



# **Better Homes: accessible housing**

**A FRAMEWORK FOR DELIVERING HOUSING FOR  
PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL AND/OR SENSORY  
DISABILITIES ACROSS KENT AND MEDWAY**

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## INTRODUCTION

*This framework has been developed following a recommendation from the Kent and Medway Housing Strategy 2012-15 under Theme 5 – Housing Need. The ambition under this Theme is 'to support vulnerable people in housing need to fulfil their potential and live a high quality life through the provision of excellent housing'.*

*With there being greater emphasis on promoting independence, choice and control over where people with disabilities live, coupled with the challenges of an ageing population; demands on new and existing accessible housing will increase in the future.*

*Meeting the housing needs of people with physical and/or sensory disabilities encompasses a broad and diverse spectrum of requirements that are different from one person to the next, so there is no 'one size fits all' approach. What this framework aims to provide is a baseline level of guidance to enable a consistent and pragmatic approach to delivery in Kent and Medway.*

*It is intended to be used by a wide range of stakeholders involved in the provision of accommodation for adults with physical and/or sensory disabilities including Private and Public Developers, Local Planning and Housing Authorities, Adult Social Services, Health Authorities, Registered Providers, the Third Sector, Parish Councils, Landowners, and Local Communities.*

*The framework has been developed at a time of significant pressure on housing and public resources. Balancing this with meeting the increasing needs and aspirations of physically and/or sensory disabled people requires agencies working closely and collaboratively in order to drive forward success.*

## 1. Vision

Through this framework, we will work together to:

- 1) Ensure the **provision** of **high quality** accommodation that meet the needs of physically and/or sensory disabled people in Kent and Medway
- 2) Develop new and innovative ways of **facilitating** the delivery of accommodation for physically and/or sensory disabled people in Kent and Medway
- 3) Develop and maintain a **consistent, proportionate** and **efficient approach** to the **delivery** of accommodation for physically and/or sensory disabled people in Kent and Medway
- 4) **Raise awareness** and **understanding** amongst local communities and partners of the housing needs of people with physical and/or sensory disabilities and how they can be met in Kent and Medway
- 5) Ensure that people with physical and/or sensory disabilities exercise **choice** in determining their housing options so that best use is made of new and existing stock

We will do this by:

- Working together to overcome any organisational or policy **barriers** to delivery
- Developing and adopting common sense and **pragmatic approaches** in relation to **design** in the **planning process** for accommodation for people with physical and/or sensory disabilities
- Using **innovative funding** opportunities for securing accessible housing for people with physical and/or sensory disabilities
- Making effective use of **existing** housing stock in meeting the housing needs of people with physical and/or sensory disabilities

## 2. Why do we need a physical and sensory disabilities housing framework?

### 2.1 Scope

This framework supports the provision and development of excellent housing in relation to adults with physical disabilities who are mobility impaired and/or have sensory disabilities, including both sight loss and hearing impairment. Children with disabilities have a different set of considerations outside the scope of this framework. There are also other forms of disability which include those with learning disabilities or autism and are not expressly mentioned in this framework. This is because of the specialist nature of accommodation design for people with complex needs or who challenge services and will generally be developed by specialist providers in consultation with Kent County Council commissioners.

### 2.2 Background

*Mind the step: An estimation of housing need among wheelchair users in England* produced by Habinteg estimates that around 78,300 wheelchair users in England have unmet housing need. 84% of homes do not allow someone using a wheelchair to get to and through the front door without difficulty, and only 0.5% of homes are reported to be 'accessible and adaptable'.

*Are we being blind to injuries in the visually impaired? A review of the literature* produced by Legood et al suggested that people with sight loss are 1.7 times more likely to have a fall and 1.9 times more likely to have multiple falls. The home environment is therefore a particular risk area for trips and falls if it is not designed suitably to minimise the dangers. The effective use of technology such as alert systems, and optimising conditions for visual communication, are also key issues for enhancing independent living for people with a hearing impairment.

