport for daily needs, thereby reducing car dependency and supporting environmental objectives. Placing co-living in such areas also maximises the efficient use of land, especially in the city centre, and helps integrate these developments into vibrant, well-connected communities.
- 6.4 Co-living developments may be appropriately located within suitable site allocations identified in the local plan as being capable of accommodating high-density, innovative housing models.

Aspects to be considered in a needs assessment include:

Local Evidence Base and market analysis	<p>Developers should provide evidence that there is a demand for the specific co-living scheme in the local context. This typically involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referencing local housing studies • Demographic analysis (eg growth in single-person households or young professionals). • Rental market trends, including affordability and vacancy rates. • Comparisons with existing co-living schemes (if any) in the area. • Alignment with policies in the adopted Local Plan.
Gap in Housing Provision	The assessment should identify how the proposal fills a gap in current housing supply for example, by offering high-quality, managed accommodation for residents priced out of ownership or traditional renting.
Sustainability and Location Justification	Developers should demonstrate that the proposed site is in a highly accessible location, close to major transport hubs or frequent public transport corridors and will support active travel.
Design and Occupancy Standards:	<p>Developers should demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality design and good integration with surrounding uses. • Details on all unit/rooms sizes and specifically set out minimum unit sizes, what shared facilities are to be provided, and proposed management arrangements.

7. Design of Co-living developments

Private and Communal Amenity Space

- 7.1 Co-living developments should provide well-designed, integrated, and accessible shared amenity spaces. Such well-designed co-living schemes in Nottingham can offer an opportunity to foster a positive and supportive community through high-quality shared spaces, often providing the added benefit of reduced overall living costs due to these shared amenities and accessible location.
- 7.2 [Policy DE1](#) of the LAPP emphasises the importance of providing appropriate private or communal amenity space for residential developments, including Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and other forms of shared living, to ensure a high quality of life for residents. It requires that such spaces are well-designed, accessible, and sufficient to meet residents' needs. [Policy DE2](#) supports the creation of well-designed places, including the provision of defensible space and high-quality communal areas that promote community interaction to meet the functional needs of residents.
- 7.3 Nottingham City Council will ensure that co-living developments deliver an appropriate level of amenity space, calculated using the aggregated approach detailed below. This will include both internal and external communal areas which should be design-led, considering the composition of spaces, their interrelationships within the building, and their intended use(s). These spaces should be inclusive, well-designed, appropriately sized, well-ventilated, easily accessible, and sufficient to meet the needs of the expected number of residents. They should also be adaptable for flexible use, enabling residents to exercise a reasonable degree of autonomy and fostering a sense of community. Layouts that discourage interaction, such as those with narrow corridors leading to numerous small bedrooms and limited shared amenity spaces, will not be supported.

Unit Mix and Diversity

- 7.4 Generally co-living developments should incorporate a balanced mix of unit types, including both studio units and shared flats. A diverse accommodation mix supports varied lifestyle preferences, enhances affordability, and fosters community interaction and meets the aims of Policy HO1 to ensure a mix of house types and sizes. Schemes that rely solely on one unit type, particularly all-studio formats, will not generally be supported. A mix of unit size will also be encouraged by the Council to ensure that only a small number of smaller units, and only then in exceptional circumstances, where the developer is providing sufficient communal facilities. The Council expects developers to demonstrate how the proposed mix meets identified housing needs and contributes to a high-quality living environment for future occupiers.

Co-Living Space Standards

- 7.5 By design co-living developments prioritise efficient use of space. These compact units are designed to meet the needs of individual residents while maximising the use of communal available space. The focus on smaller private areas underscores the importance of well-designed communal spaces to enhance the overall living experience of residents.

