Research towards the framework for delivering housing for people with physical and/or sensory needs across

Kent and Medway

for Kent Housing Group and

Kent Joint Policy and Planning Board (Housing)

By Rocío Arias-Dumeige

Sustainable Communities Project Officer

Strategic Commissioning - Accommodation Solutions

**Families and Social Care**

**Kent County Council**

**Contents**

**Executive Summary……………………………………………………………………….3**

**Method ………………………………………………………………………………………4**

1. **Definitions of wheelchair accessible housing………………………………..5**
2. **Evidence of need for wheelchair accessible homes ……………………7-16**
3. **Policies/Guidance and Strategies that support accessible homes ...17-22**
4. **Design guidance …………………………………………………..…….......23-25**
5. **Matching process ………………………………………………………………..26**
6. **Building costs and funding available…………………………………………27**
7. **Conclusion………………………………..……………………………………….29**

**Appendices…………………………………………………………………………….30-37**

**Bibliography and References………………………………………………………38-39**

**November 2013Executive Summary**

This document provides the research to support the need for the framework Better Homes: Accessible Housing.

Adequate housing for people with physical disabilities and/or sensory disabilities and/or wheelchair users is limited and often inappropriate which results in diminished choice and control of where people can live.

Inappropriate housing has a direct impact on statutory services and funding resulting in (i) people living highly expensive residential care settings and (ii) people seeking Disabled Facilities Grants and top up from KCC’s Home Support Fund Grant to adapt their property whether it is owned/privately rented/social rented or (iii) people depending fully on welfare benefits. This is why government is taking positive steps to enable the delivery of suitable housing to meet the demographic challenges and shortages in affordable housing across England “Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England (2011).

This document supports the delivery of the recommendation from the [Kent and Medway Housing Strategy](http://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/uploads/KentForumHousingStrategyFINAL.pdf) section on housing need: *“To support vulnerable people in housing need to fulfill their potential and live a high quality life through the provision of excellent housing and support services”,* page 54-55.

It also supports the delivery of KCC’s [Transformation Agenda for Social Care](http://www.kent.gov.uk/adult_social_services/transforming_adult_social_care.aspx) Accommodation Solutions and supports the outcomes of [Bold Steps for Kent](http://www.kent.gov.uk/your_council/priorities,_policies_and_plans/priorities_and_plans/bold_steps_for_kent.aspx).

The summary of the research findings on the demand and supply of accessible housing across Kent are classified under the following topics:

1. Definitions of wheelchair accessible housing
2. The evidence of need for (wheelchair) accessible homes;
3. The policy & research that supports this type of homes
4. The design guidance available
5. The matching process and
6. Estimated build costs.

**Method**

A range of methods were used to collate the data including:

* Literature review;
* Statistical information;
* Visit to Habinteg housing association wheelchair accessible properties in Medway and discussion with tenants who are full time wheelchair users;
* Discussion with housing professionals, occupational therapists and social care practitioners; and
* Discussion with people with physical disabilities waiting for major adaptations (via the Panel for Home Support Fund).

1. **Definition of Wheelchair Accessible Housing**

This report focuses primarily on people who have physical disabilities who are full time wheelchair users. This is because their housing requirements are different from mainstream housing. Wheelchair accessible housing contains key design features and more space to enable full time wheelchair users to move freely, store equipment and participate in daily living activities with other members of the family. This type of housing is referred to as Wheelchair Accessible Housing (Mind the Step, 2012).

Housing for people with sensory disabilities is slightly different because space may not always be a key issue. Instead, specific design features can be incorporated into the home to enable the household live securely in a personalised environment to meet their needs and those of the family.

Each person is different and may have different housing needs which will change over time; therefore trying to define a house type for people with physical and/or sensory disabilities is difficult and challenging. Nevertheless, there are common design features that apply to house designs and benefit directly wheelchair users.

**Definition of the Social Model of disability**

The social model of disability[[1]](#footnote-1) identifies systemic barriers, negative attitudes and exclusion by society (purposely or inadvertently) that mean society is the main contributory factor in disabling people.

While [physical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Physiology), sensory, intellectual, or [psychological](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychological) variations may cause individual functional limitation or impairments, these do not have to lead to [disability](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disability) unless society fails to take account of and include people regardless of their individual differences.

The social model of disability focuses on changes required in society. These might be in terms of:

* **Attitudes**, for example a more positive attitude toward certain mental traits or behaviors, or not underestimating the potential quality of life of those with impairments,
* **Social support**, for example help dealing with barriers; resources, aids or [positive discrimination](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Positive_discrimination) to overcome them, for example providing a buddy to explain work culture for an employee with autism,
* **Information,** for example using suitable formats (e.g. [braille](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Braille)) or levels (e.g. simplicity of language) or coverage (e.g. explaining issues others may take for granted),
* **Physical structures**, for example buildings with sloped access and elevators, or
* **Flexible work hours** for people with [circadian rhythm sleep disorders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circadian_rhythm_sleep_disorders) or, for example, for people who experience [anxiety](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anxiety)/[panic attacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panic_attacks) in rush hour traffic.

This research aims to provide information that enables the readers take positive steps in breaking the barriers mentioned above whilst promoting accessible environments for all and promoting the development of housing that meet the needs of people with physical and/or sensory disabilities.**2.** **Evidence of need/data**

Finding relevant data on people with physical disabilities and/or sensory disabilities is rather challenging. Various sources have been identified which provide a proxy towards the evidence of need for adequate housing for this population. These include:

**2.1 Demographics/Statistics**

The most recent report from Kent County Council’s Business Intelligence Research and Evaluation (BIR&E) team outlines the findings on disability from the 2011 Census data[[2]](#footnote-2).

**Kent Summary from the report:**

* Using the broadest definition (2011 Census) 257,038 residents in Kent (17.6%) have a health problem or disability which limits their day-to-day activities.
* 7.6% of the population in Kent is claiming a disability benefit, equivalent to 112,090 claimants.
* Disability benefit claimants in Kent have increased by 1.1% over the last year, when it has decreased nationally by 0.1%.
* A higher proportion of women (8.1%) claim disability benefits in Kent than men (7.0%)
* A **physical disability or health condition** is the most common reason for a claim for a disability benefit. This accounted for 75.5% of all claims in Kent (194,064).
* A higher proportion of people aged 65 and over (20.2%) claim disability benefits than those aged 16-64 (5.0%) or those aged 15 and under (3.6%)
* Thanet district has the highest proportion of disability benefit claimants in the county with 11.1% of the resident population claiming either Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance.

In addition, the BIR&E team shared comparative data from various sources with regard to disability and estimation of wheelchair users:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Estimation 2 - English Federation of Disability Sport** |  |
| Total disabled people UK | 11,000,000 |
| Total disabled people England | 9,000,000 |
| Projected estimate of disabled people in Kent | 179,684 |
| Percentage of disabled children | 6.5% |
| Percentage of disabled adults | 14.1% |
| **Estimated proportion of wheelchair users** | **8%** |
| *Source: English Federation of disability Sport, ONS midyear estimate* | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Kent derived data - estimation 3** | **Population number** | **Percentage** | **Disability population** |
| Children | 360,876 | 6.5% | 23,549 |
| Adults | 1,105,590 | 14.1% | 156,136 |
| All Persons | 1,466,466 |  | 179,684 |
| **Number using wheelchairs** |  |  | **14,375** |

**2. 2 Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs)**

The JSNAs analyses the health needs of population to guide commissioning of health, well-being and social care services within a local authority area. The [Health and Social Care Bill 2011](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-social-care-act-2012-fact-sheets) proposes a central role for JSNAs so that health and well-being board partners jointly analyse current and future health needs of populations.

