

# Nationally Described Space Standard – technical requirements

Consultation draft

September 2014

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## 1.Introduction

- 1.1 This standard deals with internal space within new dwellings and is suitable for application across all tenures. It sets out requirements for the Gross Internal (floor) Area (GIA) of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home, notably bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling height. Requirements may be exceeded but at the very least should be met.
- 1.2 This standard is only applicable where a condition which is derived from a policy within a local plan is applied to a planning permission. This standard should be read alongside relevant guidance set in National planning policy.
- 1.3 The requirements of this standard for bedrooms, storage and internal areas are relevant only in determining compliance with this standard in new dwellings and have no other statutory meaning. The methodology used to calculate this standard is set out at Annex A.

### Using the space standard

- 1.4 The standard GIAs as set out in Table 1 are organised by storey height to take account of the extra circulation space needed for stairs to upper floors, and deals separately with one storey dwellings (typically flats) and two and three storey dwellings (typically houses).
- 1.5 Individual dwelling types are expressed with reference to the number of bedrooms (denoted as 'b') and the number of bedspaces (or people) that can be accommodated within these bedrooms (denoted as 'p'). A three bedroom (3b) home with one double bedroom (providing two bed spaces) and two single bedrooms (each providing one bed space) is therefore described as 3b4p.
- 1.6 This allows for different combinations of single and double/twin bedrooms to be reflected in the minimum GIA. The breakdown of the minimum GIA therefore allows not only for the different combinations of bedroom size, but also for varying amounts of additional living, dining, kitchen and storage space; all of which are related to the potential occupancy.
- 1.7 Relating internal space to the number of bedspaces is a means of classification for assessment purposes only when designing new homes and seeking planning approval (if a local authority has adopted the space standard in its Local Plan). It does not imply actual occupancy, or define the minimum for any room in a dwelling to be used for a specific purpose other than in complying with this standard.

- 1.8 Minimum floor areas and room widths for bedrooms and minimum floor areas for storage are also an integral part of the space standard. They cannot be used in isolation from other parts of the design standard or removed from it.
- 1.9 The GIA of a dwelling is defined as the total floor space measured between the internal faces of perimeter walls<sup>1</sup>. This includes partitions, structural elements, cupboards, ducts, flights of stairs and voids above stairs. GIA should be measured and denoted in square metres (m<sup>2</sup>).

## **Compliance**

- 1.10 Drawings of at least 1:100 scale showing overall GIA, room dimensions and heights should be provided for plan checking purposes.
- 1.11 Confirmation of plan compliance may be checked by the local planning authority setting the condition. Planning authorities should also accept type approval and compliance of plans where this is confirmed by a building control body (which can be either a Local Authority Building Control Body, or a Government Approved Inspector) providing that the information used to assess compliance is submitted alongside the statement of compliance, to enable on site checking by the local authority

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<sup>1</sup> The internal face of a perimeter wall is defined as the brick/block work or plaster coat applied to the brick/block work. For a detached house, the perimeter walls are the external walls that enclose the dwelling, and for other houses or apartments they are the external walls and party walls.

## 4. The Nationally described Space Standard

4.1 The Internal Design Standard requires that:

- a. every dwelling provides at least the gross internal floor area and built-in storage area set out in Table 1
- b. every dwelling with two or more bedspaces provides at least one double (or twin) bedroom
- c. in order to provide one bedspace, every single bedroom has a floor area of at least 7.5m<sup>2</sup> and is at least 2.15m wide
- d. in order to provide two bedspaces, every double (or twin bedroom) has a floor area of at least 11.5m<sup>2</sup>
- e. one double (or twin bedroom) is at least 2.75m wide and every other double (or twin) bedroom is at least 2.55m wide
- f. any area with a headroom of less than 1.5m is not counted within the GIA unless used solely for storage (if the area under the stairs is to be used for storage, assume a general floor area of 1m<sup>2</sup> within the GIA)
- g. any other area that is used solely for storage and has a headroom of 900-1500mm (such as under eaves) is counted at 50% of its floor area, and any area lower than 900mm is not counted at all
- h. the minimum floor to ceiling height of the main living space is 2.5m for at least 75% of the Gross Internal Area.

**Table 1 - Minimum gross internal floor areas and storage (m<sup>2</sup>)**

number of bedrooms	number of bedspaces	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	built-in storage
studio	1p	39 (37)*			1.0
1b	2p	50	58		1.5
2b	3p	61	70		2.0
	4p	70	79		
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0
	8p	125	132	138	

### Notes:

1. GIAs for one storey dwellings include enough space for one bathroom and one additional WC (or shower room) in dwellings with 5 or more bedspaces. \*Where a studio has a shower room instead of a bathroom, the floor area may be reduced from 39m<sup>2</sup> to 37m<sup>2</sup>, as shown bracketed.
2. GIAs for two and three storey dwellings include enough space for one bathroom and one additional WC (or shower room).
3. Built-in storage areas are included within the overall GIA and include an allowance of 0.5m<sup>2</sup> for fixed services or equipment such as a hot water cylinder, boiler or heat exchanger.