- 7.6 The quality and size of shared amenity spaces are critical in appropriate co-living schemes, especially where they compensate for the limited private unit sizes. To ensure a high standard of living, the Council will adopt an aggregated approach to space standards, combining private and communal areas. This method provides a comprehensive benchmark to guarantee that residents have access to sufficient, high-quality private and communal amenity spaces that support their daily needs and activities.
- 7.7 Under this aggregated approach, the total space provided in co-living schemes including both private and communal should be sufficient to ensure a high overall standard of amenity space for residents. The formula for determining total amenity space per unit comprises the private unit size (m²) and indoor amenity space per occupant (m²):

$$\begin{array}{|c|} \hline \text{Private unit size} \\ \text{(m}^2\text{)} \\ \hline \end{array} + \begin{array}{|c|} \hline \text{Indoor amenity} \\ \text{space per occupant} \\ \text{(m}^2\text{)} \\ \hline \end{array} = \begin{array}{|c|} \hline \text{Total amenity space} \\ \text{provision (m}^2\text{)} \\ \hline \end{array}$$

- 7.8 The aggregated space (private plus communal) provided in co-living schemes must be sufficient to ensure that there is a good overall standard of amenity space for all residents, as required by policy DE1. This is especially important in justifying any deviations from NDSS standards, which is only permitted under policy DE1 where compliance is 'not viable or technically feasible and that a satisfactory standard of accommodation can still be achieved.
- 7.9 It is expected that as part of the planning application submission, applicants will provide calculations of total amenity space provision for the scheme. The minimum expectations for provision to demonstrate the satisfactory standard of accommodation (alongside the other requirements of this guidelines) are:

Indoor amenity space: **4 sqm or greater**, calculated as an average per bedspace for the whole scheme (counting only beds which can access these spaces).

Private unit size: This will differ for studios and clusters:

- **Studios/1 bed units (sole occupancy): 25 sqm or greater.**
- **2+ bed units / dual occupancy one bed units:** Proposals with overall dimensions below NDSS may be considered acceptable where the layout provides adequate internal communal areas and private spaces for occupants and (where appropriate) complies with HMO and other licensing requirements.

- 7.10 For indoor amenity space, dual occupancy one bed units will be treated as two bedspaces.
- 7.11 **Appendix A** shows some illustrative layouts on how compact minimum 25 m² studios can function effectively when well designed. They should, however, be read together with all the guidance in this document.
- 7.12 Co-living schemes are also encouraged to offer a mix of accommodation types, including range of studios and shared living within cluster flats.
- 7.13 Standards for outdoor amenity space are addressed in separate planning guidance – please refer to the '[The Provision of Open Space in New Residential and Commercial Development](#)' Supplementary Planning Document.

- 7.14 It should also be noted that achieving these standards is an important part of demonstrating a satisfactory standard of accommodation, but insufficient in of itself. Fully demonstrating that the scheme will have a satisfactory standard of accommodation requires showing that both private and amenity spaces will be sufficient to allow residents to achieve the same or better quality of life than occupying a conventional NDSS compliant scheme. It is also expected that the average total amenity space provision will be substantially above the minimum total amenity space provision.
- 7.15 To justify the unit mix, it is expected that a detailed accommodation schedule will be submitted with each planning application, which must include:
- The size of every unit, with classification in terms of unit type and number of bedrooms,
 - Details of indoor and outdoor amenity space, broken into type, with accompanying size (net floor area),
 - Details of the other spaces that make up the building (reception areas, storage spaces, communal laundry spaces, etc.), broken into type and total area (net).
 - Calculation of both the scheme average of total amenity space, and calculation of the total amenity space available to the smallest unit in the scheme.