The JSNA for people with sensory impairments living in Kent (2012) provides estimation to the extent and nature of people’s needs so that appropriate support can be planned. It looks at prevalence of sensory impairments, the impact this has on people’s lives and health priorities. Findings on the ‘Quality of Life’ impacts of **sight** impairment include:

*“****Housing:*** *appropriateness of housing and accommodation can have a significant impact on any individual’s quality of life. There is a graded relationship between sight impairment and poor housing circumstances. Those who have poor vision or are blind are more likely to have no central heating, cold accommodation, a shortage of space and condensation than those with fair vision. Seven in ten people with sight impairment are in rented accommodation compared to three in ten of general population” p.23*

**2.3 Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMA)**

The SHMAs provide a market assessment of the housing needs, supply and demand within an area. The North Kent SHMA[[3]](#footnote-3) reported:

*“8.74 Local Authorities should encourage developers and RSLs to ensure that there is more choice of housing available that is suited to older households and ensure that;*

* *design standards are met (lifetime homes and secure by design are features within the code for sustainable homes);*
* *some housing is built to* ***wheelchair standard****;*
* *there is a mix of social and leasehold tenures; and*
* *dwellings are located in suitable places – near to services and avoiding hilly sites.*

*Local Authorities should ensure that they support households in need of means tested support services such* ***as adaptations****; with regard to equity release, they or a voluntary sector agency should provide impartial advice and support; and that sufficient funding for adaptations is available for the increasing proportion of households in rented housing”* p.171.

**2.4 Accessible Property Register (APR)[[4]](#footnote-4)**

The APR was set up in 2003 by wheelchair users Christine Barton and Conrad Hodgkinson who experienced the barriers in accessing housing to suit their needs. The APR specialises in promoting wheelchair accessible and adapted housing across all tenures, and wheelchair accessible holiday accommodation in the sale and rent market in the UK and abroad. Properties can be advertised by individuals, estate agents or social landlords. A criterion is applied to ensure the properties comply with the label **Access Plus +**:

* Step-free approach
* Parking (off-street or unrestricted on-street)
* Level or ramped access
* Entrance level WC
* Level access to main entrance-level rooms
* Flats in multi-storey blocks qualify providing there is suitable lift access.

A property search conducted in October 2013 showed that there were **14 properties** in Kent for sale ranging from £85K to £350K. There was one property for rent at £111 per week.

**2.5 Kent Homechoice[[5]](#footnote-5)**

Kent Homechoice is the choice based lettings scheme for all social housing in Kent.

The system has various categories, including “high priority applicants in need of wheelchair housing” as per table below. These applicants have been given priority for adapted properties with full accessibility and have been assessed via the Kent Agency Assessment (KAA).

The KAA process is a mechanism for professionals from other statutory agencies to refer an applicant to the Local Housing Authority (LHA). The applicant must be on the housing register with a housing related health/support need, which cannot be met in, or is made worse by, their current accommodation.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Local Authority** | **High priority applicants needing wheelchair accessible housing - Jan 13** | **Comments on waiting time** | **Any other observations**  **(Kent Agency Assessment: KAA)** |
|
|
| Ashford BC | 19 | Up to 3 years | KAA |
| Canterbury CC | 10 | 2 to 5 years | High Priority Cases |
| Dartford BC | 12 | Up to 10 years | KAA |
| Dover DC | 13 | Average 0.58 years | 7 with KAA |
| Gravesham BC | 21 | average waiting time of 3 years |  |
| Maidstone BC | 41 |  | 3 cases have 20 urgent medical points. |
| Sevenoaks DC | 8 | Up to 3.7 years | Not KAAs |
| Shepway DC | 12 | Average 2 year waiting time | KAA and High Medical Priority |
| Swale BC | 62 | Average 2 year waiting time | KAA and High/Urgent Medical Priority |
| Thanet DC | 6 |  | Band B cases |
| Tonbridge & Malling BC | 24 | Average 106 weeks waiting time since March 2012 | All Band A cases |
| Tunbridge Wells BC | 33 | Average wait 29 months | Longest waiting time 13 years |
| **Total** | **261** |  |  |

Note that the 261 applicants requiring wheelchair accessible housing here only represent demand for the social rented sector in the main and therefore the true demand for adapted properties is under represented.

Homechoice records properties using icons for easy identification and to assist allocation. The ones showing the levels of mobility are:



There is also an icon to identify if the property has a lift



**2.6 Local Authority Demand report – Help to Buy [[6]](#footnote-6)**

[*Help to Buy*](http://www.helptobuy.org.uk/) is a government-funded initiative helping people who cannot afford to buy on the open market to get onto the property ladder. People can buy a home through one of the affordable home ownership schemes available or rent a home at less than the market rent and save for a mortgage deposit to purchase a home later.

Help to Buy net is managed by Moat housing. They are the government’s appointed Help to Buy Agent for Essex, Kent and Sussex. Prior to this, Moat Housing were the agents for HomeBuy.

Records held by Moat Housing under their previous scheme HomeBuy shows there were **19 people** requiring a wheelchair adapted property in a year period April12 to March 13, as per table below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Interested in Local Authority | Total number of active apps | for New Build Shared Ownership | for Rent to Buy | Number of applicants with a disability | Number of apps requiring a wheelchair adapted property |
| Ashford | 268 | 268 | 265 | 7 | 1 |
| Canterbury | 284 | 284 | 284 | 13 | 2 |
| Dartford | 627 | 627 | 626 | 13 | 4 |
| Dover | 77 | 77 | 75 | 4 | 0 |
| Gravesham | 368 | 368 | 368 | 16 | 2 |
| Maidstone | 596 | 596 | 591 | 19 | 3 |
| Medway Towns | 678 | 678 | 670 | 24 | 4 |
| Sevenoaks | 312 | 312 | 310 | 10 | 1 |
| Shepway | 103 | 103 | 102 | 3 | 1 |
| Swale | 238 | 238 | 236 | 9 | 0 |
| Thanet | 97 | 97 | 96 | 6 | 0 |
| Tonbridge and Malling | 430 | 430 | 429 | 16 | 1 |
| Tunbridge Wells | 229 | 229 | 228 | 10 | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | **4307** | **4307** | **4280** | **150** | **19** |

*Report date from 01/04/2012 to 31/03/2013*

**2.7 Wheelchair User Group[[7]](#footnote-7)**

The Wheelchair User Group is a registered charity formed in 1992 by wheelchair users. The Group is an independent not-for-profit charitable organisation; providing a range of services to promote equality, dignity and independence of disabled and older people and their enablers, and influence others to do the same.

Between 2012 and 2013 the Wheelchair User Group recorded **8 enquiries** for accommodation.

**2.8 Disability Information Services**

Disability Information Services Kent (DISK) is a registered charity created to provide a free and confidential information and welfare rights service to any disabled person, older people, carers and service providers from both Statutory and Voluntary sectors.

DISK recorded **63 housing enquiries** in 2012/13 – the records do not provide a breakdown of disability.

**2.9 Centre for Independent Living Kent (CiLK)[[8]](#footnote-8)**

CiLK is an organisation run, controlled and managed by disabled people. They support disabled people to live independently and campaign for an inclusive society which does not discriminate against disabled people.

CiLK recorded **48 enquiries** for accessible housing in 2011-12 and **34 enquiries** in 2012-13 –the records do not provide a breakdown of disability.

**2.10 National Health Service (NHS) wheelchair service**

The NHS hold records of all people who request a wheelchair. This goes into thousands, because a person may require a wheelchair for going out but is not as a full time user. This system does not include private wheelchair users who may buy an electric wheelchair in the private market.

In 2012, there were over 20,000 people provided with an NHS wheelchair in Kent and Medway.**[[9]](#footnote-9)** This coincides with the Papworth Trust estimation provided in 2010 below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Estimation 3 - Papworth Trust, 2010** |  |
| Number of wheelchair users in England | 1,200,000 |
| Number of wheelchair users Kent - approximation | 33,136 |
| NHS wheelchairs users England estimate | 825,000 |
| **NHS wheelchairs users Kent** | **22,781** |
| *Source: Papworth Trust, OBS mid-year estimate* |  |

**2.11 Social Services**

Social Services have two systems to record client information: ICS (Integrated Children's System) and the SWIFT system for Adults. Information is recorded by age group and need.

There are **no records** on either system that identify housing need for specific client groups. Once clients have been assessed via the KAA, this information will be passed to the Housing departments.

