
STATES OF JERSEY



MINIMUM RESIDENTIAL SPACE STANDARDS: REVIEW

**Presented to the States on 26th November 2025
by the Minister for the Environment**

STATES GREFFE

REPORT

Executive summary

In response to the States Assembly's support for part (a) of Proposition P.87/2023, the Minister for the Environment has reviewed the minimum residential space standards, specifically in relation to the specification for one-bedroom/one-person homes.

The proposition requested consideration of a revised minimum standard of 52 square metres for all one-bedroom homes, which would effectively remove the existing one-bedroom, one-person (1b/1p) specification. Following a review, the Minister has published updated supplementary planning guidance.

The Minister's revised guidance retains the 1b/1p specification, with minor changes to require a minimum gross internal area of 43 square metres for all one-bed/one-person homes¹; and to revise the minimum standard for a bedroom in this type of home to 8 sq.m².

Smaller, well-designed homes are an essential part of Jersey's housing strategy. Nearly one-third of all households in the island are single-person and household size continues to decline, reflecting a growing need for compact, affordable and flexible living options. These homes can cater to the needs of both younger and older islanders who live alone, offering thoughtfully planned spaces that support modern lifestyles. Features such as dedicated areas for remote working and adaptable layouts ensure these homes remain practical and responsive to changing needs.

Whilst minimum space standards help safeguard quality, it is good design that truly delivers great places to live that are of value and benefit to residents and the wider community. By focusing on well-designed homes within mixed neighbourhoods, we can support placemaking, strengthen social cohesion, and build more sustainable communities.

Larger homes will always cost more, but they won't necessarily meet our community's needs and may be out of reach for many. What matters is that we offer opportunity and choice. And the Minister's guidance supports a more inclusive and responsive housing system - one that gives hope to more islanders seeking a place to call their own.

Concerns about overcrowding in smaller homes are acknowledged and understood. However, the Minister believes this issue is not exclusive to one-bedroom properties. Overcrowding can occur in any home type if occupancy exceeds its intended design.

Instead of removing smaller homes from the planning framework, the Minister will adopt a design-led approach. He will also explore the potential use of planning obligation agreements to highlight each dwelling's intended design capacity to prospective occupants. This strategy ensures homes are used appropriately while enabling a diverse housing mix that supports both affordability and the needs of single-person households.

¹ The previous guidance set a GIA at 41 sq.m for flats with a shower. The revised guidance sets a single minimum standard for one-bed one-person homes with either a bath or a shower.

² 8 sq.m reflects the minimum size for a single bedroom. This does not affect GIA and provides the designer with more flexibility.

The updated guidance is now in effect and will inform future planning applications and development proposals.

Review

In undertaking this review, the Minister for the Environment invited further comment from stakeholders who participated in the consultation on the original draft guidance. Additionally, the Minister conducted a series of site visits to a range of one- and two-bedroom properties, built to both earlier and current standards, to better understand the significance of design and use of space.

Following this engagement and fieldwork, the Minister has considered a range of options, as outlined below.

Removal of the one- bedroom /one-person specification

The proposition specifically proposes that the minimum size for a one-bedroom, two-person apartment be applied to all one-bedroom units, regardless of occupancy. This would effectively remove the one-bedroom, one-person specification from planning guidance.

The Minister has considered this matter and is not, however, minded to revise planning guidance on this basis for the following reasons:

- **reduced affordability:** increasing the minimum size of homes would make smaller homes less affordable for single-person households by increasing their price by around £50,000. The effects of this are likely to make it harder to afford a deposit; and could add around almost £300/month to mortgage repayments³. This may price some buyers out of the market and is more likely to impact first-time buyers as they are often most sensitive to price increases.
- **reduced choice:** it would limit the availability of appropriately sized homes for those individuals who want or need to live as a single-person household, including those downsizing, leaving the family home to start on the property ladder, or returning to the island.
- **reduced supply of homes:** by removing the smallest form of homes that might be developed in Jersey, fewer homes are likely to be built overall, reducing housing supply.
- **increase or sustain overcrowding:** whilst the proposition purportedly seeks to reduce over potential overcrowding, it may have the opposite effect. By making smaller homes more expensive, and through the reduction of choice, it may mean that fewer people can afford to purchase or rent their own home. This may lead to situations where people are forced to remain in shared, possibly overcrowded accommodation, contrary to their needs and preferences.
- **community impact:** as a consequence of all of these factors, it could negatively affect community resilience and the island's social and economic wellbeing. Nearly one-third of all households in the island are single-person and household size continues to decline.