Designing Effective Internal/External Communal Space

- 7.16 For clarification, the council considers the following to be examples of shared amenity spaces:
- Communal kitchens
 - Dining areas
 - Lounges
 - Workspaces
 - Gyms/exercise rooms
 - Gardens
 - Rooftop terraces
 - Courtyards; and
 - Other shared communal spaces
- 7.17 These spaces should be thoughtfully designed to encourage recreational use, be (normally) freely accessible to all residents, and integrate seamlessly with the accommodation. They need to be well-designed communal areas which foster social interaction and enhance the overall quality of life for co-living residents.
- 7.18 Only general-use recreational or work-oriented spaces freely available to all residents at all reasonable times should be included in the communal-space calculation. Service areas (laundry, bike stores, bin rooms), circulation spaces, reception areas and bookable/paid/private-hire spaces should be excluded.
- 7.19 The quality, distribution and genuine accessibility of internal amenity space are critical to the success of a co-living scheme. To avoid token provision, applicants should note the following best-practice principles, and ensure that a range of such facilities are included in each scheme:
- **Cluster-Based Lounges** – In larger blocks, consider providing dedicated communal lounges or “cluster hubs” serving no more than 20–25 bedspaces each, in addition to any building-wide facilities. This creates manageable social groups and prevents smaller units from being overly reliant on distant or over-subscribed shared areas. These lounges

could also include communal kitchen and dining facilities, which would be in addition to kitchen facilities in each private unit.

- **Co-working Spaces** – In recognition of the growing trend toward remote and flexible working, provide well-designed co-working areas with reliable high-speed internet, ergonomic seating, and access to natural light. These spaces should be acoustically treated to allow focused work and include a mix of open desks, private booths, and small meeting rooms. Ideally, co-working spaces should be located in quieter parts of the building to avoid conflict with social areas.
- **Gym and Fitness Areas** – Incorporate fitness facilities that cater to a range of activities, such as cardio, strength training, and yoga/stretching. Where space is limited, consider multi-functional equipment and flexible layouts. Good ventilation, natural light, and safe flooring are essential.
- **Shared Kitchens and Dining Rooms** – Beyond cluster kitchens, include larger communal kitchens and dining halls for social events and group cooking. These spaces should be well-equipped, with sufficient appliances, storage, and seating to accommodate multiple users simultaneously.
- **Outdoor Communal Spaces** – Provide accessible outdoor areas such as terraces, gardens, or courtyards. These should include seating, greenery, and possibly BBQ facilities to encourage informal social interaction and relaxation.
- **Wellness and Quiet Rooms** – Designate spaces for meditation, reading, or quiet reflection. These rooms should be soundproofed and furnished with comfortable seating, soft lighting, and calming décor.
- **Entertainment and Social Rooms** – Include spaces for leisure activities such as cinema spaces, gaming rooms or multipurpose leisure uses. These should be acoustically separated from quiet zones to avoid disturbance.

7.20 While not counting towards amenity space calculations, these additional facilities should also be considered for provision in most co-living schemes:

- **Laundry Facilities** – Centralised laundry rooms with adequate machines, drying areas, and folding stations are essential. Consider integrating social elements, such as seating or coffee points/vending machines, to make these spaces more inviting.
- **Storage Solutions** – Offer secure communal storage for bicycles, sports equipment, and seasonal items. Adequate storage reduces clutter in private units and supports active lifestyles.
- **Coffee Shops** – Where feasible and depending on the size of the co-living scheme, incorporate a small café or coffee bar within the scheme. This can act as a social anchor, encouraging casual interaction and providing a convenient amenity for residents. Ideally, this space should be accessible to the public to foster community integration, but with clear boundaries to maintain security for residents.
- **Parcel and Delivery Rooms** – Provide secure, dedicated areas for parcel storage and delivery management which could take the form of a manned counter or parcel lockers. With the rise of online shopping, this helps avoid clutter in communal areas and ensures safe handling of deliveries.

7.21 In large co-living schemes, amenity spaces should not be overly concentrated in a single location. While some central facilities are appropriate, a degree of distribution throughout the building is encouraged to ensure accessibility and usability for all residents. Concentrating all communal spaces in one area can lead to overcrowding, reduce convenience for occupants in distant parts of the building, and discourage spontaneous social interaction.