Social Care Occupational Therapist (OT) practitioners confirm that in addition to the 261people accessed as needing wheelchair accessible properties via the KAA, there are other clients who are owner occupiers waiting for Disabled Facilities Grant to adapt their properties. The housing need for adapted accommodation is not formally recorded on the SWIFT system.

**2.12 Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)[[10]](#footnote-10)**

This government grant is held by the District and Borough Councils and people can apply if they are disabled and need to adapt their homes accordingly.

The table below shows the DFG grant allocation 2013-2014 for Kent and Medway

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | |
| Ashford | 310,717.00 |
| Canterbury | 412,717.00 |
| Dartford | 206,717.00 |
| Dover | 467,717.00 |
| Gravesham | 362,717.00 |
| Maidstone | 454,717.00 |
| Medway | 743,717.00 |
| Sevenoaks | 400,717.00 |
| Shepway | 489,717.00 |
| Swale | 910,717.00 |
| Thanet | 1,083,717.00 |
| Tonbridge & Malling | 414,717.00 |
| Tunbridge Wells | 448,717.00 |
| **TOTAL** | **£6,707,321.00** |

The DFG waiting lists shows the number of people waiting for adaptations in their current accommodation because of a disability or a frailty. Many people prefer to have adaptations done, rather than move to an adapted property in a different area because they have established support networks within their community.

**2.13 Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs): In Touch Agency**

The HIAs provides a range of services including care, support and practical advice, assists with the provision of aids and adaptations to enable people live independently and remain in their own homes and have a good quality of life. There are four offices covering Kent: East Kent, Mid & West Kent, Swale Stay Put and Thanet.

In 2012 In Touch carried out **780** adaptations[[11]](#footnote-11) in the South East.

|  |
| --- |
| **2.14 This section has demonstrated that:**  There are multiple ways of recording housing need for people with physical and/or sensory disabilities as well as general disabilities hence making it difficult to analyse, compare and develop consistent ‘evidence based’ policies (housing and planning).  Overall, the numbers found are relatively small in comparison to the wide housing needs of the population. However, significant with regards to the cost impact these households have on public sector budgets. The DFG allocation alone for Kent and Medway is £6.7m per annum and the most common reason for a claim on disability benefit originates from physical disability or health conditions, which accounts for 75.5% of all claims in Kent (194,064 people).  The demographic projections show a steady growth in people with disabilities together with an ageing population which is more prompt to become disabled or develop limiting health conditions hence the need for a range of housing options to be available on the market. |

1. **Policies/Guidance and Strategies that support accessible homes**

The government has published two key documents that outline the commitment towards planning and delivering housing that meets the needs of the existing and future population.

**3.1 Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England, Nov.2011**

This is the government’s commitment towards building high quality homes that will stand the test of time and to help drive local economies, create jobs and puts into place plans to spread opportunity in society. There is commitment towards **protecting vulnerable people** by providing ‘reasonable preference’ criteria to ensure households in greatest need because of medical conditions, hardship or the lack of suitable alternative housing should receive priority, chapter 23.

**3.2 National Planning Policy Framework, 2012**

This states the commitment to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. *“Local planning authorities should plan for a mix housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes)”* page 13.

**3.3 Mind the Step, An estimation of housing need among wheelchair users in England, 2010 [[12]](#footnote-12)**

This research that has brought to light the key issues for understanding the **housing needs of wheelchair users** conducted by Habinteg Housing Association, the London South Bank University and supported by the Homes and Communities Agency.

The research has confirmed that “*reference to wheelchair user housing and facilities to enable full accessibility and inclusion are often implicit in policy documents, but explicit in very few. In the housing sphere, design guidance is in place and there have been significant positive moves in some local authority areas to improve housing choice and mobility, but the links with wider local strategic planning are generally weak”* p.23

The research is based on the estimation of wheelchair users in England via the Survey of Housing 2007/08 and shows that wheelchair user households with unmet housing need is 78,300, which translates to 240 households in an average local housing authority.

Some highlights from the research are:

* 84% of homes in England do not allow someone using a wheelchair to get to and through the front door without difficulty
* Just 0.5% of homes are ‘accessible and adaptable’ and 3.4% of homes are ‘visitable’ by someone with mobility problems
* There are about 607,200 wheelchair users living in private households (2.8% of all households). Around 4% of these have more than one user
* The majority (74%) report using their wheelchair outdoors only
* 55% are owner-occupiers, 39% social housing tenants and 6% private rented sector tenants
* Among those who use a wheelchair indoors, about half (51%) find it easy to manoeuvre a wheelchair around their home
* The majority of ‘accessible and adaptable’ homes (84%) have been built since 1980. This equates to 20% of all homes that have been built since 1980
* Accessible and adaptable homes are less likely to be in cities and urban centres (13% of accessible homes compared to 22% of all homes).

Key recommendations from the research:

* The effective allocation of wheelchair standard properties should be **a strategic priority**, not only for housing authorities and associations but also for **adult care, children’s services and local health agencies.**
* Local authorities, choice-based lettings schemes and housing associations should **adopt a system that classifies levels of accessibility** and is based on authoritative design guidance.
* Local authorities, landlords and managers of choice-based lettings schemes should **consult with local access groups, organisations of disabled people and tenants’ groups** in developing their policies and approaches to letting accessible properties.
* Local authority departments (housing and social care), health agencies and other referral sources should **work closely and collaboratively** to ensure that disabled people in housing need get on to housing registers and can put themselves forward, or be nominated for, a property.

**3.4 Other publications include:**

**Trailblazers** is a group of disabled campaigners from across the UK who tackle the social issues affecting young and disabled people, such as access to higher education, housing, employment and social and leisure opportunities. Trailblazers are part of the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign[[13]](#footnote-13). A report ***‘Locked out’*** was produced in 2012[[14]](#footnote-14) after surveying 200 young disabled people and held 12 focus groups meetings across the UK over a period of nine months.

The report summarize that *“many young disabled people believe that the property sector and independent living services regularly fail to deliver a good or efficient service for them. The barriers to living independently can range from an estate agent’s lack of knowledge of the accessibility of housing stock to the disparity n the assessment criteria and quality of personal care in different regions in the country”* p.3

The report shares the obstacles that face young disabled people and their families who want to buy or rent a new property. It also provides solutions and advice for estate agents, local authorities, property developers and architects in the hope that they deliver housing and services to enable them to live independently in the right location.

**Aspire[[15]](#footnote-15)** is a registered charity that supports people with spinal injury. Aspire reported that:

*“Spinal Cord Injury has a devastating effect on the 1,200 people who become paralysed each year. The individual affected will lose muscle and sensory control and the vast majority become full time wheelchair users for the rest of their lives. Historically, the majority of spinal cord injuries have been sustained by those aged 15 to 40, with men outnumbering women, although increasingly it is affecting older people too.*

*Through its projects and programmes, Aspire offers practical support to the 40,000 people living with a spinal cord injury in the UK so that they can lead fulfilled and independent lives in their homes, with their families, in work places and in leisure time.”*

Aspire offers services including, Aspire Housing, Aspire Independent Living Advisors, Aspire Grants, Assistive Technology and campaigns to help take someone from injury to independence.

**3.5 Other local authorities and housing providers**

Local Authorities across England have taken the lead in developing policy and implementing the development of wheelchair accessible homes. The Greater London Authority[[16]](#footnote-16) and Exeter City Council[[17]](#footnote-17) have developed Wheelchair Accessible Guidance and Design Standards as part of their Housing Strategies and Local Development Frameworks.

The Greater London Authority has made a commitment that **10% of all new housing is wheelchair accessible** or easily adaptable for residents who are wheelchair users. In addition, the Greater London Authority has created the London Accessible Housing Register: <http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/housing/housing-need/lahr>

As a result of making this commitment, London authorities have developed their own standards and Camden has adopted their own wheelchair accessible standards and is in the process of building four wheelchair accessible units. <http://camden.gov.uk>

In Exeter City Council 10% of all new affordable housing is built to wheelchair accessible standards and this is clearly stated in their supplementary planning document[[18]](#footnote-18).