### **2.3 The nature of the problem**

Housing provision for people with disabilities has traditionally been met in residential care settings. This is the right approach to enable good quality care for many but not necessarily where all disabled people would choose to live. The necessity for placing people with disabilities into residential care may have arisen sometimes in the past through other causes, such as a lack of accessible housing and/or adaptations, rather than any fundamental need for social care itself.

For those who do live independently and have changing needs, including the older population; Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and Kent County Council's Home Support Grant will fund adaptations to the home if the property is suitable. However, these are finite resources with waiting lists resulting in delays in some areas of Kent. People waiting a long time for the changes are in the meantime at risk of falling and having accidents. Delays can also impact on the timely discharge of patients from hospital or residential care, risk injury to carers, and may in some instances contribute to re-admission. There is also an inconsistent picture of the quantity and where the adapted housing stock is located, as there is no register of adapted properties in Kent and Medway and there may be different ways of recording and managing this stock across various providers of housing.

In building new homes, minimum accessibility standards are set out in Part M of the Building Regulations which relates to access into the dwelling, circulation space, accessible switches and sockets, and a downstairs WC. These are useful but not all needs can be met by Building Regulations. Additional standards are contained in Lifetime Homes, which has positively achieved homes that are easily adaptable and framed towards supporting the changing needs of people at different stages of life. Whilst Lifetime Homes accomplishes a great deal, they are not easily adaptable for certain changes, particularly for wheelchair users requiring major interventions. There is the Habinteg Wheelchair Housing Design Standard but this is not part of regulation and is used to varying degrees in different localities. The Government is currently looking at changing the approach to housing standards with a view to rationalising and simplifying them into a nationally described standard set of which the conclusions from the consultation are unclear at this stage.

What the above means is that residential care, adaptations and Lifetime Homes are not always the answer to housing people with disabilities, particularly those with moderate and high needs. Delivery partners should be looking at alternatives which support independence and choice. Having purpose built accessible housing delivered in the first place, or making best use of existing adapted stock, reduces the burden and cost of adapting homes once they have been built.

### **2.4 How this framework will help**

This framework provides guidance on how to utilise funding opportunities for housing people with disabilities; preferred design standards for new build accessible housing; and how to make the most of existing housing stock.

This of course does come at a time of a radical savings agenda being implemented across the county in line with the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme that supports the Bold Steps for Kent plan to deliver better outcomes for less. The framework complements this work because supporting physically and/or sensory disabled people in housing need to fulfil their potential and enabling them to live a high quality life through the provision of excellent housing can bring many benefits:

- People with disabilities are less likely to want or need to move if they can manage well in their home
- There will be fewer falls or other accidents in the home that prevent admission to hospital and residential care
- People with disabilities are more likely to return home more quickly following a stay in hospital or residential care if their home is suitable
- It reduces the need for expensive home care that is required whilst waiting for adaptations
- It enables greater choice and control for people with disabilities over where they live
- It promotes independence, inclusion and improves the quality of life for the people it serves

With an ageing population there will be more people living with impairments or long term health conditions in the future, so there is a market for developing accessible homes to meet these needs. Most people will be home owners and many will have equity and so may want to provide their own housing solutions to respond to their needs. Deploying choice in the future will therefore be of great benefit to people with disabilities.

### **3. What is the housing need across Kent and Medway?**

Nearly 44,000 people of working age and a further 16,800 older people are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance in Kent. There are 3,740 people registered blind and 760 partially sighted people in Kent; and 1,900 people of working age with a registered hearing impairment.

It is very difficult to quantify the overall level of housing need for people with physical and/or sensory disabilities as there is no single method of recording the information. There has been a recognition that improvements should be made in the collection and analysis of data regarding people with disabilities to assist the planning of the right type and number of homes. The **Accommodation Strategy** commissioned and developed by Kent County Council Families and Social Care does this by providing a detailed understanding of existing housing and home care provision, and predicted needs of Adult Social Care groups, which includes people with physical and sensory disabilities.