Accessibility Standards

7.22 Co-living schemes are also required to meet [Policy HO4: Specialist and Adaptable Housing](#)). Applicants should submit drawings demonstrating that accessible private units comply with Part M of the Building Regulations, ensuring sufficient space and wheelchair accessibility. Accessible private studios are likely to require significantly more space than the minimum standards for general private studios or bedspaces, and developers should account for this during the initial design phase of a co-living scheme.

Washing and Drying Amenities

7.23 Sufficient washing and drying facilities should be provided for residents, either within private rooms or as part of shared communal provision. The format may vary depending on the overall design of the scheme, and the guidance does not prescribe a rigid approach. However, shared laundry facilities may offer a more efficient use of space, particularly in high-density developments, by avoiding the need to duplicate equipment in each unit. Shared facilities should be situated in a convenient, well-ventilated area and will not contribute to the communal space requirements unless purposefully designed to support recreational activities or social engagement. Washing and drying areas should not encroach upon or disrupt other communal spaces designated for cooking, dining, recreation, or socialising.

Occupancy Profile

7.24 Co-living schemes typically attract individuals who are currently part of the private rented sector. These occupiers are generally aged between 18 and 40 years and reside in households without children. The appeal lies in the high specification, fully managed and reasonably priced, all-inclusive accommodation that caters to their lifestyle, offering a modern and convenient living solution tailored to their needs.

7.25 A prime accessible location for co-living developments significantly enhances their attractiveness, with properties situated in the city centre near essential amenities, facilities, retail/services and employment opportunities. This proximity ensures residents can easily access urban conveniences, making co-living an ideal choice for those seeking a connected and vibrant lifestyle. These schemes are designed to align with the dynamic demands of city living.

7.26 A defining feature of co-living is the provision of high-quality shared communal spaces that promote sociable living arrangements. These areas are designed to encourage interaction and foster a sense of community among residents. The all-inclusive rental packages and streamlined management regimes further enhance the appeal by simplifying the tenancy experience, offering convenience and ease for occupiers.

7.27 The Council will support the development of co-living schemes that addresses the needs of young professionals, recent graduates, and key workers in the local economy. Co-living accommodation is often championed as an effective solution to meet these demands, thanks to its sociable and all-inclusive nature. By supporting such schemes, the Council aims to provide housing options that align with the priorities of these key demographic groups.

7.28 Although co-living can provide a more affordable rental option in the city compared to some other rental options, such as build-to-rent, the average cost of rent (inclusive of bills) is still significant. As such, whilst co-living accommodation provides an additional housing option for those able to afford it, and contributes to housing choice for this demographic, the Council does not consider it to be an affordable rented tenure.

Shared Living for Older Persons

7.29 While current co-living schemes have primarily been associated with younger demographics, there is growing recognition of its potential benefits for older residents. Shared living models can help address issues of social isolation, provide mutual support networks, and create safe, inclusive environments for those seeking community-oriented lifestyles later in life.

7.30 Recent award-winning schemes, such as those highlighted by RIBA, demonstrate how design-led shared housing can successfully integrate communal spaces with private accommodation tailored to older persons' needs. These developments often feature accessible layouts, generous circulation areas, and adaptable units that comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) ensuring mobility and usability for residents with varying physical needs.

7.31 Key considerations for older persons' shared living include:

- **Space Standards:** Larger private units to accommodate mobility aids and personal possessions.
- **Accessibility:** Step-free access, wider doorways, and adaptable bathrooms.
- **Communal Facilities:** Shared kitchens, lounges, and gardens designed to encourage interaction and reduce loneliness.
- **Storage:** Adequate provision for personal belongings, which is often a priority for older residents transitioning from family homes.
- **Management & Support:** Professional management with optional care or concierge services to provide reassurance and assistance.

7.32 By incorporating these principles, shared living for older persons can deliver high-quality, sustainable housing that promotes independence while fostering community and wellbeing.

7.33 In most cases, given the type of accommodation proposed for older people, these schemes would meet NDSS requirements.