Manchester City Council is also another authority leading in accessible environments and have developed Designed for Access 2 as part of Manchester Disable Person’s Access Group (MDAG) <http://www.mdpag.org.uk/pubs.htm#D4A>

A leading **housing provider** in this area is Habinteg Housing Association that provides accessible, adaptable and affordable properties across England[[19]](#footnote-19). They have more than 40 years of experience in housing and disability and use their expertise to create neighbourhoods that allow everyone to live independently, whatever age, impairment or cultural background. Habinteg runs four schemes in Swale (2 flats) and Tunbridge Wells with 26 dwellings specifically designed for wheelchair users (flats, bungalows, houses, maisonettes).

Occupational Therapist, Tracey Adams visited Habinteg properties in Medway and commented:

*“People living in these properties praised the services received by Habinteg and shared their experience about living in suitable housing that meets the needs of all households, not just the wheelchair user. Space was mentioned as critical and the ability to spend time as family together in the kitchen and sitting room was also highly appreciated. The design features are simple and non discriminative. The houses are scattered throughout the development and blend well with the housing state, creating an inclusive community”.* Appendix 1 provides the tenants experiences in Habinteg properties.

**3.6 In Kent & Medway**

The Kent and Medway Housing Strategy 2012[[20]](#footnote-20) was developed to help enable organisations across the County to respond strategically to the new housing challenges including changes to the funding of new affordable homes and the forthcoming welfare reforms.

The Strategy describes the strategic direction for housing across Kent and Medway for the next three years, based on the local ambitions and aims of the Districts, Boroughs and Medway Council. It is unique in that it looks across a whole County area and brings District, Borough, Unitary and County Council ambitions together in a bottom-up approach.

It provides clarity on the major strategic housing challenges facing Kent and Medway, identifies common areas of concern and proposes pragmatic solutions on issues where a Kent and Medway perspective can add value and contribute to delivery of local ambitions.

The Strategy recognises that there is a great diversity of housing across Kent and Medway and that what is appropriate for one neighbourhood may not be right in another. There are significant differences in housing need, quality and condition, which are best dealt with in different ways. It does not propose a ‘one size fits all’ approach but provides a menu of solutions to assist authorities in achieving their local aims[[21]](#footnote-21).

The Strategy is endorsed by the Kent Forum, who are the political Leaders and Chief Executives of the local authorities in Kent.

In addition, there is the Kent Housing Group (KHG)[[22]](#footnote-22) which was set up as a forum for social housing organisations in Kent. KHG has representation from all twelve Kent local authorities, Medway Council, over sixteen housing associations and Kent County County. KHG also has affiliated representation from the Homes and Communities Agency and when required other partner agencies**.**

The Local Housing Authorities have developed their individual Housing Strategies and Action Plans demonstrating housing need, not all of these strategies include a housing need analysis for vulnerable groups. The table attached below provides a summary of the District’s Affordable Housing Policies with references to Lifetime Homes and Wheelchair Accessible Housing. Extracts from the strategies can be found on appendix 2.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Affordable Housing Policies per District with references to Lifetime Home Standards and Wheelchair Accessible Housing** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Policies/Strategies | Ashford | Shepway | Canterbury | Swale | Dover | Thanet | Dartford | Gravesend | Swanley | Sevenoaks | Tonbridge & Malling | Tunbridge Wells | Maidstone |
| 1. Affordable Housing - Urban areas | 30% | 60% | 35% | 30-35% | 30% | 30% | 30% | 30% | 35-40% | 35-40% | 40% | 30% | 40% |
| 2. Rural Afford. Housing | 35% | Yes |  | Yes | Yes | 35% | 50% | 30% | Being considered Penshurst Knoockholt & Shoreham | Being considered Penshurst Knoockholt & Shoreham | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 3. Lifetime Homes | Yes | Yes | Yes  20% | Yes 50% | Yes | Yes 15% | Yes – reviewing target | Yes | Offer housing for 55+ (Retirement Housing) | Offer housing for 55+ (Retirement Housing) | Yes via House proud Scheme | Yes | Yes via House proud Scheme |
| 4. Wheelchair Accessible | Yes  10% | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes 15% | Reviewing target to include WA in the LDF | Yes 5% | developing target to include WA | developing target to include WA | Yes via House proud Scheme – 10% | Yes – depending on need | Yes via House proud Scheme |
| Wheelchair DEMAND | 12 | 19 | 10 | 60 | 14 | 6 | 16 | 27 |  | 8 | 16 | 32 | 41 |
| Other: ie. Vulnerable Adults  OP Strategy | Yes |  |  |  |  |  | OP Strategy 2009-14 |  | Extra Care Housing | Extra Care Housing |  |  | Link to KHG Rural Housing Protocol |

1. **Design Guidance**

The Lifetime Homes Standards**[[23]](#footnote-23)** has moved a step closer to achieving homes that are easily adaptable and can meet the needs of an ageing population. However, these properties are not always easily adaptable. Occupational Therapists practitioners in Kent are stating that significant alterations are required to properties built to these standards in order to meet the changing needs of people with deteriorating disabilities. Refer to the case studies in appendix 3 that show the complexity and variety of people’s experiences and need.

The publications mentioned in section 3 recommend that the Affordable Housing strategies embrace wheelchair accessible standards with a minimum percentage of accessible housing across the District/Borough. The main document including all the design guidance is the [Wheelchair Housing Design Guide, 2nd edition BRE press published in 2006.](http://www.brebookshop.com/favicon.ico)

Other reports and guidance re wheelchair accessible housing have been developed across England and Northern Ireland since that guide was published, including:

* Wheelchair user Housing Study, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, 2006
* Wheelchair Homes Design Guidelines, South East London Housing Partnership, 2008
* London Borough Design Guide for Wheelchair Accessible Housing, Mayor of London 2010
* Papworth Trust provides guidance on building accessible communities[[24]](#footnote-24).

Most recently, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) put forward a consultation document “Housing Standards Review”[[25]](#footnote-25) on the review of Building Regulations and housing standards.

This is a radical reform of the framework of building regulations, guidance, local codes and standards, supporting growth whilst delivering quality, sustainability, safety and accessibility. The main areas considered in the consultation are:

* Accessibility
* Space
* Security
* Water efficiency
* Indoor environmental standards
* Materials and
* Process and compliance

The Review is seeking the views on three options:

* Whether government should develop a nationally described standards set which would operate in addition to the Building Regulations (where rigorous local needs and viability testing indicated it could apply);
* Whether government should develop nationally described standards set as a stepping stone en route to integrating standards into Building Regulations to at future date;
* Whether the government should move now to integrate standards directly into building regulations, as functional tiers, and no technical standards would remain at all outside of the Building Regulations system, recognising that this will take time and may require legislative change.

The consultation is simplifying the standards by proposing three levels:

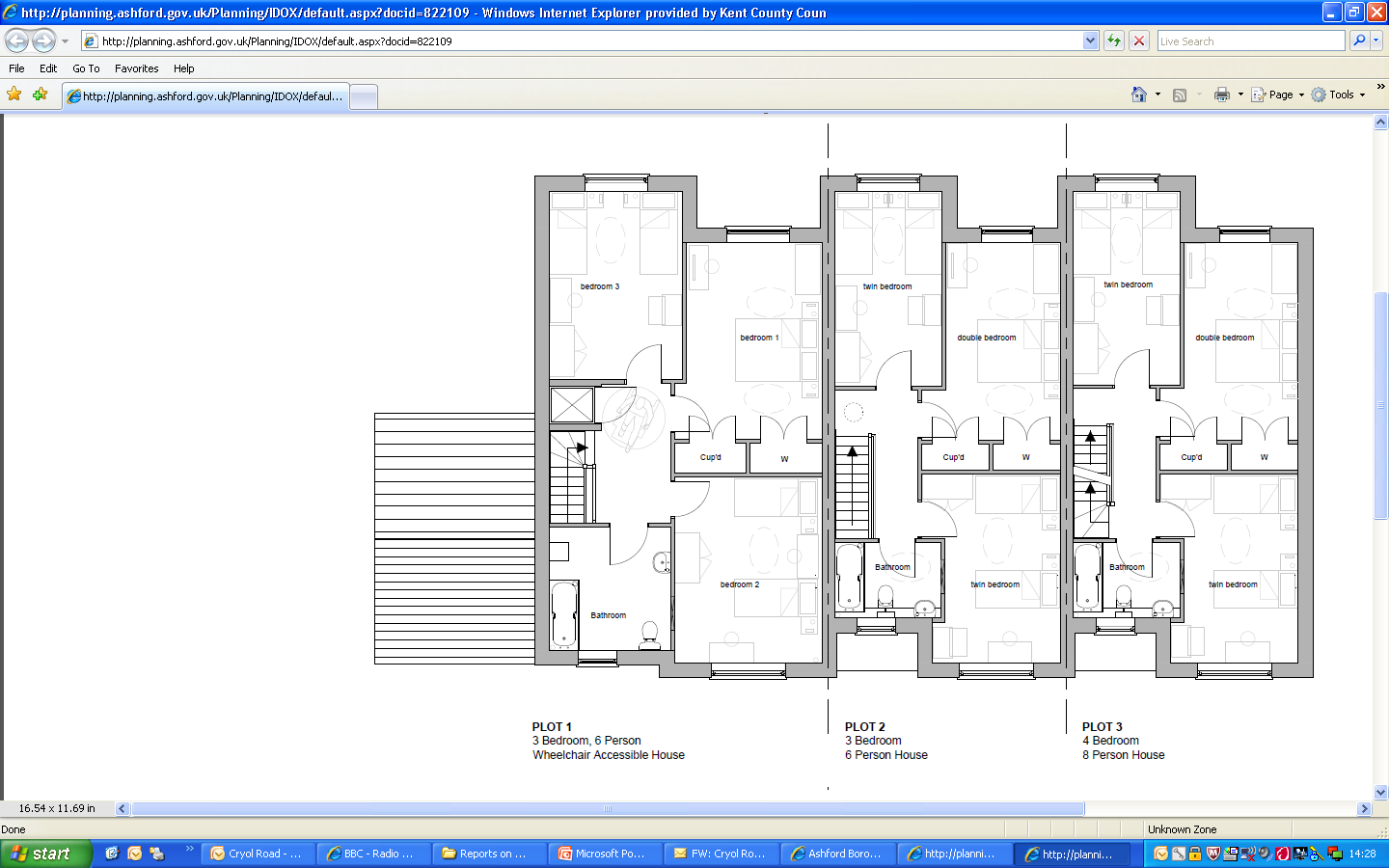
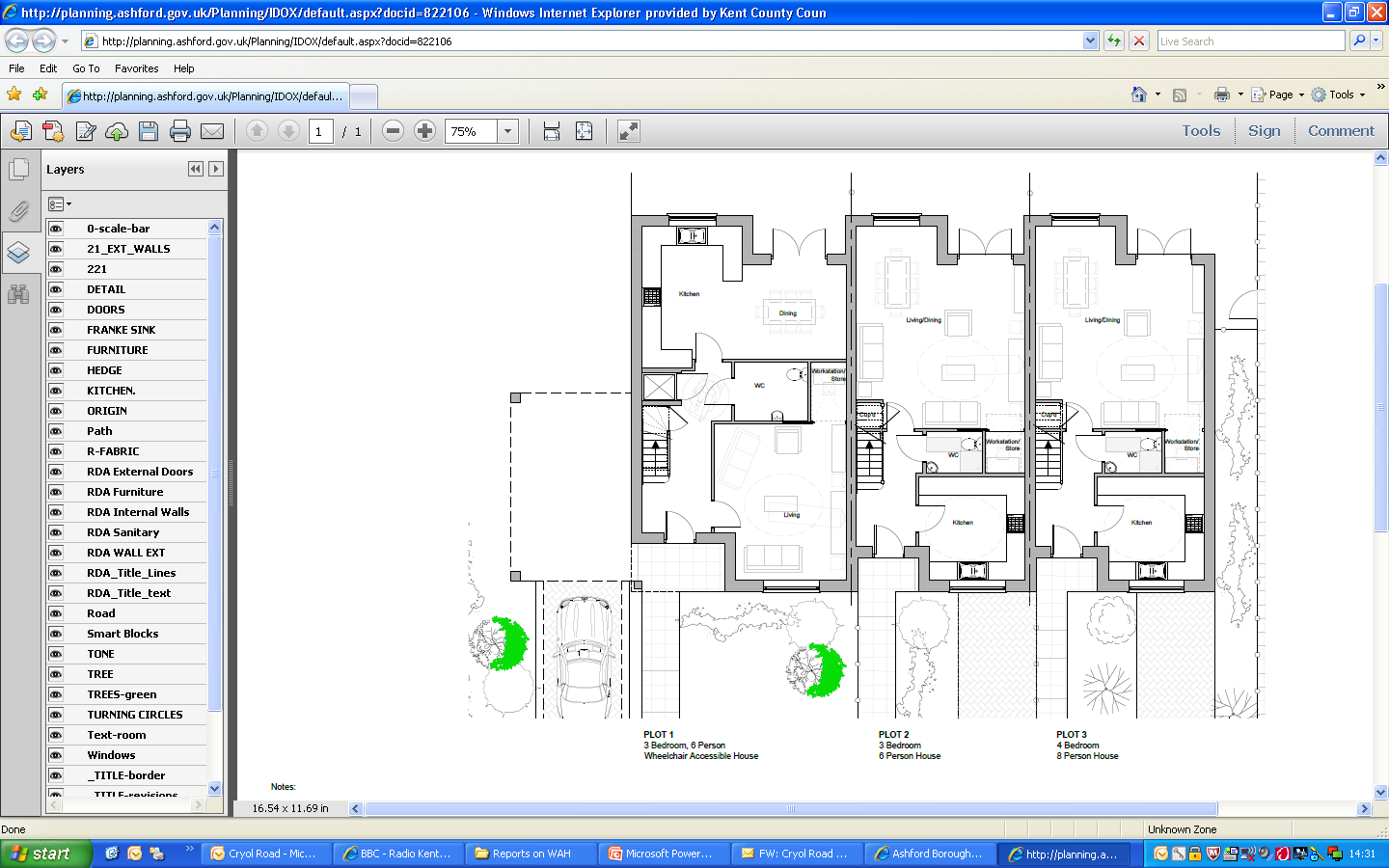
* **Level 1:** same as existing Part M
* **Level 2:** to Lifetime Home Standards
* **Level 3:** to Wheelchair Accessible Standards

It is anticipated that local authorities will determine what levels will apply across the district via the Local Plan. The consultation concluded on the 22nd October 2013 and it likely that in 2014 these Housing Standards will be adopted across England.

In Kent, there is the Kent Design Guide which provides good information on design and space standards focusing on “Place Making” but not on housing standards. The new Housing Standards will enable both documents to work in tandem.

In Ashford, a multi-agency (housing, occupational therapy, registered provider and social services) work group was set up in 2012. The Ashford Work Group set out as objective “to better understand the issues around wheelchair accessible housing in the district”. The group developed a Design Guidance based on Exeter’s guide and also identified a local site owned by the council to build 2 wheelchair accessible properties. The site has been approved by planning and building is due to commence 2013-14 ready for occupation in approximately winter 2014.

The designs below comply to Ashford’s Wheelchair Accessible Standards and have been developed for a new site comprising seven affordable properties. Two are identified for wheelchair users.

****

[**http://planning.ashford.gov.uk/Planning/details.aspx?systemkey=94739&pageindex=0**](http://planning.ashford.gov.uk/Planning/details.aspx?systemkey=94739&pageindex=0)

<http://www.ashford.gov.uk/developments-coming-soon>

1. **The matching process**

How people with disabilities access suitable housing? The publications above have confirmed that people with disabilities struggle to ‘get by’ in the system and have to wait long time before they find suitable housing. In addition, the identification of the adapted property only becomes apparent in the Homechoice system when the outgoing resident leaves, as records are not kept on adapted housing stock.

A report from the Housing & Support Partnership - planning and commissioning housing for people with learning disabilities has confirmed that:

*“People with disabilities have to work through the system like anybody else to ensure they are recognised in the system and get allocated a property that best meets their needs.” Page 14* ***[[26]](#footnote-26)***

It recommends a way to address this issue is through holding housing needs surveys to more accurately record the supply, such as the Strategic Housing Market Assessments. However, this requires commitment and resources from all authorities involved.