We do know that in 2012-13:

- The number of households registered on Kent and Medway's choice-based lettings scheme, Kent Homechoice, with a high priority need for a wheelchair accessible home was 261 (excluding Medway). This does however include both older people and children. Of these, the average waiting times varied between districts from just over half a year to up to 10 years. These households are registered to access social housing in the main and so this does not represent need within other housing tenures.
- It is difficult to recognise those households registered on Kent Homechoice with a sensory disability as this information is not collected. (This is a consideration for the future so that the needs of this client group can be more easily identified).
- There were 150 applicants with a disability registered with an interest for the shared ownership Help to Buy scheme for Kent, of which 19 required an adapted property
- There were 63 housing enquiries to the Disability Information Service Kent (DISK)
- There were 34 enquiries for accessible housing to the Centre for Independent Living Kent (CiLK)
- There were 8 accommodation related enquiries to the Wheelchair Users Group in Kent

Further information can be found in the **Research Paper** that was carried out to inform this framework.

### **4. Who are the main delivery partners?**

Partnership working is critical to the delivery of housing for people with physical and/or sensory disabilities. To successfully complete a new accessible housing development or to make best use of existing adapted stock or provide new adaptations, the input of a range of different partners is needed, who all bring unique expertise and specialist skills to the table.

A summary of the main local partners involved in the delivery of housing for people with physical and/or sensory disabilities and their role and responsibilities are set out in the table below.

| <b>Who are they?</b>                | <b>What is their role?</b>   |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Elected Members</b>              | Elected Members provide local leadership on housing and planning and set the local strategic direction. They can act as great ambassadors and advocates for accommodation for people with disabilities, particularly where there is concern amongst local residents about proposed development.  |
| <b>Parish Councils</b>              | Parish Councils have a critical role in ensuring that the local community is involved and informed about the development process and can help facilitate communication between local residents, Developers and Local Housing Authority officers. They may be involved in the development of Neighbourhood Plans for their local community. They are also a statutory consultee within the planning process.  |
| <b>Homes and Communities Agency</b> | The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is a Government body responsible for housing and regeneration across England, which provides funding for the delivery of new affordable housing.  |
| <b>Developers</b>                   | Developers can be either public sector or private sector. Developers will purchase the land, commission the architect and construction company to design and build a new development and submit the planning application.  |
| <b>Registered Providers</b>         | <p>Registered Providers of social housing provide affordable housing to people at below market rents and include both not-for-profit Registered Providers and stock-owning Local Housing Authorities. Registered Providers also purchase properties directly from the developer.</p> <p>Registered Providers will commission the architect and construction company to design and build a new development and submit the planning application. The Registered Provider ultimately manages the affordable homes once they are built and occupied. They also aim to make the best use of existing adapted stock and aim to allocate it to a person in need of the adaptations.</p>   |
| <b>Local Housing Officers</b>       | <p>Local Housing Authorities (Districts and Medway Council) have a housing enabling role and are responsible for making sure the needs of their communities are met. Officers will make sure a proposed development fits in with their overall housing strategy and can provide data to assess local need. They can help with engaging the community and promoting the benefits of development to local residents.</p> <p>Local Housing Officers also advise on the social housing allocations process and administer Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's). Local Housing Authorities' allocation policies can also ensure that people moving from existing social housing who no longer need the adaptations have sufficiently high priority to be moved to free up the property.</p> |
| <b>Local Planning Officers</b>      | <p>Local Planning Officers from District and Borough Councils and Medway Council create local planning policy and determine what development takes place based on Member decisions.</p> <p>They can provide pre-application advice on potential sites, design and quality of proposed developments and process the final planning application. Building Control Officers also check compliance with the building regulations.</p>  |
| <b>Landowner</b>                    | The Owner of land identified as a potential site has a crucial role to play in releasing that land for development. Landowners can range from local individuals to Parish Councils, District and County Councils and land-owning institutions such as universities and the Church of England.  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Care Providers</b>                           | Care Providers deliver in-house care and support services to people in residential care, supported living schemes, and domiciliary care within their own homes. They are crucial in risk assessing how people use and access their properties and have a role in informing authorities in case of high risk.  |
| <b>Social Services</b>                          | Social Services provide a view on the developments needed for people with disabilities who may require care and support services. They can also assist with design standards where adapted housing is being considered and can provide support for developments that strategically fit the population needs requiring care and support.<br><br>Occupational Therapy Teams in Social Services provide assessment, advice, equipment and adaptations for disabled people living in their own homes. They would liaise with a Care Provider in case of reported risk of an individual. |
| <b>GPs and Commissioners of Health Services</b> | New accommodation for people with disabilities will impact on local GP and health services. GPs and health Commissioners would be able to support new developments if brought in at an early stage and could also help shape services as they develop. Health and Wellbeing Boards and Clinical Commissioning Groups also help to determine local health and care priorities.   |
| <b>Home Improvement Agencies</b>                | Home Improvement Agencies provide advice, guidance and support to older people, disabled and other vulnerable people. They can undertake repairs or assist people through the DFG process to help them continue to live as independently as possible in their own home.   |
| <b>Third Sector</b>                             | The Third Sector is the voluntary or community sector that can provide accommodation solutions for disabled people. For example, the Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI) in Kent provides purpose built accommodation for adults with a physical disability over the age of 18 and an assisted living scheme for ex-service personnel and their dependants over the age of 65.   |
| <b>Private Rented Sector</b>                    | The Private Rented Sector is a provider of accommodation. Some provide accommodation to people with disabilities that can offer supported living solutions and bespoke specialist care services.  |

