



IMPROVING STANDARDS OF RENTED HOMES



RENTAL PROPERTY STANDARDS FOR HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HMOs)



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FOREWORD

At PAL, we are committed to improving the standard of privately rented accommodation in Welwyn Hatfield and creating a better, safer and fairer private rental sector for our residents.

We know that the majority of tenants are satisfied with the treatment they receive from their landlords and the standard of their rented homes. We also know that the majority of landlords and letting agents operating in our borough are providing good quality services and properties. However, a small minority are exploiting tenants and dragging the reputation of the sector down and we believe it is important that tenants can distinguish creditable landlords and agents from these individuals and make informed choices when renting their homes.

This is why, in January 2012, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and the University of Hertfordshire came together and founded PAL - our free and voluntary landlord and property accreditation scheme that recognises landlords and agents that meet their legal obligations and those that go above and beyond to provide quality homes.

We understand that to secure the success of our scheme, we must ensure that Welwyn Hatfield's landlords, letting and managing agents are aware of their responsibilities. To achieve this, we have developed these PAL Rental Property

Standards that outline the legal requirements of providing rental accommodation in the UK and also provide a model for best practice in providing good quality homes. All PAL accredited landlords and partners commit to abiding by the contents of this document in order to gain and maintain their accreditation.

We thank you for participating in our scheme and hope that this guide will assist you in meeting your obligations, whilst providing assurance to tenants and driving up the private rental standards in Welwyn Hatfield.