Change of use of existing buildings including Purpose Built Student Accommodation

7.34 Proposals for the change of use of existing buildings including Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) schemes need to comply with Local Plan policies and the guidance within this document including on minimum suggested room sizes and other guidance.

- 7.35 PBSA developments are typically designed for a transient student population, with smaller room sizes and limited personal amenity provision, reflecting the short-term nature of student occupancy. In contrast, co-living schemes are intended for a broader demographic including working professionals who may reside for longer-continuous periods and have different expectations around privacy, storage requirements and amenity.
- 7.36 As such, the design, layout, and management of existing PBSA buildings may not be inherently suitable for co-living without significant adaptation. The conversion of PBSA to co-living may also represent a material change in the nature and intensity of use, with potential implications for local infrastructure, amenity impacts, and the housing mix and will in most cases require planning approval.
- 7.37 This document provides essential guidance to ensure that any PBSA-to-co-living conversions are not only technically feasible but also policy-compliant, context-sensitive, and capable of delivering high-quality, sustainable living environments for future occupants. Without adherence to these principles, such conversions are unlikely to be supported.
- 7.38 PBSA-to-co-living conversions may also require additional developer obligations (S106) which will be considered on a case-by-case basis in line with Section 9.
- 7.39 When converting PBSA, particular attention should be paid to upgrading internal communal provision. Student schemes often rely on limited cluster kitchens; co-living residents typically expect larger, multi-functional lounges/workspaces. Demonstrating how existing circulation cores can be reconfigured to deliver cluster hubs of c. 4–6 m² per bedspace will significantly improve the viability of conversion proposals.

Part-conversion of existing PBSA schemes

- 7.40 Part-conversion of existing Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) schemes to co-living or other non-student residential use may be considered acceptable in principle. However, it will be for applicant to clearly demonstrate how the proposed subdivision of an existing scheme such as by floor, wing, or discrete building can be achieved in a way that safeguards the living conditions, safety and residential amenity of both student and non-student occupiers. Any accommodation proposed for non-student use will be expected to comply fully with the guidance set out within this document, including in relation to minimum private room sizes, aggregated amenity space provision, design quality and management arrangements.
- 7.41 Where mixed occupation is proposed within a single building, applicants should recognise the potential for differing patterns of occupation, amenity use and activity between student and non-student residents. Proposals should therefore demonstrate that the physical layout, access arrangements, communal facilities and management regime have been designed to minimise conflict, support effective management and ensure a satisfactory standard of accommodation appropriate to the intended length of stay and lifestyle of all residents. This approach reflects the requirements of Policy DE1 of the LAPP and provides a proportionate, policy-led framework for assessing PBSA conversions that protects residential amenity and living of all occupiers.

Waste and Recycling facilities

- 7.42 New co-living developments should have adequate provision of waste and recycling storage facilities and appropriate arrangements for the collection of such waste. Developers are advised to liaise with the council's Planning Department and the council's Waste Department for support and advice at the design stage to help clarify requirements and ensure that a suitable and satisfactory layout for the scheme is achieved for the management of waste. It is suggested that contact is made with waste colleagues through contacting planning@nottinghamcity.gov.uk in the first instance to discuss proposed schemes at the early design stage.
- 7.43 How waste is deposited/managed within the building is the responsibility of the developer, but due consideration should be given to encourage recycling and minimise waste stream contamination. For the collection of waste, the onus is on the developer to ensure residents have easy access to bins and collection points as well as adequate storage of waste according to the collection methodology and schedule of the council.
- 7.44 Developers should be aware that it is the government's intention that councils will also have to provide a weekly mandatory food waste collection by 31 March 2026 future and consideration should be given to this and any future changes in waste collection requirements.

