

MICRO LIVING DEFINED

Definition: The provision of homes that do not conform to current minimum space standards
There are three micro-living product types:

1.

COMPACT LIVING

Self-contained smaller homes

2.

CO-LIVING

Purpose-built and managed developments including a combination of personal and shared amenity space

3.

SHARED LIVING

Converted or subdivided houses / HMOs

There are currently numerous terms used across the world to describe homes delivered below the prescribed minimum space standards.

However, the lack of a common definition creates misunderstandings between the key parties involved in housing delivery. This slows productivity and potentially hinders the viability of proposed new housing schemes.

The British Property Federation, working in partnership with JLL, undertook a detailed analysis of the terminology used to describe small housing products from across the world in order to identify a common definition for micro living. This common definition is summarised in the title of this document and the accompanying infographic report entitled Micro Living.

Global validation

We identified a total of 62 micro living schemes from the UK, Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, USA, Canada and Hong Kong. We looked at marketing material, websites and press coverage related to these schemes to identify patterns in terminology usage. Those different terms are summarised in the accompanying Micro Living Terminology table.

Assessing the patterns and trends in the terminology usage allowed us to arrive at our definition and the different product categories it encompasses.

The research identified that the general catch all term used to describe small housing around the world is micro living or micro homes. All micro living solutions are provided below current UK minimum space standards.

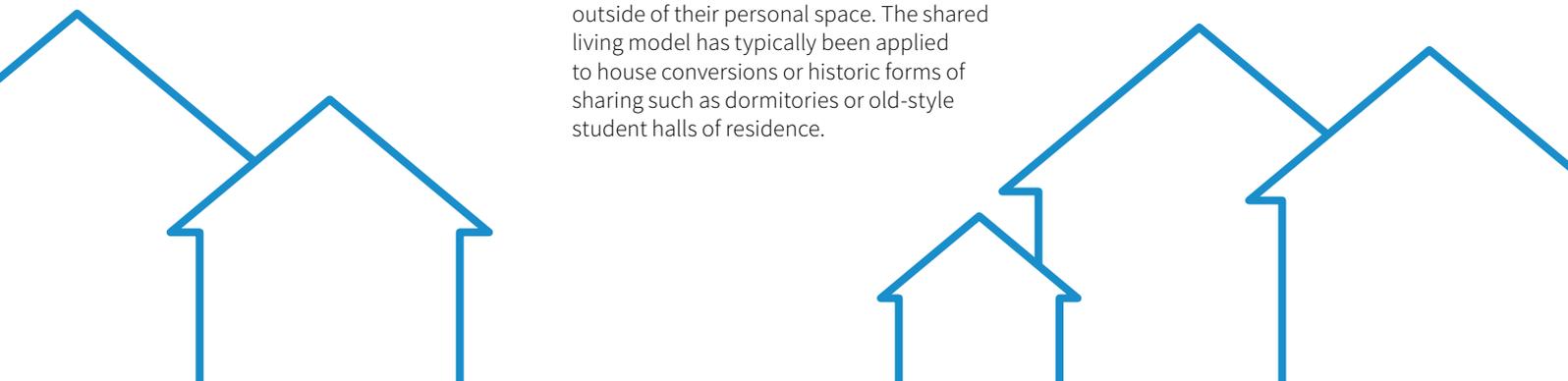
Furthermore, all the identified micro living solutions sit along a spectrum with self-contained living at one end and shared living at the other. Self-contained living sees the provision of all of a person's basic housing needs within their personal space. Shared living involves 'deconstructing' a home so that some amenities or facilities are provided to occupiers on a shared basis outside of their personal space. The shared living model has typically been applied to house conversions or historic forms of sharing such as dormitories or old-style student halls of residence.

The common term used globally for modern purpose built forms of shared living – and considered the best term to continue using going forward – is Co-living.

Self-contained smaller homes have a much more diverse range of terms applied to them including micro, nano, tiny and compact. Of those options, compact living is the proposed catch all term for small self-contained homes going forward.

Physical definition

This research has focused on defining the physical nature of micro living. The ability to sell or rent each product category is not considered to be a driving factor in assigning a classification, given that policy or lending criteria can alter over time or in different regions. However, the research did find that all forms of shared living or co-living product in the sample group are currently rental only, whereas compact homes may or not be rental only.



MICRO LIVING TERMINOLOGY

TERM	LOCATION	TYPICAL SIZE	TENURE	DESCRIPTION	TERM USAGE	NUMBER OF INSTANCES TERM USED
Micro living / Micro home	Global	20 – 40 sq m	Sale or rent	May be self-contained, may encompass shared amenities	Consistently used descriptive term globally to denote small homes	29
Micro Pads	USA	12 – 30 sq m	Rent	Modular built housing unit	Product name from the USA	1
Compact living	UK mostly	–	Sale or rent	Self-contained living space	Typically used to denote space saving solutions often in interiors, product and furniture design	2
Nano Flat	Hong Kong	18 sq m	Sale or rent	Self-contained living space	Product name targeting young professionals	1
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)	UK	6.5 – 12 sq m	Rent	Rooms to let starting from a minimum of 6.5 sq m with facilities in home shared among occupants	Standard term laid out in Housing Act 1985 for subdivided homes – formal term for a house share	3
Co-living	Global	12 – 20 sq m	Rent	Provides a combination of personal living space and shared facilities	Common international term for modern purposed built shared living developments	18
Studio	Global	20 sq m +	Sale or rent	Self-contained living space	Term used to describe a home with a single room for living, dining and sleeping	1
Tiny House	UK, North America, Australia	11 sq m	Sale	Self-contained living space	Marketing / product name	1
Innovation Housing	USA	35 sq m	Rent	Provides a combination of shared and personal facilities	Marketing / product name	1
Dormitory	USA, UK	12 sq m	Rent	A shared bedroom as well as additional shared amenities	Common term for housing solutions with room sharing	2
Twodios	UK	12 sq m	Rent	Two private sleeping rooms with shared kitchen and bathroom.	Marketing/product term in the UK	1

BASIC HOUSING NEEDS

Following interviews with developers, tenants, policy makers and planners, it has been determined that the capacity to provide the following facilities/amenities should be available in all homes, no matter the size.

1. Bed, 2. Washing machine, 3. Toilet, 4. Shower, 5. Sink, 6. Storage, 7. Sofa/ arm chair, 8. Cooking facilities, 9. Fridge, 10. Table

The question becomes whether these need to be provided in a self-contained manner to each individual occupier, or whether they can be shared? Families share many of the amenities. But it also seems reasonable to conclude that like-minded, but unrelated, people can also share many of the above, whilst retaining some self-contained personal living space.