Geraldine Ward
Deputy Dean of Students, University of Hertfordshire

Ellen Gava
PAL Landlord Accreditation Manager

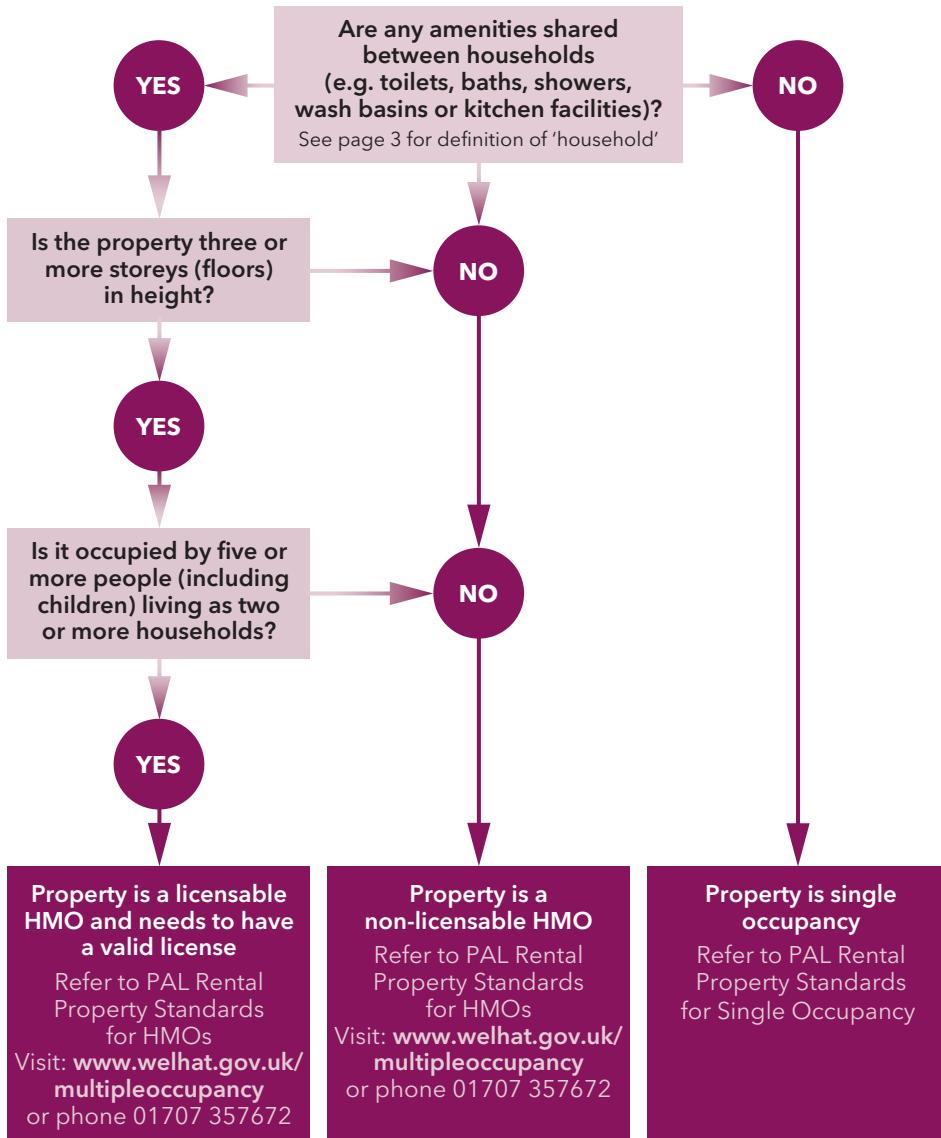


DEFINITIONS AND CATEGORIES OF PROPERTY

HOUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 'House' is not conclusively defined in legislation but includes flats, blocks of flats, and the grounds, outbuildings and boundaries.
HOUSEHOLD	<p>Each of these is a single household:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ a single person;■ co-habiting couples whether or not of the opposite sex;■ a family of related people.
SINGLE OCCUPANCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Property made up of a single household
HOUSE IN MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ A house (or flat) that is let to three or more unrelated tenants (or two or more households) who share a kitchen, bathroom or toilet.
LICENSABLE HMO	<p>An HMO that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Three or more storeys high including habitable basements, attics, and any commercial property, and■ is occupied by five or more people, and■ is occupied by people as their only or main home.



HOW DO I KNOW IF MY PROPERTY IS AN HMO?



THE AIM OF THIS DOCUMENT

The PAL Rental Property Standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) sets out the property standards expected from a PAL Accredited Property. It aims to reflect but does not replace any legal obligations expected of private sector residential landlords.

PAL property accreditation requirements are based around the following five areas which will be assessed:

- Electrical Safety
- Fire Safety
- Thermal Comfort
- Security
- Repair and Maintenance

For a property to be accredited, it must be managed by an accredited landlord or an accredited agent/ partner. Properties which meet all the stated property standards are certified by PAL or an accredited PAL partner as 'Accredited Properties'.

PAL also recognises higher standard properties using a gold mark to distinguish those properties that exceed legal requirements. For a property to be gold standard accredited, it must be managed by an accredited landlord or an accredited agent/ partner and meet the specified additional requirements for the following areas:

- Energy Efficiency
- Security
- Standard of Accommodation
- Space and Facilities

ACCREDITED PROPERTIES

PAL Accredited and PAL Gold Standard Accredited Properties are distinguished using the following accreditation logos:



This reflects both the expected level of management expertise and the amenities in the property.

PAL Accredited and PAL Gold Standard Accredited Properties can be promoted using their awarded logos including on our website at www.pal-online.org.uk/property-search

Please read through this document thoroughly to ensure that your properties meet the outlined requirements.

SECTION ONE: Property standards for PAL Accredited HMOs

SECTION TWO: Requirements for Gold Standard Accredited HMOs

SECTION THREE: Relevant legislation, regulation and further reference documents

SECTION FOUR: Accreditation Checklist

It is recommended that the Rental Property Standards are read in conjunction with the PAL Code of Practice - a brief document which outlines the level of management expected from PAL landlords, letting and managing agents.



SECTION ONE: PROPERTY STANDARDS FOR PAL ACCREDITED HMOs

The property, including the structure and associated outbuildings, yard and other amenity space and means of access, must provide a safe and healthy environment for the occupants and meet the following standards:

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS			
	REQUIREMENT	DETAIL	FURTHER REFERENCE
1.1	General Property Condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The property is maintained in a satisfactory state of repair and is free from avoidable hazards.■ At the start of tenancy the property, furnishings and appliances are clean and in good working order.	<p>Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1984 and The Management of HMO (England) 2006.</p> <p>Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)</p> <p>Repairs Priority Guide WHBC Amenity Standards pg 32</p>
1.2	HMO Licensing and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Where HMO mandatory licensing applies (under Part II of the Housing Act 2004), the landlord has a current HMO licence or has made an application for an HMO licence and the property complies with the licence conditions specified.■ The property has correct planning permission for the current use of the property.	<p>Welwyn Hatfield Council booklet "Houses in Multiple Occupation - Licensing Guide for Landlords"</p>
1.3	Kitchen Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Each kitchen has facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food which are suitable for the number of occupants using the kitchen.	<p>WHBC Amenity Standards pg 8</p>