# Annex A: Methodology for generating the minimum gross internal floor areas

## Principles of the Nationally Described Space Standard

1. This document sets out the methodology used to generate the Gross Internal Areas within the Nationally described Space Standard. Use of this methodology is not required in demonstrating compliance with the standard. The space standard was developed to rationalise existing space standards into a single national approach. The starting point is the need for rooms to be able to accommodate a basic set of furniture, fittings, activity and circulation space appropriate to the function of each room. The overall objective is to ensure that all homes are highly functional in terms of meeting typical day to day needs at a given level of occupation.
2. The space standard also takes into account the spatial implications of providing improved accessibility and adaptability, particularly for older or less mobile people, and is capable of accommodating the requirements of both Category 1 and Category 2 accessibility standards in Approved Document M (2014).
3. The space standard sets out a comprehensive range of one, two and three storey dwelling types with one to six bedrooms and up to eight bedspaces (as well as studio flats).

## Detailed calculation methodology

4. The Gross Internal Areas in Table 1 are determined by a combination of the space needed to accommodate the furniture detailed in Annex B (which is derived from the Housing Quality Indicators and the London Housing Design Guide) and the accessibility requirements of M4(2) of the 2014 version of Approved Document M. They therefore reflect the individual room areas and the amount of general circulation and storage space needed to accommodate these cumulative requirements in a range of dwelling types and sizes.
5. The GIA reflects the principle that more people (or bedspaces) need more space but there are other variables which affect the amount of space needed for any given home to be functional.
6. The variables are as follows:
  1. The number of bedspaces (or people)
  2. The number of bedrooms
  3. The number of bathrooms
  4. The number of WC/cloakrooms (and shower rooms)
  5. The number of storeys
7. Each of these variables also has an impact on the amount of circulation space and the area taken up by internal partition walls within each dwelling type.

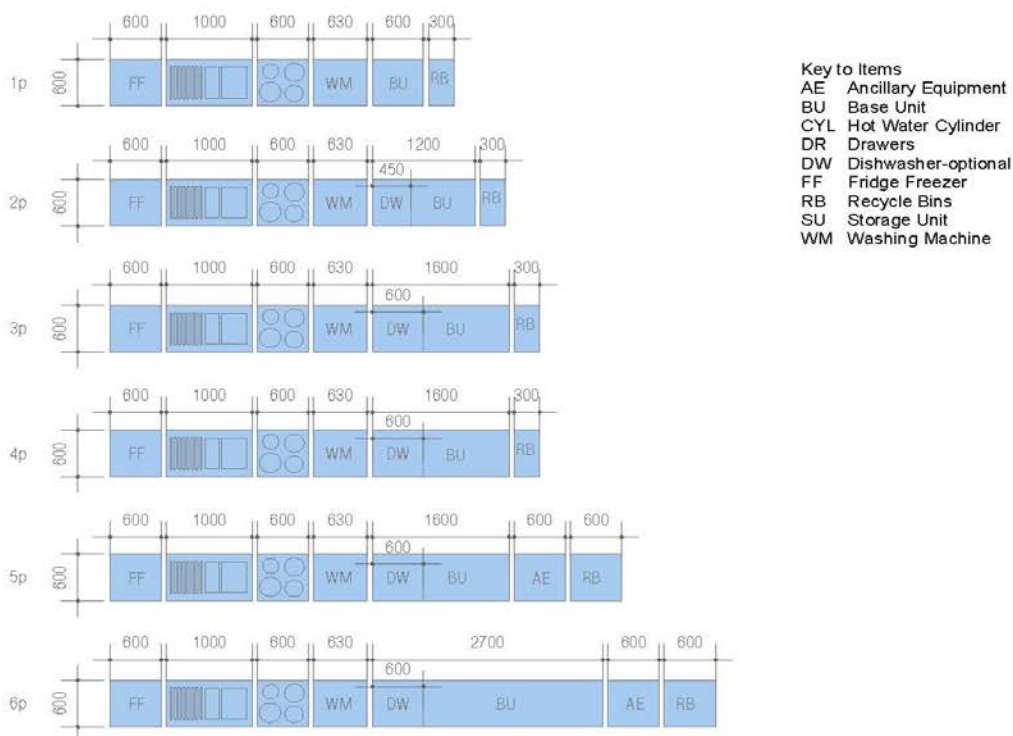
8. By assigning a numerical value to each variable, the Gross Internal Areas (GIAs) can be generated by a simple calculator which has an in-built 'starter figure'. The starter figure varies for one, two and three storey homes and takes account of any extra space needed for stairs; effectively dealing with variable 5. It also includes a basic allowance for living, dining and kitchen space, storage and general circulation and partitions.
9. Using the appropriate version of the calculator<sup>2</sup>, only the number of bedspaces, bedrooms, bathrooms and WC/cloakrooms need to be entered for any dwelling type. These values are added to the 'starter figure' to produce the required Gross Internal Areas.
10. Each bedspace/person has a value of 9m<sup>2</sup>. This is made up of 2m<sup>2</sup> of living/dining/kitchen space, 0.5m<sup>2</sup> of storage space and 4m<sup>2</sup> of bedroom space (the difference between the size of a single and a double or twin bedroom). The remaining 2.5m<sup>2</sup> is attributable to extra circulation and partitions.
11. Each bedroom adds a further 4m<sup>2</sup>. This allows the different spatial implications of various combinations of single and double/twin bedrooms to be reflected in the minimum GIAs. Independently of the number of bathrooms, WCs or storeys, these two variables together generate a simple pattern.
  - 2b3p to 2b4p – add 9m<sup>2</sup>
  - 2b4p to 3b4p – add 4m<sup>2</sup>
  - 2b4p to 3b5p – add 13m<sup>2</sup> (9+4)
  - 3b5p to 3b6p – add 9m<sup>2</sup>
  - 3b6p to 4b6p – add 4m<sup>2</sup>
  - 3b5p to 4b6p – add 13m<sup>2</sup> (9+4)
12. Each bathroom has an incremental value of 5m<sup>2</sup> and each WC/cloakroom or shower, 3m<sup>2</sup>. These, and the bedroom values, also include a small further allowance for the extra circulation and partitioning that is needed when any extra room is added.
13. It should be noted that the GIAs for two and three storey homes are based on the provision of a compact winder stair. Where straight stair flights are required, more floor space may be needed.
14. The areas for one bedroom homes (which have no 'spare room') incorporate an additional allowance to ensure that they are suitable for people who wish to work from home and/or older people who choose to downsize.
15. The GIA's in this standard will not be adequate for wheelchair housing (Category 3 homes) where additional internal area is required to accommodate increased circulation and functionality to meet the needs of wheelchair households.

