

GUIDANCE NOTE

Building Regulations 2014

Part E - Resistance to the Passage of Sound

This Guidance Note has been produced in order to clarify what is meant by 'room for residential purpose' and should be read in conjunction with the definition given in Regulation 3 of The Building Regulations 2014 and referenced in Schedule 1 Part E.

The definition given is: "...means a room or suite of rooms which is not a dwelling house or flat and which is used by one or more persons to live and sleep and includes a room in a hostel, an hotel, a boarding house, hall of residence or a residential home, whether or not the room is separated from or arranged in a cluster group with other rooms, **but does not include a room in a hospital, or other similar establishment, used for patient accommodation** and, ..."

It is the wording "or other similar establishment" which is causing some confusion.

The underlying principle is that the Building Regulations are designed to allow people to live, and particularly sleep, without disturbance from excessive levels of noise.

Hospitals by their very nature generally have occupants for short periods of time, often several to a room, and provide 24 hour care. This means that the benefits of sound insulation would be negated by the operation of the building.

There is a varied list of names for other buildings but the principles – which should be applied to the MAIN use of the building – are:

- a) The anticipated length of stay
- b) The degree of nursing care provided

If the room may be considered to be the occupant(s) residence, albeit with some level of 'on call care', the requirements of Schedule 1 should be applied.

There may be cases where the length of stay may be anticipated to be short term such as respite care, but given the reason for the stay, the requirements of Schedule 1 should be applied.

There may be cases, such as a hospice, where the level of nursing care is 24 hours and the stay anticipated to be short. However, in this instance, the owners and users should benefit from the reduced sound levels afforded by the Schedule 1 requirements.

In summary, in order to be classed as exempt from the requirements of Schedule 1, the building must either be a hospital, or be operated as a hospital, providing high levels of patient care 24 hours a day. In all other cases, the requirements of Schedule 1 should be applied and adequate levels of sound insulation provided for the benefit of occupants.

If you are unsure as to the application of Schedule 1 to your proposed building you should contact your Building Control Authority at the initial design stage for clarification.