	REQUIREMENT	DETAIL	FURTHER REFERENCE
1.4	Toilet and Personal Washing Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are adequate facilities for the number of occupants. ■ The facilities are in a condition that can be maintained in a clean and hygienic state. ■ A washable floor covering is provided. <p>For three storey HMOs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Wash hand basins, with hot and cold water, are provided (where reasonably practicable) in all bedrooms. 	WHBC Amenity Standards pgs 9-11 Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
1.5	Furniture and Storage Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All furnishings and furniture are in a clean and reasonable condition and comply with current Fire Safety Regulations. ■ All rooms in the property are adequately furnished for the purpose intended and adequate storage space is provided for the number of tenants in the property. ■ All bedrooms are of an adequate size. 	Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended) WHBC Amenity Standards pg 13
1.6	Thermal Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The property is sufficiently insulated to current standards. ■ A valid Energy Performance/Environmental Impact Certificate (EPC) is available. 	WHBC Amenity Standards pg 24 Energy Performance of Buildings Directive. Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
1.7	Heating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All habitable rooms are heated and the property has controls that allow separate use and programming of heating and hot water including a programmer/timer and room thermostat. ■ Thermostatic radiator valves are fitted to radiators. 	WHBC Amenity Standards pg 8 Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)



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HEALTH AND SAFETY			
	REQUIREMENT	DETAIL	FURTHER REFERENCE
1.8	Fire Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ As an HMO the property has the appropriate level of fire safety/protection. The level of fire safety/protection required is dependent upon the number of storeys the property has. Refer to WHBC Amenity Standards and Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Guide for further details.■ Suitably sited smoke detectors are provided.■ Each kitchen is fitted with a fire blanket.■ All exit routes within a property (hallways, landings and staircases) are maintained as safe and free from significant obstructions and domestic appliances. This is to enable evacuation of the property in the event of fire.■ All external exit doors can be opened from the inside without the use of a key.■ All bedroom, kitchen and living room doors provide 30minutes fire resistance compliant with FD30s standard.■ A sufficient emergency lighting system is installed to provide adequate coverage to the protected fire escape route. The number and position of the individual emergency lights has been determined by a fire risk assessment.■ The property has a current Emergency Lighting Installation Certificate.	<p>Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006, Regulation 4</p> <p>WHBC Amenity Standards pg 18</p> <p>Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service 'Guide to Fire Protection in Houses in Multiple Occupation - Guide for Owners, Agents and Managers of HMOs'</p> <p>British Standard EN3 1869:1997</p> <p>Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)</p> <p>British Standard 5266-1</p> <p>British Standards S 476: - 20: 1987</p> <p>Fire tests on building materials and structures.</p> <p>Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service 'Guide to Fire Protection in Houses in Multiple Occupation - Guide for Owners, Agents and Managers of HMOs'</p>

	REQUIREMENT	DETAIL	FURTHER REFERENCE
1.8	Fire Safety (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A Carbon Monoxide detector is installed in any bedroom or living room where there is a combustion appliance. ■ The property has a current Fire Alarm Installation Certificate. <p>For two storey HMOs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Automatic Fire detection (AFD) system compliant with British Standard 5839 part 6: Grade D, LD2 is provided. <p>For three storey HMOs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Automatic Fire detection (AFD) system compliant with British Standard 5839 part 6: Grade A, LD2 is provided ■ The property has an up to date fire safety risk assessment and the landlord/agent ensures all requirements from the assessment have been acted upon. ■ Note that it is not acceptable to provide power to the fire precautions via pre-payment or coin operated electric meters 	<p>Regulatory Reform Order (Fire Safety) 2005</p> <p>British Standard 5839 part 6: Grade D, LD2</p> <p>British Standard 5839 part 6: Grade A, LD2</p> <p>LACoRS Guidance on Fire Safety (2008) www.lacors.gov.uk</p>