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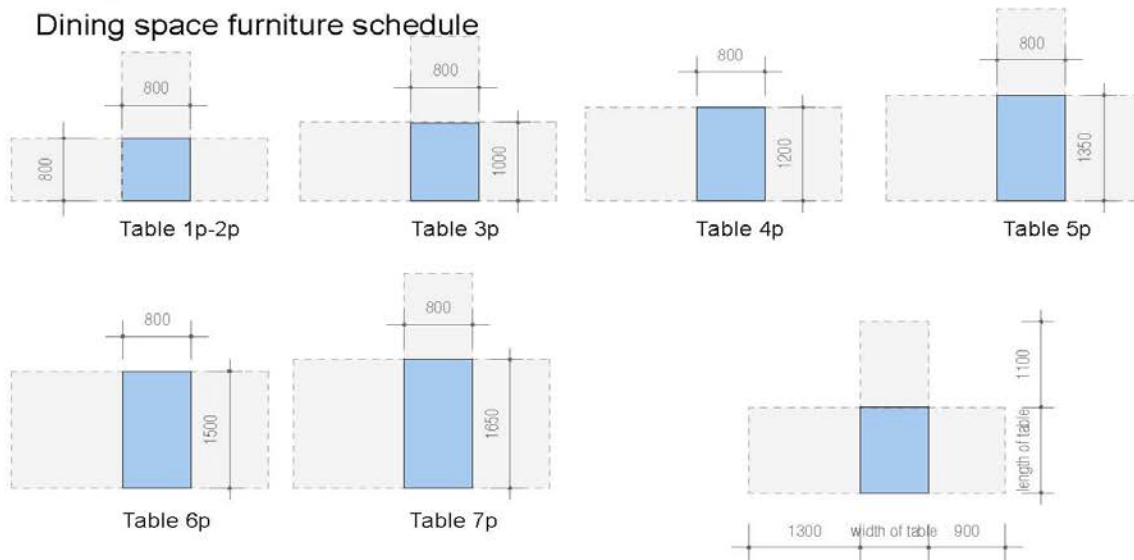
<sup>2</sup> The calculator used to generate these figures was originally developed by Levett Bernstein Architects in 2009. The GIA's used in this standard have been calculated by Levett Bernstein Architects for DCLG.

