



Disabled people's housing strategy 2021

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Foreword

We've listened to what disabled residents have told us about the changes needed in housing. We know how important it is to do things with residents, not to them. That's why we have co-produced this strategy.

We're determined to provide accessible housing, and services, which work for disabled residents. For that purpose, we listened to the Disabled People's Commission. The commission looked at ways of improving public services in Hammersmith & Fulham. In 2018 the commission published their final report, *'Nothing About Disabled People Without Disabled People'*. The report recommended co-production with disabled residents. To that end, we set up a working group with disabled residents to create this strategy together.

We know that disabled people know best about what they need in housing. It was important that we heard from as many disabled people in our housing as possible. That's why we also set up focus groups, to have in-depth discussions about housing issues. Those discussions highlighted key points which now shape our action plan. Disabled residents will now work with us to carry out that action plan.

We have made four key commitments in this strategy. We will create a culture of co-production with disabled residents and work together with those residents to improve their influence in shaping housing service. We will improve access to housing information with disabled residents including housing options and housing services. We will also improve the council's services as a landlord for disabled residents. Finally, we will identify ways to increase the supply of accessible and affordable housing to meet the needs with disabled residents. Our action plan explains exactly how we will work with disabled residents to fulfil these commitments.

We are committed to working with disabled residents on issues that affect them – together we will deliver the housing and services disabled residents want and need. This strategy is also the start of a new way of working better together – towards true co-production.

Councillor Lisa Homan

Cabinet Member for Housing
Hammersmith & Fulham Council

Overview



Summary

This strategy addresses how Hammersmith & Fulham Council (H&F) will work to ensure the best housing outcomes for disabled residents in the borough and puts into action some of the recommendations of the Disabled People's Commission (DPC) in the context of housing service delivery.

The strategy underlines the importance of co-production with disabled residents in service design and review, and the key role good quality housing has in supporting disabled residents to have choice and control in their lives.

The Disabled People's Commission defines co-production as:


“local disabled residents are working together with decision makers; to actively identify, design, and evaluate policy decisions and service delivery that affect our lives and remove the barriers we face”¹

To achieve the changes and improvements proposed in this strategy, we will work using the Social Model of Disability.² The Social Model reflects disabled residents' real-life experience and puts forward a radical and practical approach to ending disabled residents' exclusion that does not require disabled residents to change who they are in order to be deemed to be entitled to the same rights and opportunities as non-disabled residents.

The Social Model of Disability recognises that people with impairments are 'disabled' by the physical, attitudinal, economic and environmental barriers in society and therefore the focus should be on removing these barriers.

H&F's vision is to support disabled residents to live as independently as possible (with support where appropriate) and have opportunities to access the appropriate housing options and suitable accommodation that meet their needs.

The council knows that both internal and external partners are critical to delivering the best services with disabled residents in the borough, and this strategy is underpinned by commitments to joint working and creation of a culture of co-production with disabled residents.

¹ Source: 'Nothing About Disabled People Without Disabled People' report, www.lbhf.gov.uk/dpcreport 

² Source: Inclusion London website, <https://bit.ly/2xsglbz> 

The strategy contains four key objectives:

- 1** Create a culture of co-production with disabled residents and work together with those residents to improve their influence in shaping housing services
- 2** Improve access to housing information with disabled residents including housing options and housing services
- 3** Improve the council's services as a landlord for disabled residents
- 4** Identify ways to increase the supply of accessible and affordable³ housing to meet needs with disabled residents

Key actions arise from four objectives, which will continue over the life of the strategy are:

- We will work with disabled residents (and those who support disabled residents) to provide comprehensive information and advice on housing options in H&F
 - We will increase disabled residents' participation through our resident involvement work to shape and influence housing services
 - We will continue to engage directly with disabled residents to ensure that they are aware of this strategy, their rights and housing options
 - We will engage with and strengthen our partnership working with Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) in the borough, including DPOs run by adults with learning difficulties
 - We will continue to improve our homes and services to better meet the needs of disabled residents
 - We will continue to review and, where necessary, amend the Local Plan to facilitate the development of new housing to meet the needs of disabled residents
- We will continue to press for Greater London Authority funding to facilitate the delivery of specialist housing in the borough
 - We will develop and monitor the quality and availability of signposting information available to disabled residents through housing services
 - We will implement service feedback protocols such as exit surveys and feedback forms to help us improve housing services to meet the needs of disabled residents



Attendees at a Hammersmith & Fulham Disabled People's Commission event

³ See appended glossary for definitions

Introduction

The term ‘disabled people’, as defined in the Equalities Act 2010, refers to people who have a ‘physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term limiting effect on their ability to do normal day-to-day activities’. However, this is a broad definition and individuals’ housing and support needs will differ greatly.

We spoke with disabled residents and local organisations to understand the challenges disabled residents face in accessing housing services and information and securing good housing that meets their needs.

This strategy aims to set out the council’s approach for meeting the housing needs of disabled residents through provision of housing services shaped and influenced by and for disabled residents.

In a climate of increasing financial challenges for local authorities particularly in social care expenditure, and an increasing demand of an aging population, this strategy emphasises the importance of partnership working and co-production with disabled people and Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs) to develop better information services and streamline processes to deliver better housing services for disabled residents. Our approach will help us anticipate future needs of disabled residents and better plan future housing provision in the borough.