In Kent, the matching process for **affordable (social rented) housing properties** (owned by Registered Providers or the council) is managed by the **Kent Homechoice** as outlined in the section above. The data base contains information on all affordable housing in Kent and Medway containing details of type of adaptation, size and location to enable choice in the bidding process. Homes going through a bidding process and are awarded every two weeks.

A guide was produced by Valuing People team called: “Making Choice Based Lettings work for People with Learning Disabilities – A guide for choice based letting schemes and landlords”

<http://www.housinglin.org.uk/_library/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Other_reports_and_guidance/Choice_Based_Lettings_Providers_guide__Final.doc>

For the **private rented sector, or privately owned properties** there is the Accessible Property Register (APR) –as mentioned on section 2.. This website holds information on accessible or adapted properties for sale and/or rent across the UK. This process is self managed by the disable person and/or carer.

To ensure the matching process is improved, it is recommended that the records on adapted affordable housing stock continues to be maintained updated on the Homechoice system as properties become vacant. This will enable better identification of adapted properties available to re-let and develop consistent data of the supply of adapted housing stock in Kent and Medway.

It can also be recommended to develop ‘pathways to housing’ in partnership with people with physical and/or sensory disabilities, housing allocation officers, occupational therapists, registered providers, the private rented sector, developers and representatives from estate agents. This will enable clarity in the process for all parties involved and establish the roles each play in making housing accessible for people across the tenures.

1. **Build Costs and funding available**

The Ashford Work Group started to scope the costs of building wheelchair housing. It has used the Design Guidance and the Residential Space and Layout Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to cost out each item and establish a baseline.

The initial baseline costs range from £ 13K for core design features to £ 50K if specialist equipment is included in the initial build out costs, i.e. specialist bath and through floor lift. These costs exclude the need for additional land that is required to meet the recommended design standards. This can range from an additional 14sqm to 24sqm –depending on the type of dwelling being built (bungalows, flats or houses).

In parallel to this work, the Housing Standards Review published the costs to deliver each level of housing and the impact assessment demonstrates savings in the industry by having consistent standards that developers can use from the shelf rather than having to spend additional hours designing homes to wheelchair standards[[27]](#footnote-27) .

In Kent, new housing is planned for the next 20 years. Kent County Council as a strategic planning authority seeks developer contributions under planning regulation (of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990) section122 (2) for transport, education, communities and social care. Social Services has worked with the Housing and Planning departments to identify major site developments and plan to build wheelchair accessible units as part of the affordable housing stock. Two major sites in Shepway and Thanet have secured eight units in each. This innovative approach enables developers, planners, registered providers, housing departments and social services work together to deliver more efficiently adequate housing for people with disabilities.

To incentivise the private and public sector housing providers, the Government launch in 2012 via the Care and Support Grant £240m commitment over 5 years towards the development of specialist housing, including housing for people with disabilities. This will assist providers with additional financial support in developing specialist housing models.

The Home Ownership for People with Long-term Disabilities (HOLD) is a scheme that allows a person with a long term disability buy a share in a property on the open market. A Registered Provider purchases the home and, based on the household income, the home buyer then purchases a part-share in the home. HOLD is available in Kent, although there are limited lenders providing interest only mortgages for applicants intending to cover their mortgage repayments solely through Support for Mortgage Interest benefit.

Although it is recognised that there are immediate costs in introducing key features at the building stage, these will outweigh the costs of adaptations to a general needs property. This has been confirmed by Exeter City Council who has adopted the Wheelchair accessible housing design standards in 2011.

1. **Conclusion**

The research has provided evidence to demonstrate that there are multiple methods of recording:

* information about numbers of disabled people and the estimation of numbers of wheelchair users
* information about wheelchair accessible housing, and
* housing need for people with physical and/or sensory disabilities.

Every agency, whether public or private sector, hold information for their own purpose. The lack of consistent data hides the reality and difficulties that many people with physical and/or sensory disabilities face when trying to meet their basic housing needs. It can be assumed that the lack of accessible properties diminishes the choice, control and opportunities for people with disabilities across the spectrum.

More positively, the commitment and engagement of county council, local housing authorities, housing providers, occupational therapists and most importantly the service users is critical in developing policies and practical solutions that directly meet the housing needs of vulnerable people. One good example where this commitment has been applied is in Ashford Borough Council with the development of design guidance and two wheelchair accessible affordable housing units to be built in 2014.

This research (quantity) has helped to answer key questions in relation to how data is recorded with regards to housing needs for people with physical and/or sensory disabilities. However, it is recognised that it is not just about facts and figures, policies and strategies but about the **experiences people with disabilities** have in searching for suitable accommodation. This is why a qualitative research was commissioned with the purpose of gathering the insights and experiences people with physical and/or sensory disabilities have across Kent. **(Link to Activemob)**

Both reports contribute toward the development of the framework/protocol for housing people with physical and/or sensory disabilities. This is endorsed by the Kent Housing Group and the Kent Joint Policy and Planning Board (Housing) and contributes directly to the overall monitoring of the Kent and Medway Housing Strategy.

Finally, the recent National Housing Standards review may also accelerate the planning and delivery of suitable housing for people with disabilities across the spectrum. The ongoing challenge will remain for local authorities to determine how many should be built and to what standard. It is hoped that Kent framework will become a key tool in determining local need.

**Appendix 1**

**Habinteg Clients benefiting from wheelchair accessible properties:**

**Anna, Mark and Kathy (Habinteg real case story)** *– names have been changed.*

Six year old wheelchair user Anna and her parents live in a Habinteg four bedroom wheelchair standard bungalow. Anna needs 24 hour care. Prior to moving into this property they were finding it difficult to live in their local authority property.

Anna had become confined to just two rooms of the house because it was inaccessible to her, making it difficult for her parents to meet her needs. Now Anna can access every room to be with her parents.

The wheelchair standard bungalow is built to cater for the needs of wheelchair users and has made a real difference to their family life. There are wide doorways and level access for Anna’s wheelchair. Everything is height adjustable. There is plenty of turning width and the windows are set lower so she can see out from her chair.

Adaptations made to the bungalow also make it easier for Mark and Kathy to care for their daughter. They no longer have to lift and carry Anna as they have assistive equipment. Kathy says, “In our old house, Anna became isolated because she could only go in two rooms. Here, she can be with us all the time. It takes a lot of worry away because the house will be adapted so we know we can stay here forever.”

Additional Video Case Studies (1 and 2) can be seen on:

<http://www.habinteg.org.uk/main.cfm?type=TENANTSVIDEO>

**Appendix 2**

Below are the key extracts from the Local Authorities Housing Strategies which demonstrate commitment to deliver housing for vulnerable adults:

**Ashford Borough Council**[[28]](#footnote-28) has produced the Ashford Vulnerable Adults Housing Strategy:

*“The Ashford Housing Needs Survey 2005 detailed the particular disability that individuals identified and showed that 18.5% of households in the Borough contained somebody affected by a disability or long term illness. When asked the nature of the disability by far the largest identified disability was difficulty with walking; affecting 51.9% of respondents with 9.8% of households containing a wheelchair user, although only 28.1% of people identified as wheelchair users lived in a property which had been suitably adapted. In Kent the greatest proportion of people registered blind or partially sighted are over 75, similarly this age group shows the highest number of new registrations. The need for life time homes is strengthened when including families that have a disabled child.*

*In July 2010, six families with a disabled child were registered on the Ashford Housing Register waiting for an adapted property.”*

The strategy seeks to encourage multi-agency working to make best use of available resources to improve access to and choice of accommodation for vulnerable people, including wheelchair user groups living in the borough. This is endorsed in the LDF Affordable Housing paragraph 23[[29]](#footnote-29) and recently adopted Residential Space and Layout Standards[[30]](#footnote-30) paragraphs 1.31-1.32.

**Canterbury** City Council’s Housing Strategy 2012-2016 identifies that the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document currently requires 20% of affordable housing to meet the Lifetime Homes Standard. CCC will investigate whether there should be a common requirement for all tenures through the Local Plan process. It also identifies the need to develop planning policy to achieve minimum space standards.

