

DCC consultation on an Interim Planning Policy on HMOs for the rest of the county

The closing date for responses is 5 May 2026.

<https://letstalkcountydurham.co.uk/en-GB/projects/houses-in-multiple-occupation-draft-policy>

DCC explain as follows.

Article 4s can be put in place where there is evidence that concentrations of HMO properties are to the detriment of maintaining mixed and balanced communities.

There are already Article 4s, with a supporting planning policy, in place in Durham City and its surrounding areas to control concentrations of HMO properties predominantly occupied by students. This policy remains as is and is not affected by this consultation.

The draft HMO planning policy for the rest of the county is required to specifically address HMO applications outside of the Durham City Article 4 areas in advance of a new County Durham Plan.

Once agreed, the policy will give all stakeholders clarity on how planning applications for HMOs in these areas will be determined when the new Article 4 comes into effect on 17 August 2026.

Please note - this policy will be an interim one and the policy approach to HMOs in all areas of the county will be reviewed again as part of the process to develop the new County Durham Plan.

The proposed policy is this:

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) outside of the Durham City Article 4 areas (as shown on the map in Appendix A) will only be permitted where the development meets all the following criteria:

- a) it would not lead to three or more of the ten nearest properties being HMOs (as identified through mandatory and selective licensing data);**
- b) it would not lead to 'sandwiching' of a dwelling between two HMO properties where there are adjoining curtilages (as identified through mandatory and selective licensing data) or an HMO and a property that is not a dwelling;**
- c) a management plan is provided which demonstrates impacts on neighbour amenity would be acceptable; and**
- d) it will provide a high standard of amenity for occupants and protect neighbouring amenity by meeting the requirements set out in Tables 1 and 2.**

There is a considerable amount of justification and explanation given for this proposed policy.