We will aim to provide a range of options; particularly as more disabled people are choosing to remain in their homes. These options include repairs and adaptation services, and the provision of new homes built to meet disabled residents’ changing circumstances over a lifetime.

The council are committed to having housing provision for disabled residents fully integrated within housing developments. Housing provision extends beyond the home itself, such as making sure play areas in housing developments are accessible to disabled children and young people (including those with SEN – special educational needs) and their families, and housing management practices which address and prevent discrimination against disabled people.

This sort of investment in housing and related services can reduce the spending on social care and improve residents’ wellbeing and quality of life and support independent living as much as possible.

People with unmet need for accessible housing are estimated to be four times more likely to be unemployed or not seeking work due to sickness/disability than disabled people without accessible housing needs or whose needs are met.⁴

⁴ Source: LSE Report ‘No Place Like an Accessible Home’ (July 2016)

The Disabled People's Housing Strategy responds to:

- 1 The council's Housing Strategy 2015** which sets out the council's intention to increase the amount of genuinely affordable housing being delivered. The council is currently developing its new Housing Strategy which will emphasise the importance of implementing the principles of co-production.
- 2 The Local Plan 2018** which is the borough-wide policy that guides decisions on whether or not planning applications can be granted. For example, the Local Plan contains policies on accessibility and affordability requirements for homes being developed in H&F.
- 3 The Disabled People's Commission Report** which contains eight recommendations that help make H&F become the most accessible and inclusive borough in London.



Members of the Hammersmith & Fulham Disabled People's Commission

Vision and objectives

H&F's vision is to create a culture of co-production in housing services to enable disabled residents in the borough to live independently, access suitable accommodation that meets their needs, and have more control over the housing options and housing services available to them.

To ensure this strategy supports the council's delivery of effective people-centred services, it is underpinned by three key principles:

1 Commitment to co-production and shared decision-making

We want disabled residents to work together with us to shape council services to offer better quality housing and related services.

2 Partnership working

We will work together with disabled residents and colleagues in adult social care, social services and the third sector to deliver good housing options. Safe, secure, and affordable housing is essential in delivering better outcomes for disabled residents.

3 People-focused approach

Through applications of co-production principles and partnership working we want to make every contact count, so disabled residents access the right services at the right times for them.

Consultation

In creating this strategy, we worked with members of the **Disabled People's Commission** who helped shape the themes of the strategy.

We also spoke to **Adult Social Care, H&F Mencap, Safety Net – People First** and crucially, we held three **focus groups** and spoke with disabled residents for first-hand feedback on their experiences and their vision of co-production and working with the council to provide better services to disabled residents in the borough.



Participants at a Hammersmith & Fulham co-production event

National and local context

21 per cent (13.3 million) of people reported living with a disability in 2015/16, an increase from 19 per cent (11.9 million) in 2013/14. Most of the changes over the two years came from an increase in working-age adults reporting a disability (16 to 18 per cent).⁵

The prevalence of disability rises with age: in 2015/16, 7 per cent of children were disabled, compared to 18 per cent of adults of working age, and 44 per cent of adults over state pension age. There are more disabled women than men in the UK.⁶

In London, the Mayor's draft New London Plan 2017 includes requirements for 10 per cent of all new build housing in London to be wheelchair user dwellings (wheelchair adaptable or wheelchair accessible), and the remaining 90 per cent to be accessible and adaptable dwellings (previously lifetime homes standards.)

In Hammersmith & Fulham, the largest predicted population growth over the next 10 years is expected to be of the over 85 age group although the number of people aged 65 to 85 is also expected to grow by a fifth.⁷

The September 2016 Strategic Joint Needs Assessment (JSNA) noted that the likelihood of having a disability increases with age, and that the large number of working age residents in the borough means the 45 to 64-year-old age group has the largest number of people reporting long-term illness or disability. This is backed up by the national trends highlighted above.

People are living longer and at the same time there is a gradual shift in the older population of people living longer with disabling barriers. Just over 51 per cent of older people living in the borough stated that their day to day activities were limited (either a little or a lot).⁸

The 2011 Census shows that, in respect of physical disabilities, 12.6 per cent of Hammersmith & Fulham's residents reported having long-term illness or disability (14.7 per cent in 2001). The percentage by ward ranges from 9.9 per cent in Parsons Green and Walham to 15.8 per cent in Wormholt and White City.

As regards learning difficulties, the Learning Disabilities JSNA shows that there were 1,014 people aged 18 to 64 with a learning disability known to Adult Social Care in 2013/14.

Particularly important to note is that, in the same period, 14 per cent of people with learning difficulties receiving services and support from Adult Social Care were aged 65 and over.

⁵ Source: Department for Work and Pensions – Family Resources Survey 2015/16

⁶ Source: Department for Work and Pensions – Family Resources Survey 2015/16

⁷ Source: GLA population projections 2014

⁸ Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics DC3404EW

Covid-19

The relationship between housing and public health is well known. The Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic has seen housing services across the country respond to the biggest health crisis that the UK has faced this century. The virus has impacted residents of Hammersmith & Fulham in many ways. In this crisis, we have been working hard to mitigate risks for some of our residents who have required additional support during the pandemic.