The strategy also recognises that: *“We lack information about the housing requirements of applicants with physical disabilities. We will improve collection and analysis of data when people apply to join the Housing Needs Register. We can then plan for the right type and number of homes, either existing properties adapted for the purpose, or specially-designed new HA accommodation”.* pages 21-29.

**Dartford** Borough Council is currently reviewing its target for lifetime homes as part of the LDF, especially those with wheelchair access.

In **Dover,** the District Council Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document[[31]](#footnote-31) expects that 10% of the affordable housing to be to wheelchair standard unless it can be shown that fewer units of that type are required in a particular scheme, paragraph 5.65. The Housing Initiatives Manager has indicated a target of delivering four wheelchair units per year as part of the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015.

**In Gravesham**, theHousing Strategy 2009-2013 commits to: *“Continuing to promote disabled adaptations, developing a register of adapted property and the needs of disabled people and considering the adoption of Lifetime Homes standards for new housing. Maximise the provision of new wheelchair accessible homes on a site by site basis, with a 5% target overall”.*

The **Maidstone** theHousing Strategy 2011/12-2014/15 expects affordable homes to be constructed to full Lifetime Homes standards. It will seek a proportion of new affordable dwellings to be designed for full wheelchair use to respond to the needs of housing applicants who need them. The detailed design and specification requirements of wheelchair housing will be sourced from relevant specific guidance documents. Housing Strategy links with KHG Rural Housing Protocol

**Medway** Council Housing Strategy 2011-2014 makes clear commitment to develop an Accessible Housing Register as part of the Homechoice based lettings scheme. It also identifies through the consultation the need to develop a clear, easy to understand pathway into housing for people with learning disabilities.

There is recognition to undertaken further research into the housing and support needs of certain client groups, in particular people with learning disabilities, physical

disabilities, mental health problems and people who are deaf and have sensory

problems.

The key actions relevant to this report include:

* Deliver 10 fully wheelchair compliant homes per year
* Deliver 9 homes specifically designed for clients with Learning Disabilities
* Provide at least 150 households with major adaptations within their home through the Home Adaptations Service
* Assist 3,940 vulnerable households to undertake adaptations, repairs and
* improvements to their home
* Work with the Institute of Public Care and Adult Social Care to undertake housing needs analysis on a range of client groups including those with dementia and learning disabilities.

The **Sevenoaks (includes Swanley)** the Housing Strategy Action Plan (2012) seeks to achieve Lifetime Homes Standard on social/affordable rental units subject to site constraints. Commitment to develop a target for affordable housing to meet wheelchair standards

**Shepway** District Council Affordable Housing seeks provision for disabled and mobility impaired people with 20% of new housing to meet Lifetime Home Standards, which is not quite wheelchair standards but seeks to ensure wheelchair users have appropriate accommodation. One positive achievement has been the agreement from developers to build eight wheelchair accessible properties on a major site (Nicholls Quarry-Martello Lakes). These properties were secured under a section 106 agreement for the use of Adult Social Care. The development has not started yet and will require clear specifications and guidance to develop and allocate these units appropriately.

**Swale** Housing Strategy 201-2015 seeks to secure high design and sustainability standards for all new development and homes including 100% of affordable housing and 20% of market housing to be built to Lifetime Homes Standards.

Via the Kent Housing Action Plan for people with learning disabilities it seeks to increase housing options and improve choice for people with special needs, to enable them to live independently and safely.

The **Tonbridge and Malling** Affordable Housing SPD 2008 seeks 40% of a development to be affordable. “*To cater for people’s changing needs over time the Borough Council is therefore seeking 100% of social rented housing (including ground floor flats where appropriate) to be constructed to full Lifetime Homes standards. The Borough Council will seek at least 10% of new social rented*

*housing (including ground floor flats where appropriate) on schemes of 10 units*

*or more to be fully wheelchair-user accessible”.*

The **Tunbridge Wells** Affordable Housing 2007 SPD identifies *“The provision and location of disabled access units within the affordable housing provision will therefore be an issue for discussion at pre-application stage and will depend on the suitability of the development scheme and the current level of need on the Housing Register and the Housing Needs Survey data.”*

**Appendix 3**

**Housing needs case scenarios: based on real examples**

**Case Scenario one**

Mrs X is a 35 year old mother with 2 children aged 2 and 8. She lives with her husband who works full time in a retail outlet.

Mrs X was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis 6 years ago and, following the birth of her second child, she experienced a flare up in her condition. She now walks just very short distances with crutches indoors and, by the afternoon, she is reliant on a wheelchair.

Mr and Mrs X bought their home 7 years ago with a 100% mortgage and at the present time it is in negative equity so they are not able to sell it to buy a more appropriate home for the family. Their present home is a mid terraced cottage with 2 bedrooms and bathroom upstairs and small lounge/diner and kitchen downstairs.

Mrs X has a supportive mother who lives locally and is able to take the eldest child to school and pick them up. During the day Mrs X spends most of her time downstairs with her youngest child as climbing the stairs is very difficult for her. Her mother regularly visits to support her in looking after her children.

Mrs X has requested a commode downstairs as during the afternoons she often cannot climb the stairs at all and she is experiencing a frequency and urgency of micturition. The steep narrow staircase of the cottage is not suitable for a stair lift, there is not sufficient space for a wheelchair through floor lift and the property cannot be extended at the back because of the light restrictions for the neighbours.

Mrs X’s husband helps her up to bed at night and he assists her in using the bath with a lift that has been provided by Social Services. He lifts Mrs X’s legs over into the bath but the spasm in her legs, as a result of fatigue, can make this difficult and there are increasing manual handling risks for them both on the stairs and using the bath.

Mrs X uses a manually propelled wheelchair at times during the day but this is very tiring for her and the wheelchair service are not able to provide her with a powered chair, in order to preserve her energy, as there is insufficient space to manoeuvre it indoors.

There are 3 steps to the front door and 2 to the back which Mrs X requires help to negotiate particularly when she is fatigued. Social Services have provided galvanised railing which she can use when she is ambulant.

The family have been accepted onto the housing waiting list as they are not in a financial position to purchase a property that is suitable to Mrs X’s needs and they have been waiting for 8 months for a suitable mobility bungalow to become available.

A bungalow is the most suitable housing as it will give her quick direct access to all rooms internally - which is particularly important with a young family. Through-floor lifts take up valuable floor space in houses and they are not easy for wheelchair users to control if they have poor dexterity. There are also ongoing maintenance costs and the risk of break down.

Mrs X would like to be re-housed to a bungalow that would allow her use the wheelchair and would give her back her independence to look after herself and her children.

**Location**

Location is very important to Mrs X as she would like to remain close to her mother – who does not drive but will continue to provide support as her condition progresses. She would like her new home to be close to her eldest child’s school and local amenities. The family chose their present location because it is a ‘safe’ area and Mrs X is concerned that she should not feel vulnerable when out in her wheelchair. As her children get older she is also concerned that they should feel safe too as she is aware that they may need to be more independent than other children of the same age.

**Internal access**

Mrs X will require adequate **wheelchair turning space** (1500mm X 1500mm) and **widened doorways to all rooms** (900mm) - including the hallway - to ensure that she can safely manoeuvre a self propelling chair inside the property. She will be provided with a powered indoor wheelchair when she has suitable accommodation.

**External access**

Mrs X will require **level external access** to allow her to manoeuvre either her powered wheelchair or manually propelled wheelchair out of her home. There will need to be **car parking close by** with sufficient side and back space to allow for wheelchair transfers. There should be facilities to **park and store a mobility scooter** should she choose to purchase one of these in the future to increase her independence out of doors.

**Bathing**

Mrs X will require standard bathing facilities for her young children and a **level access shower facility** for herself with **shower controls** located so that she can **reach them**, sufficient space to manoeuvre a self propelling shower chair and a wash basin that has sufficient **knee room** to allow her to use it from her wheelchair.