## 5. People’s views on their housing needs and aspirations

A key part of successfully delivering housing for people with disabilities is to understand their housing needs and aspirations. This can only work through asking people with disabilities themselves what is important and required.

Between March and June 2013, Activmob undertook qualitative research to gain an insight into the [Housing Needs and Aspirations of People with Physical or Sensory Disabilities in Kent](#). This provided valuable learning and gave participants a voice to inform this framework. The key points made in the research are summarised below.

### 5.1 Disability is not just about wheelchairs

- Disability encompasses a broad spectrum of needs, which requires understanding and responding to in an individual way

### 5.2 Adaptations

- People with disabilities know best, what they need and when they need it
- Adaptations have been found to take a long time to deliver with people learning how to live and cope, adapting themselves, rather than waiting for the works to be carried out
- The emphasis should be on “what we can do” (living with the disability) rather than what people can’t do
- Aesthetics of adaptations are important in terms of how they look within the home and their functionality
- Maintenance of adaptations is a concern. Finding an organisation to adopt the maintenance and pay for replacement when due, can be difficult



### 5.3 Information and language

- Accessing information on matters of concern can be difficult especially if you are “not on anyone’s radar you are out of the loop”
- Knowing where to look for information and having an “open door” to information is important
- Messages can be confusing and mixed (e.g. information on the housing benefit size criteria)
- Professionals working with people with sensory disabilities should understand the importance of language and recognise the written form of British Sign Language
- There is an opportunity to involve younger people to explore how new technology can be used more creatively in the future when communicating on the design and build of housing and adaptations
- There is a need for a guide around “everything you need to know about being disabled that they didn’t tell you”. (Organisations such as Disabled Rights UK provide this sort of information)

### 5.4 Making a decision

- Making a decision on housing is sometimes taken out of peoples hands and having control over this is crucial to their independence as well as timing on when to make a decision
- Location is ‘key’ when making a decision on housing, where options should be provided, such as around where transport, work, social and family networks are based

### 5.5 Design

- People with disabilities should be involved in the housing design process from the beginning, starting with a blank canvas, so that their needs are met
- The person with the disability is the expert in understanding their needs and so assumptions should not be made on their behalf

#### CASE STUDY – INVOLVING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Hannah is a wheelchair user with Cerebral Palsy who, after living with her parents for 10 years in Herne Bay, wanted to gain independence and live on her own.