Residents have made big sacrifices to keep themselves and their loved ones safe. Many people in shielding groups, and those that have had to self-isolate, have spent months in their homes. This period at home has highlighted how housing quality, accessibility of services and housing suitability affect our mental health and wellbeing.

We as a council have also made changes to prevent the spread of the virus, including:

- 1 Adapting quickly to provide services online.**
- 2 Getting 'Everyone In' and supporting rough sleepers.**
- 3 Reducing risks while making sure our services keep running and remain accessible to residents.**
- 4 Looking at ways of reducing loneliness and isolation.**
- 5 Engaging with community groups online and making sure that residents have the support to access online meetings.**

We are facing changing and challenging times in the future. But, as we've shown, we won't let this stop us providing high quality housing and inclusive services to disabled residents.



Objectives



Objective 1 – introduce a culture of co-production with disabled residents to shape housing services

Background

The council is committed to working closely with disabled residents to make decisions about the support and services they receive. The council set up the Disabled People's Commission (DPC), which was made up of 10 disabled people. The DPC delivered its report which was unanimously approved at Cabinet in December 2017.

The report '*Nothing About Disabled People, Without Disabled People*' contains eight key recommendations focusing on creating a culture of co-production within the council. Members of the commission have been directly involved in shaping the Disabled People's Housing Strategy, chairing focus groups and providing critical feedback throughout.

One of the fundamental tenets of co-production in the report is empowering disabled residents to work together with the council to identify barriers for disabled people, co-produce solutions to these barriers and review the solutions after implementation.

In addition, there are statutory duties on local authorities to involve the public in their decision-making at an early stage. This is underpinned by the Public Sector Equality Duty which flows through all decision-making and requires proper consideration of, and engagement with, disabled residents affected by policies and decisions.

To demonstrate our commitment to co-production we can point to, and build on, the work on the West King Street Renewal project. Council officers worked in partnership with a team of disabled residents from pre-application engagement, inclusive design discussions to meaningful engagement throughout the evolution of the project. This significant achievement included a statement on co-production which addressed successes and challenges of the collaborative effort that led to delivery of a fully accessible development for all.



Artists impression of the West King Street Renewal project which was co-designed with disabled residents

What is co-production?

The Disabled People's Commission's report explains that co-production is "working together means local disabled people living in an area are working together with decision makers. Co-production means disabled residents and decision makers together planning, designing and reviewing policy and services that affect our lives to get rid of barriers."

Co-production is different from consultations, reviews and surveys which are often undertaken as ways of gauging views to shape an outcome or decision. Members of the DPC, and other disabled residents we engaged directly in creating this strategy, were clear that co-production is a combination of many elements together as part of a successful working relationship between the council, disabled residents, and the wider community.

For most local authorities, to realise true co-production involves a step-change from the current way of doing things. It also requires building capacity of disabled residents to be involved in co-production (working together) with professionals.

This housing strategy will initiate that change in housing and we are aware that co-production is a journey. The strategy's key actions will be approached through the principles of co-production particularly the first steps of continuous engagement, consultation, and co-design.

Many disabled residents have told us they will welcome this new approach. However, the council is aware of the challenging task ahead in bringing more disabled residents on board. This was highlighted in our focus group sessions with disabled residents. Many disabled residents told us that there had been many years of perceived apathy and lack of engagement with them and that the council will have to regain their trust through action and delivery on commitments. We are committed to building trusted relationships with disabled residents.

We also know that, of the council staff who responded to the DPC's survey, 94 per cent want to involve local disabled residents who get support and/or use council services, in the council's work.



"The leaders should be talking to us"

Disabled council tenant



"Sometimes the best people to have in your department to help disabled people are disabled people"

Disabled council tenant

Our commitments

We will...	Which will mean...
Publicise resident engagement and co-production options to disabled residents and Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs)	More disabled residents are aware of the options
Publicise the different DPOs that disabled residents can access in the borough	Stronger relationships with DPOs and the third sector to deliver better services for disabled residents
Develop a co-production strategy with disabled residents to include different levels of engagement	Disabled residents are empowered and involved from the beginning to affect change in council services

Our action plan

Action	Service or team responsible	Outcome
Promote the work of the Resident Involvement Teams particularly the resident involvement groups	Housing Services	Increased awareness of the Resident Involvement Teams amongst disabled residents
Review the recruitment strategy for resident involvement groups so that all groups and activities are explicitly accessible to disabled residents, to increase disabled residents' participation Identify budget for access requirements	Housing Services	Recruitment to groups is more accessible
Implement the updated recruitment strategy for the involvement groups	Housing Services	More disabled residents are recruited to resident involvement groups
Review the impact of resident involvement groups on Housing Services	Housing Services	Measurable impact of the work of the groups on Housing Services
Promote and raise awareness of the work of DPOs in Hammersmith & Fulham	Housing Services/ Housing Solutions/ Adult Social Care	More H&F customers are aware of the work of local DPOs

Objectives

Action	Service or team responsible	Outcome
Develop a co-production strategy with the full range of DPOs in Hammersmith & Fulham, including DPOs led by people with learning difficulties	Housing Strategy to coordinate and liaise with relevant stakeholders	Closer working between the council and DPOs
Develop ways of gathering information about housing from disabled residents	Housing Services	More information held by the council on housing for disabled residents

Possible measures

- Number of disabled residents engaged
- Number of disabled residents recruited to groups
- Number of DPOs meaningfully engaged and promoted
- Number and type of changes made in partnership with disabled residents



Attendees at a Hammersmith & Fulham Disabled People's Commission event

Objective 2 – improve access to housing information

Background

The council will make sure that disabled residents applying for housing assistance understand the processes and decision-making mechanisms involved, on a customer journey that is accessible, person-centred, and clearly defined.