8. Planning Obligations and Viability

- 8.1 Each case will be considered on its own merits. However, the council will generally seek to secure financial contributions through negotiation of a legal agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Where a Planning Obligation is entered, then it will need to be completed prior to the granting of planning consent. Further details can be found on the council's [S106 webpage](#) including annually revised costs.
- 8.2 If an applicant considers there are viability issues due to the level of contributions being sought, or due to NDSS compliance under Policy DE1 rendering the scheme undeliverable, they will be required to submit a robust viability assessment. Such assessments will be independently examined before the scale and nature of any reduction or deviation is agreed.
- 8.3 The following are the starting point for Planning Obligations for new co-living schemes;

Planning Obligation	Details
Management Plan	A Management Plan is required to ensure that occupants of the development adhere to standards that prevent noise, disturbance, or nuisance to neighbouring properties. It should provide an established point of contact for nearby residents to report disturbances caused by occupants and mandates the maintenance of cleanliness and tidiness on the site. The plan should require the owner to manage the site effectively, including staffing designated offices 24/7 throughout the year and managing the accommodation. It should outline procedures for managing behaviour, providing contact numbers for residents, and detailing security measures such as CCTV monitoring and regular security patrols. Additionally, the plan should address cleaning and refuse collection to ensure the site remains clean and litter-free.
Education	Co-living developments are not aimed at families and as such there should not be a need for additional primary or secondary school places. However, it will be for the developer to clearly set out that the scheme is not expected to meet family needs now or in the future. Without this justification then it will be assumed that for apartments of 2 or more bedroom apartments that contributions towards education improvements may be required.
Open Space*	Open Space requirements should be agreed in line with The Provision of Open Space in New Residential and Commercial Development Supplementary Planning Document .
Affordable Housing contributions*	Co-living developments are generally regarded as falling within the sui generis planning use class. In line with the Nottingham Local Plan Part 2 policies that promote the delivery of a balanced housing mix and support affordable housing provision, developments that create new residential units are expected to contribute towards affordable housing where thresholds are met. While co-living

	<p>accommodation typically consists of self-contained studio units including sleeping space, seating, en-suite bathroom facilities, and a small kitchen or kitchenette. These units are considered residential in nature and should therefore be subject to affordable housing policies.</p> <p>Therefore, Nottingham City council will seek S106 Affordable Housing Contributions in line with normal residential policy requirements.</p> <p>Affordable housing requirements should be agreed in Affordable Housing Contributions arising from Purpose Built Student Accommodation Supplementary Planning Document.</p>
Employment and Training contributions*	<p>In line with Policy 19: Developer Contributions and Policy IN4: Developer Contributions and Policy EE4: Local Employment and Training Opportunities</p>
Other contributions agreed on a case-by-case basis but could include improvements to public transport, flood mitigation, improvement to highways or street scene etc	<p>In line with Policy 19: Developer Contributions and Policy IN4: Developer Contributions</p>

* these contributions can be calculated using the council's [S106 Estimator](#).

9. Pre-application Advice

- 9.1 Developers and applicants are advised to consult the Development Management Team at the City Council prior to submitting planning applications for any new co-living developments to discuss any additional likely requirements given the unique type of development.
- 9.2 Please contact Development Management by emailing planning@nottinghamcity.gov.uk.

Glossary

Amenity Standards: Criteria for the quality and usability of living spaces, including private and communal areas.

Affordable Housing Contributions: Funding and planning efforts to increase the supply of homes for rent or sale at prices accessible to those whose needs are not met by the market.

Build to rent (BTR): Purpose-built housing designed for rent rather than sale, typically offering longer tenancies (e.g., three years or more) and managed by a single landlord.

Cluster flat / shared unit: A type of private unit consisting of individual private bedrooms with kitchen, living, and bathroom facilities shared only among the occupants of that same flat. A cluster flat exceeding eight bedrooms will not be recognised as a single private unit for the purposes of amenity calculations, space standards, or planning obligations (see Private unit).

Co-living: Purpose-built, professionally managed residential accommodation classified as sui generis, comprising a mix of private units (studios or shared cluster flats) together with extensive shared communal facilities, typically aimed at young professionals, graduates, or key workers.