# Annex B: Furniture schedule used to generate the minimum gross internal floor areas

## Kitchen furniture schedule



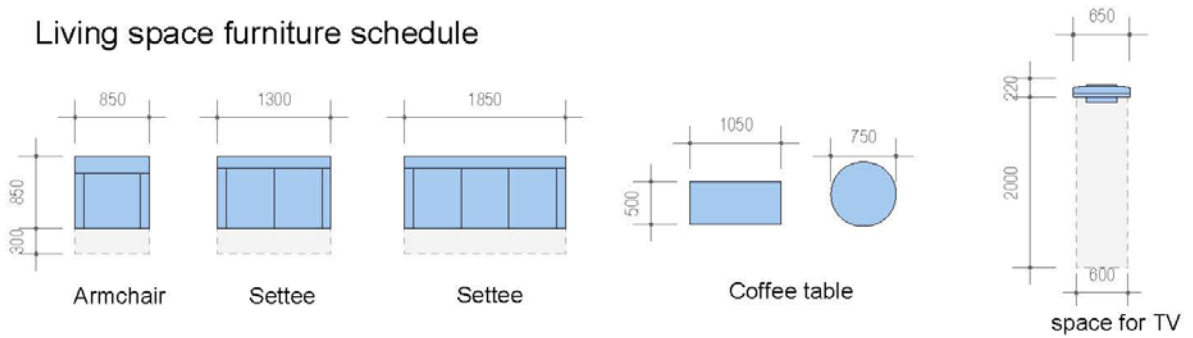
## Dining space furniture schedule



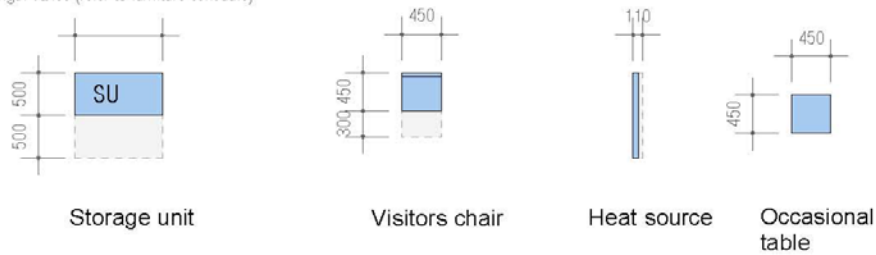
## Circulation Zones



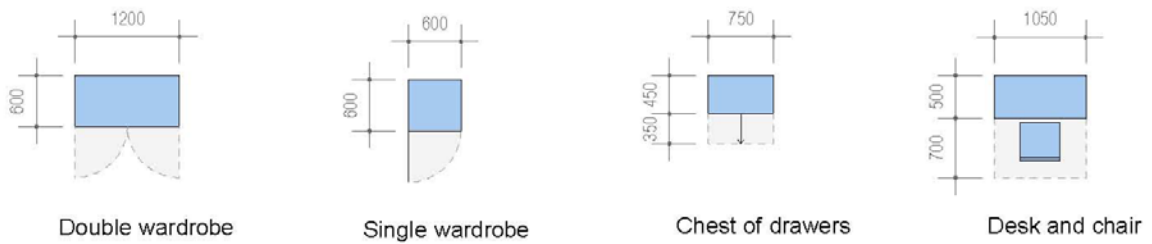
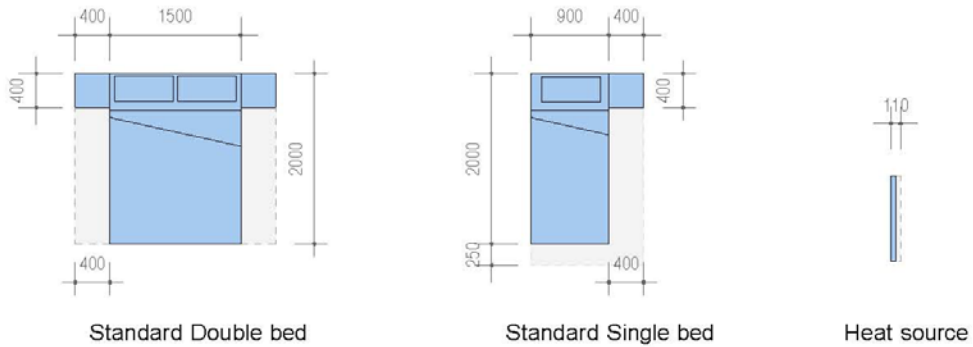
## Living space furniture schedule



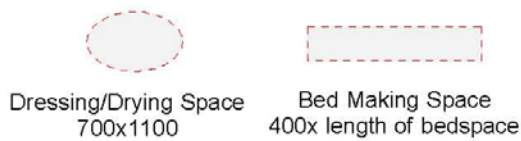
Length varies (refer to furniture schedule)



## Bedroom space furniture schedule



## Activity Zones



Space Standards Furniture Schedule SK02 **mæ**