The Public Sector Equality Duty requires councils and health authorities to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic i.e. disabled person and people who do not share it.

The Disabled People's Commission's 2017 report, *'Nothing About Us, Without Us'* identified lack of accessible information as a barrier to equality affecting disabled residents.

Feedback from focus groups of disabled H&F residents carried out in 2017 and 2018 identified key areas for H&F to improve access to information:

- Clarify the Housing Register, Allocations, and Transfers processes
- Explain the adaptations process
- Identify the different contact points for different services
- Provide information on support services i.e. transition to adulthood
- Explain the full range of housing options available to disabled residents
- Explain the local and legal contexts, "what are our rights?"

Participants in the focus groups also highlighted that housing assessment can appear to be an opaque process.



"It is nice to be able to see the actual officer who you speak to on the phone"

Disabled council tenant

Improving access to information for disabled residents

Hammersmith & Fulham Council can support disabled residents' access to housing services by providing information which meets high standards of accessibility, transparency, and consistency.

Key ways to improve accessibility of information include:

- Exploring the possibility of adopting single accessibility standard e.g. NHS
- Using simple language when announcing key changes
- Listening and asking the right questions
- A culture of awareness about the barriers to housing that disabled residents experience including those disabled residents with hidden impairments/health conditions
- Access to British Sign language interpreters
- Clearly defined terms, i.e. 'accessible'
- Awareness of communication barriers
- Clear and publicised information about processes and services
- Clearly defined points of contact
- Tailored services: what works for one resident may not work for another
- Excellent customer service.

Availability of accessible information will improve access to services and foster equality for disabled residents in the borough. Hammersmith & Fulham Council will improve our relationship with residents by addressing current concerns. For example, at a recent focus group with council tenants, only half of the attendees knew the name of their housing officer.



In the focus groups, you told us that you want us to:

- Explain the process for adaptations
- Explain the full range of housing options
- Tell you more about HomeSwapper, and affordable rent options
- Explain the intermediate and shared ownership options
- Let you know about local development plans
- Explain the legal information relating to your housing options
- Give you information on housing options for young disabled residents entering adulthood

It is important that disabled residents know how the allocations and transfers processes work, including decision making mechanisms, criteria and appeals processes. Disabled applicants need to know what they can expect when, and who to contact with questions or issues.

Our commitments

We will...	Which will mean...
Work with DPOs to develop tailored housing options and advice for disabled residents	More disabled residents will be advised of the housing options they have available to them, and understand a clearly articulated offer
Publicise the full range of housing options and services available to disabled residents, as well as the processes and procedures involved	Disabled residents will have a clear idea of what to expect, and who to contact about what, when accessing housing services
Publicise information on how disabled residents can find out about development plans in the local area	Disabled residents will have a clear idea of what developments are taking place locally, and what land is being used for
Strengthen internal and external links, co-working and signposting	Disabled residents will have a smooth journey through H&F Council services, and be better informed about services outside of the council

Our action plan

Action	Service or team responsible	Outcome
<p>Develop new information in everyday language explaining the full range of housing options available to disabled residents. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Options advice leaflet • DFG and Adaptations information leaflet 	Housing Solutions/ Housing Services/ Adult Social Care	Leaflets are more accessible
Ensure accessible easy-read information on the council's responsibilities as a landlord, and legal duties to disabled residents under housing legislation, are made available	Housing Strategy/ Housing Solutions	Increased access to information on landlord responsibilities and legal duties
Produce accessible easy read versions of the Housing Strategy, Housing Allocation Scheme and Home Buy Allocation Schemes	Housing Strategy/ Housing Solutions	Increased access to the Housing Strategy, Housing Allocation Scheme and Home Buy Allocation Schemes

Objectives

Action	Service or team responsible	Outcome
Distribute up-to-date contact information to disabled council tenants with useful H&F contacts including tenants' housing officer details	Housing Solutions/ Housing Services	More disabled residents have information on who to contact at H&F
Engage DPOs and housing associations to identify housing demand from disabled residents in the borough	Housing Solutions/ Housing Strategy	Improved data on demand
Develop signposting materials to link to Disabled People's Organisations and other useful local contacts	Housing Solutions/ Housing Strategy	Disabled residents have increased access to information on DPOs and local contacts
Develop ways to provide tailored housing information early in preparation for key transitions i.e. the transition into own accommodation when reaching adulthood or a move to supported housing	Housing Solutions/ Social Services	Disabled residents given tailored information earlier
Review the accessibility of the council's website	Housing Strategy/ Corporate Communications	The council website is more accessible

Possible measures

- Number of disabled residents signposted to appropriate services
- Number of disabled residents who received updated accessible housing services information
- Number of people engaged through working with DPOs
- Analysis of numbers of visitors to council website
- Analysis of feedback following production of accessible information material

Objective 3 – improve housing services with disabled residents

Background

There is strong evidence that poor quality or inappropriate housing can trigger health and social care needs, worsen existing needs and lead to early loss of independence and more intensive and costly interventions.