Communal amenity space: Shared kitchens, lounges, workspaces, gyms, etc.

Flexible Tenancies: Rental agreements that offer varying lengths of stay, typically ranging from 3 to 12 months.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs): Generally shared houses of 3 or more persons living in 2 or more separate households but subject to a more precise definition within the Housing Act 2004.

Large-Scale shared living accommodation: Non-self-contained accommodation which provides private rooms alongside shared communal spaces and facilities. This type of accommodation does not constitute self-contained dwellings (use class C3), HMOs, student accommodation, hotels, or other residential institutions. Tenancies should be for a minimum of 3 months.

Local Plan: Nottingham's Core Strategy (2014) (ACS) and Land & Planning Policies Document (2020) (LAPP).

Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS): Guidelines for the minimum size of new homes.

NPPF / NPPG: National Planning Policy Framework & National Planning Practice Guidance.

Private unit A self-contained living space for one household containing all basic domestic facilities (sleeping, bathing, cooking, and living/storage) that are not shared with residents from any other unit. It may be either:

- (a) a studio with private kitchen and bathroom; or
- (b) a shared cluster flat (private bedrooms with kitchen/living/bathroom facilities shared only within that flat).

A shared cluster flat forming a single private unit shall contain no more than eight bedrooms. Any cluster exceeding eight bedrooms will be treated as multiple private units for amenity calculations, space standards, and planning obligations.

Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA): Accommodation designed and used solely for the occupation by students.

Planning Obligation (S106): A legal agreement entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Studio room: A private unit occupied by one or two persons containing its own private en-suite bathroom and cooking facilities, with no sharing of kitchen or bathroom with residents from other units.

Sui Generis: A unique use of a property that does not fall into a prescribed use class.

Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended): A classification system for different types of property use in planning law.

Appendix A: Illustrative Designs

The illustrative layouts show on the next page show compact minimum 25 m² studios can function effectively when well designed. They should, however, be read together with the full guidance, which sets out additional requirements relating to:

- **Aggregated amenity space** (including minimum total amenity per unit and indoor communal space averages),
- **Unit mix expectations**, including the need for a balanced mix of studios and cluster flats,
- **Accessible unit standards**, which require larger footprints and compliance with Part M,
- **Communal space distribution**, including cluster-level lounges and other shared facilities that support smaller private units.

Illustrative Designs

DESIGN PARAMETERS

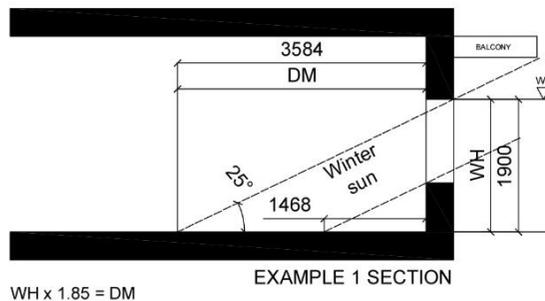
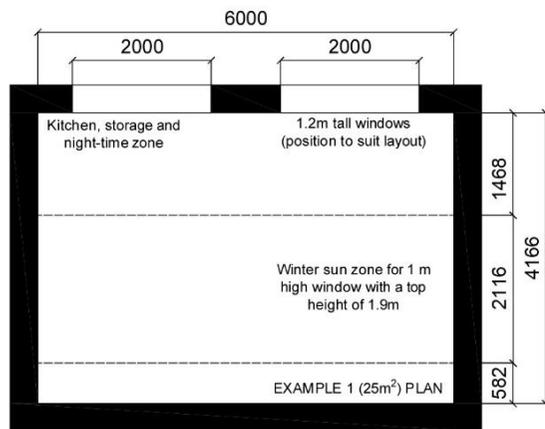
1. These design parameters show how compact private units in co_living schemes can still provide a decent standard of living when they are well designed and supported by shared communal spaces.
2. The diagrams are illustrative, not fixed standards. All proposals will be assessed against the full requirements of the Co_living Interim Planning Guidance, including communal amenity provision and overall living conditions.
3. The diagrams show a total internal floor area of 25 m² (illustrative minimum), and are intended to demonstrate absolute minimum functional layouts, not to maximise occupancy.
4. Accessible units will require additional space and must comply with relevant accessibility standards.