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	REQUIREMENT	DETAIL	FURTHER REFERENCE
1.9	Gas Appliances	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ All means of use and supply of mains gas and alterations and repairs to gas installations comply with the current Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations.■ All gas appliances are serviced and tested annually by an engineer endorsed by Gas Safe Register and a Gas Safety Certificate provided.	Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 Health and Safety Executive Gas Safety Advice Gas Appliances (Safety) Regulations 1995 The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006, Regulation 6(4)
1.10	Electrical Installations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ An adequate number of suitably sited electric sockets are provided in the property.■ An approved electrician (NICEIC or similarly approved) certifies all electrical wiring installations as safe and future inspections are carried out as recommended on the Certificate.■ A copy of a current Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) is provided - 5 yearly or more often if specified by electrician.	WHBC Amenity Standards pg 22 Plugs and Sockets etc (Safety) Regulations 1994 British Standard 7671 - Requirements for Electrical Installations. IET Wiring Regulations.
1.11	Electrical Appliances	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ All electrical appliances provided by the landlord are functioning in accordance with manufacturers' operational limits and are capable of being operated in a safe manner.■ All electrical appliances are visually inspected before the start of the tenancy for signs of wear and tear.	Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994 Plugs and Sockets etc (Safety) Regulations 1994 British Standard EN 60335

	REQUIREMENT	DETAIL	FURTHER REFERENCE
1.11	Electrical Appliances (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A Portable Appliance Test (PAT) Certificate is obtained for each appliance every 12 months. If appliances are less than a year old, a PAT test is not required but a copy of a receipt is required. 	
1.12	Liquefied Gas/Paraffin Heaters and Appliances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No form of bottled gas or paraffin heaters are provided by the landlord or his/her agent as a heating or cooking source. 	www.gov.uk/firekills
1.13	Lighting and Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All rooms have adequate ventilation (this can be ventilation either by openable windows or by mechanical ventilation for bathrooms). ■ All properties are provided with adequate lighting, particularly the communal areas and especially on internal staircases. 	Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) WHBC Amenity Standards pg 20
1.14	Falls on stairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A handrail is fitted on all staircases, internal and external, which consist of three or more steps. ■ There are no openings on stairs or the guarding, which allow a 100mm diameter sphere to pass through. 	Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
1.16	The Environment and Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All properties are provided with adequate refuse disposal facilities including adequate external recycling bins. 	www.welhat.gov.uk/waste



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	REQUIREMENT	DETAIL	FURTHER REFERENCE
1.16	Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ External doors are of a solid construction and compliant with British Standard 8621:2007■ Vulnerable windows are also capable of being effectively secured against entry without compromising the means of escape in case of fire.■ All windows on the first floor and above have window restrictors fitted.■ The boundaries of the property are physically defined by way of robust and well maintained walls or fencing.■ Gates at the side or rear of the property are securely fitted.■ Hedges around external doors and windows are kept trim to avoid providing screening for burglars.■ Lock barrels fit flush with the door and comply with recommended British Standard EN 1303:2005.	WHBC Amenity Standards pg 24 British Standard 8621:2007 British Standard EN 1303 British Standard :7950 British Standard EN 1303:2005.
1.20	Landlords Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ If a property is on a buy-to-let mortgage it has insurance as specified by the lender.	

SECTION TWO: SUPPLEMENTARY REQUIREMENTS FOR PAL GOLD STANDARD ACCREDITED HMOs

PAL Gold Standard Accredited Properties are required to meet additional requirements on top of the property standards detailed in Section 1.

	REQUIREMENT	DETAIL
2.1	Energy Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Property has an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) demonstrating a minimum rating of D. And at least two of the following are provided:<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Full double glazing throughout■ Energy saving motion activated (PIR) lighting throughout common areas■ Energy Saving light bulbs throughout all common areas■ An 'A' rated efficient boiler■ 'A' rated efficiency for any other appliances.
2.2	Security	At least two of the following are provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ An intruder alarm system■ External approach / security lighting■ CCTV■ A security door viewer ('spy hole')■ A secure post box■ Secure bicycle storage■ An appropriate refuse/ recycling store■ A door chain
2.3	Standard of Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The external appearance and upkeep of the house is maintained in repair, clean condition and good order.■ External recreation space is maintained to a high standard (garden/yard/outbuildings).■ Carpets, curtains and decoration within common parts are clean and in good repair.
2.4	Services and Facilities	At least one of the following is provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Separate communal living room of a high decorative order■ Suitably installed and located washer dryer.



	REQUIREMENT	DETAIL
2.4	Services and Facilities (continued)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A cleaner (for common parts and amenities) or a gardener service.
2.6	Inventory	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A current detailed inventory is available for the property.