Some existing housing stock in the borough is already suitable for disabled residents, including those with support needs, whether through original design or subsequent adaptation. The council are also able to adapt some of our existing stock because we are committed to supporting disabled residents to have choice and control in their lives. Unfortunately, some of the council's housing stock does not meet the needs of disabled residents.

The main funding stream for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) comes from the Government for councils to support these improvements. Funding for DFGs has increased in recent years but the cap on individual grants (of £30,000) has not changed since 2008.



⁹ Source: Council housing stock data Oct 2017

Training and development

One of the council's most valuable resources is its staff. However, many disabled residents engaged during the creation of this strategy spoke of examples where they felt misunderstood and, in some instances, dismissed when receiving housing services from the council.

Particularly, residents felt that council contractors who carry out repairs and adaptations are not empathetic to the needs of disabled residents.

This highlights a need for regular and continuous training, including Disability Equality Training and development of staff from the council and its contractors in dealing with disabled residents. Finally, as part of Objective 2, the council's housing services must provide clear and well publicised ways for disabled residents to contact the council.

Housing stock

The council is the biggest landlord in the borough. The council has around 11,353 general needs homes. Three quarters of these are flats with almost half of them having no ground floor entrance and some having no lifts. In addition, 35 per cent of the council's housing stock is one-bedroom properties⁹ which is a higher proportion than London as a whole.

Many of the council's existing homes need to be adapted and improved to be more accessible to disabled residents. It is therefore crucial that future housing provision in the borough, should at the very least be built to Lifetime Standards and able to meet the needs of a range of disabled residents based on good data and adapting to remain current with demographic changes in the borough.

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)

DFGs are administered by the council to help disabled residents adapt their home to make it easier for them to continue to live there or maintain their independence. Adaptations produce improved quality of life for 90 per cent of recipients and improved quality of life for carers and of other family members.¹⁰

To obtain a DFG, applicants are means-tested and determinations of the level of grant is made on a case-by-case basis.


From our focus groups, we found that some disabled residents are; not aware of DFGs, do not fully understand the process and the steps involved or are extremely dissatisfied with the length of time it takes for adaptations to be undertaken.

Participants in the groups pointed to improvements in their quality of life by having good quality adaptations carried out properly and in a timely manner. The importance of this reaches beyond the physical improvements, they mentioned that it helps them to be more in control, live independently and with dignity and feeling safer in their homes.

Accessible Housing Register


In the council's Older People's Housing Strategy and the Mayor of London's draft London Housing Strategy 2017, there are clear expectations that social landlords must be well-informed about the accessibility of their housing stock using tools such as the Accessible Housing Register.

As part of the recently published Older People's Housing Strategy, the council pledged to update and maintain information on its Accessible Housing Register to identify which properties are accessible for disabled and older residents.



"Customer service is key to any organisation being successful"

Disabled council tenant



"Attitudes towards people with invisible disabilities need to be addressed, people think you 'look well' and don't listen to the fact that you are disabled"

Disabled council tenant

¹⁰ Source: Heywood and Turner (2007)

Our commitments

We will...	Which will mean...
Improve our systems for allocating and matching all accessible and adapted homes to which the council can nominate	Disabled residents seeking to move will be matched to housing that better meets their needs
Working with disabled residents, review and improve the current disabled facilities grant and aids and adaptations service	The process of adapting existing accommodation in line with disabled residents' needs is people-focused, enabling disabled residents to live in their own homes for as long as possible and maintain their independence
Develop a training programme for frontline officers, to include Disability Equality Training	Disabled residents who contact the council deal with informed staff and receive the best customer service
In partnership with housing associations and DPOs, develop detailed housing demand profile from disabled residents	Being able to identify opportunities and develop homes to meet the needs of disabled residents

Our action plan

Action	Service or team responsible	Outcome
Recruit disabled residents to co-produce a review of the Disabled Facilities Grant and Adaptation Service	Housing Services (with Housing Property Services and Occupational Therapy)	Disabled residents are involved in the review process
Review the current Disabled Facilities Grant and aids and adaptations service	Housing Services (with Housing Property Services and Occupational Therapy)	Disabled Facilities Grant and the aids and adaptations service is analysed
Implement recommendations from Disabled Facilities Grant and adaptations service review	Housing Services (with Housing Property Services and Occupational Therapy)	Recommendations are put into practice and the service is clearer and more efficient

Objectives

Action	Service or team responsible	Outcome
Co-produce accessible information that details the applicant journey through the Disabled Facilities Grant process	Property Services and Occupational Therapy)	Disabled residents have better access to information about the improved process
Identify the council's accessible housing stock and update the accessible housing register	Housing Services	The accessible housing register accurately represent accessible housing stock
Create a training programme (Disability Equality Training) for frontline officers dealing with repairs and adaptations (including contractors), including training delivered by DPOs	Property Services	An increased number of frontline officers receive training
Property adaptations to be retained at the end of tenancies and property to be re-allocated to another disabled person	Housing Solutions	Fewer properties have adaptations at the end of tenancies
Ensure that fire safety measures in council properties (such as fire doors) are suitable for use by disabled tenants	Housing Services	Improvement in accessibility of fire safety measures
When tenancy checks are carried out, gather up-to-date information on disabled tenants	Resident Involvement	More current data held regarding disabled tenants