³ Assuming a 25-year mortgage at 5% interest

The current standards support the States Assembly's policy objectives, as set out in the island plan, to promote compact development and optimise land use. Smaller homes, where they are specifically designed for fewer occupants, are not inherently substandard and play a vital role in meeting diverse housing needs.

Maintaining the existing one-bed/one-person standard ensures affordability, choice, and alignment with strategic housing goals.

Increase the one- bedroom /one-person minimum standard

While a broader 10% increase in minimum standards for both one- and two-bed homes was considered (and rejected) by the Assembly when it debated P.87/2023, the Minister has considered increasing the overall gross internal area (GIA) of the one- bedroom /one-person minimum standard as part of his review.

The Minister has, however, concluded that increasing the minimum overall GIA for one- bedroom /one-person would unnecessarily inflate the cost of new, smaller homes. The revised standard already represents a significant improvement over earlier standards (by 25%), exceeds the UK national minimum standard, and is consistent with best practice guidance in London.

Instead, the review presents an opportunity to adopt a universal 43 sqm gross internal area (GIA), aligning all one-bed/one-person homes under a single benchmark. This adjustment addresses a technical misalignment – and which sets a fixed minimum bathroom size of 2m x 2.2m, regardless of whether a bath or shower is provided - and supports the delivery of homes that meet both planning and building requirements.

The requirement for a minimum 43 sq.m GIA for all one-bed/one-person homes represents a 25% improvement in minimum space standards compared to earlier standards.

Change the minimum standard for bedroom space

Although planning policy does not regulate the number of people who ultimately occupy a home, design standards can help influence occupancy patterns. In response to concerns about potential overcrowding in one-bed/one-person homes, the Minister has revised planning guidance to support a designed approach that may help manage over-occupation.

This involves reducing the minimum bedroom size in one-bed/one-person units from 11.5 sqm - the standard for a secondary double bedroom - to 8 sqm, which aligns with the established minimum space standard for a single bedroom.

This change provides greater flexibility to designers, who retain the discretion to include a larger bedroom if they wish to support home working within that space. Crucially, the overall minimum GIA remains at 43 sqm, allowing designers the option to incorporate dedicated home working space either within a larger bedroom or elsewhere in the home, such as the living area.

Ceiling height specification

The height of rooms within a dwelling can significantly influence the perception of space and overall quality of the living environment. Even a modest increase in ceiling height can transform a space from feeling cramped to feeling generous. When paired with appropriately sized windows, higher ceilings also enhance natural light, ventilation, and the depth of light penetration into rooms.

Whilst increasing ceiling heights may not directly address issues of overcrowding in one-bed/one-person homes, it has the potential to enhance the overall quality of accommodation. That said, any move toward a more generous ceiling height standard would have cost implications, particularly in terms of construction and energy efficiency. These impacts would need to be tested in collaboration with the development industry before any changes to guidance are formally adopted and the Minister is not minded to pursue this option at this time.

Limitations on the proposition of one-bed/one-person homes

The provision of one-bed/one-person homes could, in principle, be subject to limitation within individual development schemes by restricting the proportion of such units. This approach may help manage the balance of housing types and mitigate potential issues related to over-occupation or under-provision of larger homes.

The Bridging Island Plan, however, under Policy H4 – Meeting housing needs, already provides a policy mechanism to manage the mix of homes within a development. This mechanism allows for flexibility and responsiveness to local context, with the appropriate mix varying depending on the location within the island. As such, the Minister is not minded to introduce a fixed threshold for the proportion of smaller homes into supplementary guidance at this time.

Conclusion

In summary, the Minister's review has carefully considered stakeholder feedback; included site visits to a range of one-bedroom homes to explore issues of size, design and use of space; and considered a range of policy options. The decision to retain and refine the one-bedroom/one-person specification reflects a balanced approach - supporting affordability, choice, and housing supply, while addressing concerns about overcrowding through design-led solutions and planning controls.

By maintaining a clear and consistent standard, and aligning it with best practice, the Minister aims to ensure that smaller homes continue to play a vital role in Jersey's housing mix, contributing to more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable communities.