**Kitchen facilities**

Mrs X will be continuing to make all meals for her family and the kitchen will need **wheelchair accessible facilities positioned at a height** which will enable her to do this. In the future, should she no longer be able to prepare the family meals, it will be important that the **kitchen cupboards and work surfaces can be raised** to enable carers to use the facilities. Storage cupboards, sink unit and hob will need to be positioned **on flexible brackets** with wall tiling behind and electric sockets within reach of a seated user to allow for change in usage.

**Garden facilities**

Mrs X will require wheelchair access into the garden with a **level patio area** to enable her to enjoy the facility with her family.

**Additional storage facilities**

Mrs X has walking and standing equipment that will require storage space within the bungalow as it may only be used for short periods of the day. In the future it is likely that she will require moving and handling equipment such as a mobile hoist and this will require storage space too.

As well as these specific requirements there are general needs throughout the bungalow - accessible window openers, raised electric sockets, lowered light switches for example.

**Care Scenario two**

Mr and Mrs X have one disabled child. They require a two bedroom mobility flat or bungalow with a level access shower. The child is a full time wheelchair user so level access into the flat is required and turning space throughout. A disabled child requires a large amount of equipment therefore storage space is essential. Parking near the entrance is important and also ideally a garden.

Hoists will need to be installed into the property so appropriate fixings will be required. Space for a hospital bed within the property is required and space for a carer to access either side. Turing space of 1500mm x 1500mm is required including space for furniture. 850mm clearance is required for doorways throughout the property.

**Case scenario three**

Mr and Mrs X have two children, both have a disability. One has a physical disability, needing a bedroom and shower room downstairs. This child is a wheelchair user so requires the storage, turning space and wider doorways as previously discussed.

The second child has a cognitive disability so parking at the front of the property is essential, locks on the doors and windows is required and a safe accessible garden is also essential. The area is very important as they have a close family network of support and moving too far away from this would be damaging for the families ability to cope.

**Case scenario four**

Mr and Mrs X have four children, all under the age of ten. One child was born with a disability that has resulted in them being a full time wheelchair user. The child also has various complex medical needs and wakes frequently during the night. Mr and Mrs X will not accept any of their children sleeping on the ground floor as they are all very young.

If looking to adapt a two storey house, a through floor lift would be required for safe transfers. Disabled children rarely have the ability to hold their posture so stair lifts would not be suitable. Therefore, space would need to be available for this within the property and still allow storage and turning space.

The child is hypersensitive to tactile sensations and will not tolerate a shower. A specialist height adjustable bath is required to enable the carer to safely care for the child. An application to the Disabled Facilities Grant is required to complete this.

Hoists are again required, wider doorways and turning space. Parking and access to a garden are important as all the children are young and the disabled child is restricted as to when they can be outside.

**Bibliography and References**

Ashford Borough Council: <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/ashford_borough_council/document_library/strategic_documents/housing_strategy.aspx> ; <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/pdf/AffordableHousing_AdoptedVersion_cover.pdf>; <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning_and_building_control/planning_now_and_in_the_future/residential_space__layout_spd.aspx>

Bold Steps for Kent– medium term plan for Kent -2014/15, from:

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/your_council/priorities,_policies_and_plans/priorities_and_plans/bold_steps_for_kent.aspx>

Centre for Independent Living in <http://www.cilk.org.uk/index.htm>

Definition social model of disability in <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_model_of_disability>

Disabled Facilities Grant allocation in <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175660/Disabled_Facilities_Capital_Grant_Determination__2013-14_.pdf>

Dover District Council <http://www.dover.gov.uk/regeneration_delivery/supplementary_planning_documen/affordable_housing.aspx>

English Federation of disability Sport, ONS midyear estimate

Exeter City Council [www.exeter.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=15591&p=0](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=15591&p=0)

Greater London Authority in <http://legacy.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/sds/bpg-wheelchair-acc-housing.jsp> and <http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/housing/housing-need/lahr>

Habinteg Housing Association in <http://www.habinteg.org.uk/main.cfm?type=MINDTHESTEP>

Help to Buy scheme in <https://www.helptobuy.net/home>

Home Improvement Agency in <http://www.in-touchsupport.co.uk/our-services/home-improvement-agencies/kent-and-medway/>

Housing Standards review [https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/housing-standards-review- and consultation](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/housing-standards-review-%20and%20consultation)<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/230252/3_-_Housing_Standards_Review_-_IA_with_Annex.pdf>

Kent Community Health NHS Trust 2012

Kent County Council Research <https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/facts-and-figures/Economy/disability-in-kent-august2013.pdf>

Kent Homechoice lettings in <http://www.kenthomechoice.org.uk/>

Kent and Medway Housing Strategy, 2011 from: <http://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/uploads/KentForumHousingStrategyFINAL.pdf>

Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England (2011)

Lifetime Homes <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/>

London Borough Design Guide for Wheelchair Accessible Housing, Mayor or London 2010 in <http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/housing-land/publications/london-housing-design-guide>

Medway Council, Housing Strategy <http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/North%20Kent%20SHMA%202009.pdf>

National Planning Framework , 2012, Department of Communities and Local Government

Papworth Trust provides guidance on building accessible communities [www.papworth.org.uk](http://www.papworth.org.uk)

Planning and Commissioning Housing for People with Learning Disabilities. A toolkit for Local Authorities. The Housing & Support Partnership.

Trailblazers <http://www.mdctrailblazers.org/> and Locked Out report <http://www.mdctrailblazers.org/assets/0000/7774/Trailblazers_LockedOut_WEB.pdf>

Transforming Adult Social Care in Kent, 2012 from:

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/adult_social_services/transforming_adult_social_care.aspx>

Tunbridge Wells Council <http://www2.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=792>

Wheelchair Housing Design Guide, 2nd edition BRE press published in 2006.

Wheelchair user Housing Study, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, 2006 <http://www.nihe.gov.uk/wheelchairreport.pdf>

Wheelchair Homes Design Guidelines, South East London Housing Partnership, 2008 <http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200141/housing_strategy/1890/housing_reports_and_policies/2>

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\_model\_of\_disability [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [**https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/facts-and-figures/Economy/disability-in-kent-august2013.pdf**](https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/facts-and-figures/Economy/disability-in-kent-august2013.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/North%20Kent%20SHMA%202009.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://accessible-property.org.uk/start.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. http://www.kenthomechoice.org.uk/ [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.helptobuy.net/home> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. http://www.wheelchairusers.org.uk/ [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. http://www.cilk.org.uk/index.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Kent Community Health NHS Trust 2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175660/Disabled_Facilities_Capital_Grant_Determination__2013-14_.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <http://www.in-touchsupport.co.uk/our-services/home-improvement-agencies/kent-and-medway/> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. <http://www.habinteg.org.uk/main.cfm?type=MINDTHESTEP> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. <http://www.mdctrailblazers.org/> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. <http://www.mdctrailblazers.org/assets/0000/7774/Trailblazers_LockedOut_WEB.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. <http://www.aspire.org.uk/home.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. <http://legacy.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/sds/bpg-wheelchair-acc-housing.jsp> [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. [www.exeter.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=15591&p=0](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=15591&p=0) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. <http://www.exeter.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=18529&p=0> [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. <http://www.habinteg.org.uk/> [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. [Kent and Medway Housing Strategy 2012-15](https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/community-and-living/Regeneration/KFHS%20Refresh%20FINAL.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. [Strategy Market Assessment Update](http://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/uploads/SeptKFHSSHMAUpdateFinalReport.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. http://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/Default.aspx [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/> [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. <http://www.papworth.org.uk/downloads/pt_guidetodevelopinginclusivecommunities_2008_100901101523.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/housing-standards-review-consultation [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Planning and Commissioning Housing for People with Learning Disabilities. A toolkit for Local Authorities. The Housing & Support Partnership. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/230252/3_-_Housing_Standards_Review_-_IA_with_Annex.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/ashford_borough_council/document_library/strategic_documents/housing_strategy.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/pdf/AffordableHousing_AdoptedVersion_cover.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning_and_building_control/planning_now_and_in_the_future/residential_space__layout_spd.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. <http://www.dover.gov.uk/regeneration_delivery/supplementary_planning_documen/affordable_housing.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-31)