Possible measures

- Number of disabled residents engaged to help review the DFG process
- Number of homes improved so they are future-proofed for disabled residents' needs
- Length of time to deliver adaptations for disabled residents
- Create and monitor feedback/exit surveys following repairs and adaptations

Objective 4 – identify ways to increase supply of accessible housing

Background

The current housing stock is largely inaccessible to most disabled residents. With the supply of existing accessible or adaptable housing so low, the only option for some disabled residents may be new housing. The Mayor of London and Hammersmith & Fulham Council requires developers to provide 90 per cent new accessible housing and 10 per cent new wheelchair housing. There are also policies on achieving new affordable housing. However, the high cost of land and development in London means that most new housing is unaffordable to disabled residents on benefit or low incomes.

Accessible housing

Approved Document M of the Building Regulations in 2015 included minimum specifications for accessibility of all homes.

The London Plan requires 90 per cent M4(2) accessible and adaptable homes (formerly lifetime homes) and 10 per cent M4(3) wheelchair user dwellings. Wheelchair user dwellings are further divided into wheelchair adaptable (with potential to be adapted for a wheelchair user) or wheelchair accessible (suitable for immediate occupation for a wheelchair user). This ensures new housing with step free access to meet the needs of the occupant as they change over time.

The split between accessible and adaptable homes M4(2) and wheelchair user homes M4(3) is spread across both private housing and affordable housing to give people choice.

Wheelchair adaptable housing

If it is new private housing or new affordable housing for shared ownership or discount market sale, then the requirement is to meet Building Regulation M4(3) (a) wheelchair adaptable dwellings with the potential to be easily adapted for a wheelchair user.

Wheelchair accessible housing

If it is affordable housing for social or affordable rent where the housing department nominates wheelchair users for new housing, then the requirement is Building Regulation M4(3) (b) wheelchair accessible dwellings on completion. This is suitable for immediate occupation by a wheelchair user.



Housing schemes with support

These include both supported housing and extra care housing schemes. Supported housing is for people with physical disabilities and complex needs, people with learning disabilities or people with mental health conditions who need support to live independently in their homes.

Extra care housing

Extra care housing is for disabled and older people who need purpose-built housing with full time support to meet their care needs.

However, these schemes traditionally require capital funding to build homes, and revenue funding to provide the support services required and meet the housing costs.

Disability Forum Planning Group (DFPG)

The Disability Forum Planning Group is an independent group run by disabled volunteers with lived experience of using housing, public buildings and public open space. It provides invaluable advice to the council's housing and planning services to make sure new public buildings and new housing are step free and accessible to all disabled residents, people with long term health conditions and older disabled residents.

The DFPG reviews proposals at various stages of the planning process to help planning and housing officers ensure housing providers and developers submit planning applications that comply with Building Regulations. The group are particularly concerned to ensure that all new social/affordable rent housing are fully compliant with both Building Regulations M4(2) accessible and adaptable dwellings and Building Regulations M4(3) wheelchair user dwellings.



The DFPG is not funded. However, the council is keen to support members of the group to identify funding streams to build capacity of disabled residents to be involved in co-production and working together with the council on planning applications. The council will also help facilitate training and recruitment to the group under the management of the existing disabled volunteers.

Key recommendations from the DFPG:

- Planning and housing departments work together with disabled residents and include them in the process throughout development
- Co-produce information to make the planning system more transparent
- Co-produce accessible easy-read information on standards for new housing
- Improve access to information of major developments
- Council to ensure developers to build and fit out homes for disabled residents post completion
- Council to ensure all wheelchair user dwellings are always occupied by households with a wheelchair user from Hammersmith & Fulham housing waiting list

Affordable Housing Development Framework for council owned sites

In addition to the traditional housing supply pipeline through the planning system, the council has approved an Affordable Housing Development Framework.

This innovative framework enables us to work with housing providers to deliver up to 800 new affordable homes in the borough on council owned sites over six years. The overall objectives of the framework are to:

- Deliver more genuinely affordable homes outside the regeneration/opportunity areas through creative partnerships with housing providers
- Give the council nomination rights
- Deliver these homes as soon as possible and within six years
- Use council resources to support affordable housing

The homes delivered will be genuinely affordable and meet the housing needs of many groups including disabled residents.

The council has clear policy on housing development which can be viewed online in the borough's Local Plan.¹¹ The Local Plan is a policy document that sets out the council's vision for the borough until 2035, including placing more people in decent, affordable homes in a stronger local economy that provides training and job opportunities for residents.

For development that will provide 11 or more homes, the affordable housing component should be provided in line with the following:

- a) A borough wide target that at least 50 per cent of all dwellings built should be affordable
- b) 60 per cent of additional affordable housing should be for social or affordable renting, especially for families
- c) 40 per cent should be a range of intermediate housing
- d) Affordable dwellings should be located throughout a new development and not concentrated on one part of the site
- e) The provision of affordable rented and social rented housing in ways that enable tenants to move into home ownership

The above policy works alongside other policy documents such as the GLA's London Plan which requires developments on private land to provide at least 35 per cent affordable housing, and developments on public land to provide at least 50 per cent affordable housing.