DAYLIGHT AND WINDOWS

1. Good access to natural daylight is essential to make smaller rooms feel comfortable and usable, but more importantly, for the health and wellbeing of residents. Rooms that are too deep can feel dark and cramped, even if they technically meet a minimum floor area.
2. Main living areas should receive good daylight for most of the day, even in winter; therefore, windows should be positioned so daylight reaches the back of the room, not just the area next to the window.
3. Where glazing is tinted, it should still allow clear views out and good light levels, and windows should normally be capable of being opened for ventilation. Solid panels and films on glazing should be avoided in all circumstances.

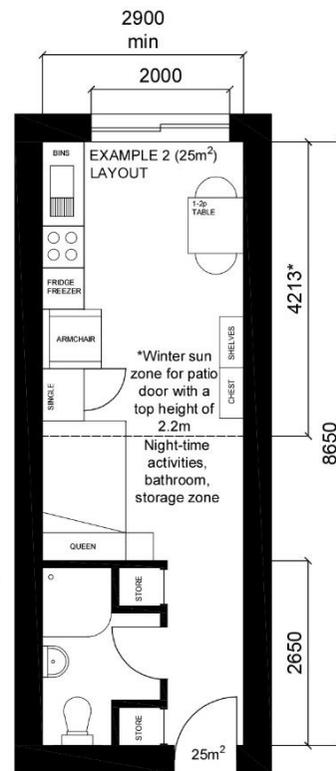
ROOM DEPTH AND OUTLOOK

1. The depth of a room has a direct impact on daylight, outlook and overall comfort. Shallower rooms tend to be less efficient in the use of space, but they generally perform better in terms of daylight and amenity; a balanced approach should be pursued.
2. Bathrooms, storage areas/cupboards and night-time functions should be positioned in the darker areas within room, as per Example 2.
3. Where balconies or terraces project in front of windows, room depth may need to be reduced to account for increased overshadowing. Designers can demonstrate how the room receives natural light, as exemplified in the Example 1 Section.



WH x 1.85 = DM

DM: Maximum habitable room depth
WH: Distance from finished floor level to top of the window



Minimum room width 2900mm

INTERNAL LAYOUT AND ZONING

1. Layouts should be carefully planned, especially within compact units. As a minimum, rooms should provide for a range of day and night-time domestic activities and have a clearly defined: sleeping and wardrobe zone, kitchenette and small dining table, and sofa and TV zone.
2. Designers must have full consideration of potential fire risks, allowing for a straight forward, safe means to escape from all zones within the room.
3. Furniture arrangements should be realistic and practical, and should fit comfortably without blocking circulation or access to windows; Nationally Described Space Standards furniture block (including zoning around them) is available to download at www.dqfnottingham.org.uk

COMMUNITY AMENITY SPACE

1. Private room layouts should not be considered in isolation, they should work alongside shared communal facilities.
2. Smaller private rooms can be acceptable (up to a minimum of 25m²) where they are clearly supported by high quality, accessible communal spaces.
3. Compliance with these diagrams alone does not justify reduced unit sizes unless the wider amenity and quality tests in the guidance are met.

NOTES

Dimensions are always of internal footprints excluding wall thickness.

The examples shown adopt a nominal glazing area of 16% of the floor area for illustrative purposes.

Critical Design Parameters for Single-use Private Rooms

Author: DPL,NCC/LA
February 2026

Co_living Interim Planning Guidance

Drawing Number
CoL001
February 2026