SECTION THREE: RELEVANT LEGISLATION, REGULATION AND FURTHER REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

3.1 The following legislation applies to this PAL Rental Property Standards document:

- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Housing Act 1996
- Housing Act 2004
- Occupiers' Liability Act 1957
- The Law of Property Act 1925 (c.20)
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Building Act 1984
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1987

3.2 The following regulations apply to this PAL Rental Property Standards document:

- The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended)
- The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- General Product Safety Regulations 1994
- The Plugs and Sockets etc. (Safety) Regulations 1994
- Institution of Electrical Engineers Wiring Regulations
- Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations 1999
- The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

It is the Landlord's or appointed Agent's responsibility to ensure they are familiar with the relevant legislation and regulations appertaining to private rented HMOs.



3.3 The following reference documents have been cited in this PAL Rental Property Standards document:

- *Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS); Department for Communities and Local Government: August 2006*
- WHBC Amenity Standards
- www.depositprotection.com Tenant Deposits, Disputes and Damages leaflet
- BS 8621:2007: *Thief resistant lock assemblies - Keyless egress*
- BS EN 1303: *Building hardware - Cylinders for locks - Requirements and test methods*
- BS:7950: *Specification for enhanced security performance of windows for domestic applications*
- Fire safety in the home: Fire Kills www.gov.uk/firekills
- www.welhat.gov.uk/waste
- BS 7671: *Requirements for Electrical Installations. IET Wiring Regulations.*
- 'The Siting of Domestic CO Alarms', page 34, the Health and Safety Executive www.hse.gov.uk
- British Standard EN 50291-1:2010+A1:2012: *Electrical apparatus for the detection of carbon monoxide in domestic premises. Test methods and performance requirements*
- Health and Safety Executive Gas Safety Advice: www.hse.gov.uk/gas/domestic/
- Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service '*Guide to Fire Protection in Houses in Multiple Occupation - Guide for Owners, Agents and Managers of HMOs*'
- British Standard 5839 part 6: Grade D, LD2: *Fire detection and fire alarm systems for buildings. Code of practice for the design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of fire detection and fire alarm systems in domestic premises*
- LACoRS Guidance on Fire Safety (2008) www.lacors.gov.uk
- British Standard EN3 1869:1997: *Fire blankets*
- British Standard 5266-1:2011: *Emergency lighting. Code of practice for the emergency escape lighting of premises*
- Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (Directive 2002/91/EC,EPBD)
- Welwyn Hatfield Council booklet "Houses in Multiple Occupation - Licensing Guide for Landlords"



SECTION FOUR: ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST - HMOs

	YES	NO	COMMENT
4.1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS			
Is the property in a reasonable state of repair and free from avoidable hazards?			
Do you have emergency repair arrangements? (displayed in prominent place)			
4.2 FIRE SAFETY			
Does the property have adequate means of escape and fire precautions? (as per the scheme requirements)			
Do the furnishings comply with Fire Safety Standards?			
4.3 GENERAL STANDARD OF MANAGEMENT			
Do the management arrangements for the property comply with The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 as well as PAL Code of Practice?			
4.4 THERMAL COMFORT & ENERGY PERFORMANCE			
Does the property have an adequate heating system and effective thermal insulation? (as per the scheme requirements)			
4.5 SECURITY			
Is the property secure? (as per the scheme requirements)			
4.6 AMENITIES			
Does the property comply with the relevant requirements for amenities in HMOs?			
4.7 LICENSING			
Will the HMO need to be licensed?			
Does the property have an existing HMO licence?			



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4.8 DOCUMENTS REQUIRED	FREQUENCY
Fire Alarm Test Certificate	Annual
Emergency Lighting Test Certificate	Annual
Gas Safety Certificate	Annual
Portable Appliance Test Certificate (PAT)	Annual
Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR)	5 yearly (or more often if specified by electrician)
Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)	10 yearly (or when additional energy efficiency measures are installed)
Details of Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme	Issued at the start of a tenancy period
Tenancy Agreement	Issued at the start of a tenancy period or at renewal stage

4.9 GOLD ACCREDITATION

See list of criteria - Section 2 of this document.

DISCLAIMER

The PAL scheme operator will endeavour to keep the information in this document current and accurate, but will not accept liability for any loss to any person or third party resulting from information contained or omitted from this publication.



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Partnership Accreditation for Landlords | The Campus | Welwyn Garden City | Hertfordshire | AL8 6AE
T | 01707 357366 E | administrator@pal-online.org.uk

@PalWelhat