¹¹ www.lbhf.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/local-plan 

Our commitments

We will...	Which will mean...
Deliver genuinely affordable homes that meet the needs of disabled residents	Disabled residents can access homes they can afford that meet their needs
Identify funding to build capacity of disabled residents to continue advising the council on new development proposals	Disabled residents are empowered and involved from the outset in the development of new housing in the borough
Support the DFPG to recruit and train interested disabled residents	Disabled residents are empowered to influence decision making regarding the provision of housing the borough
Work together with disabled residents to review the Local Plan and consider revisions and amendments	Disabled residents are able to influence the Local Plan to ensure planning applications meet the needs of disabled residents
Work with Greater London Authority (GLA) on specialist housing and identify funding opportunities	More funding in the borough for the delivery of specialist housing appropriate to the needs of disabled residents

Our action plan

Action	Service or team responsible	Outcome
Promote the work of the Disability Forum Planning Group (DFPG)	Housing Strategy and DFPG	Increased awareness of the work of the Disability Forum Planning Group (DFPG)
Support the DFPG to recruit and train members	Housing Strategy and DFPG	Increase in trained members of DFPG
Support the DFPG to leverage and secure funding for capacity building of disabled residents	Housing Strategy and DFPG	Stronger relationship between the council and DFPG
Together with the DFPG, produce accessible information on housing development and accessible housing standards	Housing Strategy and DFPG	Improved access to information on housing development and accessible housing standards

Objectives

Action	Service or team responsible	Outcome
Work with the DFIG to secure housing for disabled residents that meets Building Regulations Part M4 (2 and 3)	Housing Strategy and DFIG	More housing for disabled residents that meets that meets Building Regulations Part M4 (2 and 3)
Together with the DFIG, review Local Plan content and recommend changes	Housing Strategy and DFIG	Recommendations made on the Local Plan which reflect the housing needs of disabled residents
Ensure disabled tenants receive seamless support through sign up, allocations, moving and tenancy management, and linked to H&F Link for benefit support where necessary	Housing Solutions	Improved customer satisfaction on consistent support

Possible measures

- Number of disabled residents involved with DFIG
- Sustainable funding of the DFIG
- Number of genuinely affordable housing delivered to meet the needs of disabled residents
- Number of disabled residents provide feedback on housing for them
- Disabled residents participation in reviewing updates to the Local Plan

Appendices



Appendix 1: Glossary

Term	Definition
Accessible housing	Broadly means building (or modifying) a home to enable independent living for a disabled person. Accessibility can be achieved through design as well as integrating accessible features such as furniture and fittings. (See Appendix 2 for accessible housing standards).
Affordable housing	This is housing for people whose needs are not met by the market. It includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Social rented homes: these are typically the cheapest rented housing available in the market.● Affordable rented homes: typically, these are higher than social rented homes but lower than market homes.● Intermediate housing: these are homes that are for rent and sale below market levels and include products like Shared Ownership and London Living Rent.
Affordable rented housing	Affordable rented housing are homes let by local authorities or housing associations to people who are eligible and qualify for the council's housing register. The rents are above social rent levels, but do not exceed of 80 per cent of local market rent.
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	A 'means-tested' (income and savings assessed) financial grant that helps meet the cost of adapting a property where a disabled person lives.
Greater London Authority (GLA)	A devolved strategic governance body for London. It has powers over planning, transport, policing and fire and rescue services.
Housing associations	Housing associations are not-for-profit organisations that rent houses and flats. They aim to provide good, low cost and affordable housing for people in need.

Term	Definition
Intermediate housing	This type of affordable housing is aimed at people who do not qualify for social housing but cannot afford to rent or buy in the private market. It includes products such as Shared Ownership, shared equity and discounted market sales – as well as affordable rented products such as London Living Rent. To be eligible for intermediate housing a household's income must be less than £60,000 per annum if they want to rent, and £90,000 if they want to buy. These incomes are updated annually by the GLA.
London Affordable Rent	A rent level similar to social rent, set by the Greater London Authority. The rent excludes service charge and is updated annually by the GLA.
London Living Rent	London Living Rent is a type of Intermediate housing product for middle-income Londoners. These homes will have lower rents, so cash you save on rent can go towards a deposit for your own home.
Shared ownership	This intermediate housing product is the Part Rent/Part Buy option that enables customers to buy a home on leasehold basis. Customers can buy between 25 per cent and 75 per cent of the property value and pay rent on the remaining share to the provider. The rent is initially capped at a maximum of 3 per cent of the open market value of the unsold share. The buyer will also be responsible for payment of service charges.
Social rent	Sometimes also known as 'Target rent', Social rent is the rent charged for socially rented properties like council properties. Rent levels are worked out using a nationally set formula and are regulated by the Social Housing Regulator.
Discount Market Sale	Also known as 'DMS', this is a low-cost home ownership product where a newly built property is purchased at a discounted price with the unsold equity held by the council in perpetuity.
Local Plan	The Local Plan sets out the council's planning policies in one document and contains a section on the council's housing policies. All planning applications are determined in accordance with the local plan.

Term

Definition

Registered providers

Registered providers are housing providers registered on the statutory register of social housing providers maintained by the Social Housing Regulator. They include housing stock-owning councils and non-profit and profit-making organisations. Most non-profit providers are also known as housing associations.

Section 106 agreement

This is a planning agreement between the council and a developer. The council only grants planning permission if the developer offers some benefit to the local community, for example affordable housing, education facilities or improved public spaces. The agreement applies to the land, not the developer, so future owners will need to take it into account.



Appendix 2:

Accessible housing standards

New accessible and adaptable dwellings (formerly lifetime homes)

In London since 2015: 90 per cent of all types of new housing must meet this Building Regulation M4(2) standard. This ensures all new housing has step free access to meet the needs of the occupant as they change over time.

Main requirements for 90 per cent new housing at M4(2) standard:

- Step-free access to dwelling, any parking space and communal areas
- Dwellings above ground floor to have lift access (with some exceptions) in addition to accessible stairs (shallow steps with handrails etc)
- Step-free access to toilet at entrance level and to any private outdoor space
- Wide range of people including older and disabled people and some wheelchair users can use the dwelling (including bathrooms and toilets)
- Common adaptations can be carried out in future to increase access
- Wall mounted switches; socket outlets and other controls are reasonably accessible to people who have reduced reach

Wheelchair user dwellings (formerly wheelchair housing standard)

In London since 2015: 10 per cent of all types of new housing must meet this Building Regulation M4(3) standard. This ensures all new wheelchair housing meets the needs of wheelchair users.

Main requirements for 10 per cent new housing at wheelchair user standard M4(3):

- Step-free access with lift to every private entrance to the dwelling and to every private outdoor space, parking space and communal areas
- Enough room for wheelchair user to turn safely outside communal lift
- Enough room for wheelchair user to move around dwelling and communal areas
- Step-free access to toilet and every other room in dwelling
- Door and corridor widths to be wide enough for wheelchair user around dwelling and communal areas
- Transfer and storage space for two wheelchairs inside dwelling
- Wall mounted switches; socket outlets and other controls are reasonably accessible to people who have reduced reach



The split between accessible and adaptable homes M4(2) and wheelchair user homes M4(3) is spread across both private housing and affordable housing to give people choice.

There are two categories of wheelchair user dwellings:

- **Wheelchair adaptable dwellings: M4(3) (a).** Requirement in new private housing, affordable shared ownership and discount market housing. Fixtures and fittings in kitchens and bathrooms can be easily adapted in future to make dwelling fully wheelchair accessible.
- **Wheelchair accessible housing: M4(3) (b).** Requirement in new social rent, affordable rent housing or shared ownership/discount market sale where the council nominates households with wheelchair user from the housing waiting list. No adaptations are required because all fixtures and fittings in kitchens and bathrooms should be fully wheelchair accessible on completion.

Appendix 3: Disability Forum Planning Group

What is the role of Disability Forum Planning Group (DFPG)?

We are a group of disabled residents with lived experience of barriers disabled residents face when using housing, public buildings and public open space.

We give advice to the council's planning department on planning applications for new buildings. It is Planning and Development Control Committee or council officers who decide on planning applications.

Which planning applications do the DFPG look at?

- Major developments with 10 or more housing units
- Public buildings e.g. schools and colleges, hospitals, GP surgeries, theatres, community centres, sports facilities etc
- Public open space e.g. around housing developments, public buildings, offices, hotels etc
- Parking for blue badge holders (disabled parking) in developments
- Changes to shop fronts

What does DFPG think about when looking at planning applications?

- Pedestrian routes across development
- Public open space inside development
- Kerbs and tactile paving at pedestrian crossings

- Drop-off points for taxis or visitors etc
- Parking for blue badge holders inside development
- Shared space (where vehicles and pedestrians share the same space)
- Step-free access to main entrances etc
- Inside of buildings and common areas
- Accessible toilets
- Space for wheelchair users
- Equal access to facilities provided

What does DFPG not consider?

DFPG does not consider:

1. Height; size of buildings or coverings for outside walls. This is carried out by planning officers.
2. General highway issues (streets and pavement).

Housing developments

We look at new housing with 10 or more housing units. DFPG checks statements and drawings for:

- 90 per cent new housing at accessible and adaptable standard (old lifetime homes)
- 10 per cent new housing at wheelchair housing standard

Hotels

DFPG checks statements and drawings for:

- 10 per cent hotel bedrooms at wheelchair-accessible standard
- Step-free access to hotel facilities

Obstructions on the footway (pavement)

Main issues for DFPG: pedestrians able to use pavement safely with as few obstructions or clutter as possible e.g:

- Advertising boards outside shops and cafes etc
- Tables and chairs outside restaurants, pubs, cafes etc

Parking for blue badge holders (disabled parking)

N.B. there are different rules for blue badge parking at new housing developments, shopping centres and offices etc.

DFPG checks statements and drawings for:

- Correct number and per cent of blue badge parking bays
- Layout and position of blue badge parking bays
- Parking management plan to reduce abuse by non-disabled residents

Sport facilities or stadiums

DFPG checks statements and drawings for:

- Wheelchair-accessible seating
- Easy access and family-friendly seating
- Accessible toilets

Student housing

DFPG checks statements and drawings for:

- 10 per cent student rooms to be wheelchair accessible or wheelchair adaptable
- Step-free access to communal areas or student facilities