Her journey began by applying to the Local Housing Authority housing register. She was then visited by an Occupational Therapist who assessed her needs and found out what she wanted from her new home such as the location. Hannah really wanted to move to Canterbury because it is where many of her friends live and where she socialises.

There was a wait of a year to find out how many extra points Hannah would get on the housing register. Once offered a property, she met with a doctor to discuss her needs. She was then invited to view the property in Canterbury which was under construction. After accepting it, from this point on she was involved in the build process through talking to the builders.

Hannah now lives in a ‘fantastic’ house perfectly located just outside the city centre with a lovely garden and all the adaptations she needs. It allows her to be able to live as normal life as possible and is exactly as she had imagined.

Her advice for developers is to get the person with the disability involved from the beginning as they are the best person to know what they need. It is also good to work with builders who have experience in building these homes. And, it is good to have people with disabilities living near to one another to create more of a community feel and encourage more socialising.

## 6. Making the most of funding opportunities

Making the most of funding opportunities and using these opportunities creatively and innovatively is crucial for the success of the delivery of accommodation for people with disabilities.

The funding options for housing for people with disabilities are summarised below. But in an age of reduced and limited public funding, developers should consider how they can access alternative sources of funding to enable the delivery of accommodation for people with disabilities. People with disabilities and their families should themselves also consider how they can use their own resources towards maximising their housing opportunities.

### 6.1 Affordable Homes Programme

Delivered by the HCA via investment partners, the majority of which are Registered Providers, this is a £4.5bn funding programme covering 2011-15. The major part of the programme is available as affordable rent and shared ownership sale. The funding was allocated in 2011 for schemes which must complete by March 2015.

This model is made up of four broad funding streams which contribute to the development of new supply:

- Additional borrowing capacity generated from the conversion of social rent properties to affordable rent (or other tenures) at re-let, as well as the borrowing capacity generated by the net rental income stream of the new properties developed
- Existing sources of cross subsidy, including provider surpluses, income from developing new properties for outright sale, Recycled Capital Grant Funding and Disposals Proceeds Fund and S106 cross subsidy
- HCA funding where required for development to be viable
- Other sources of funding or means of reducing costs such as free or discounted public land, including local authority land, and local authority contributions, for example from the New Homes Bonus

In June 2013, the Government announced that further funding of £2.5billion would be available for a new Affordable Homes Programme for the period of 2015-18. The expected timetable is that the bid prospectus will be published in December 2013 with bids to be submitted in April 2014 and an announcement of allocations in July 2014. For both these programmes the HCA encourages Registered Providers to bring forward proposals that will meet the needs of vulnerable and older people in mainstream housing, supported housing and housing for older people in both rented and home ownership. This includes encouraging Lifetime Homes.

### 6.2 Planning gain

Developers should consider using the planning system to provide affordable housing through S106 agreements (of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) and rural exception policies. These ensure that the housing built on the development remains affordable and meets local need. Innovative use of planning gain can be used to form closer links between housing, social care and local communities.

#### **CASE STUDY – SECURING WHEELCHAIR HOUSING IN LIEU OF DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS**

Kent County Council as a strategic planning authority seeks developer contributions under planning regulation 122 (2) for transport, education, communities and social care.

Through negotiations with a developer in relation to social care on a major site in Shepway (consisting of 1,000 units), eight wheelchair accessible housing units were secured on the site. This was negotiated with approval from the Local Housing Authority so that the new units will be allocated to disabled people eligible for social care services and was secured in lieu of the cash transaction that is usually arranged in S106 agreements. Although it will take some time for the units to come forward, this approach has reduced the lengthy process of collecting the money from developers and meets the legal requirements for all parties involved.

For social care clients, this has meant that the units are absolutely part of the community from the outset and not seen as an add-on to the development requiring costly adaptations. Eligible households can be identified at the earliest opportunity from the housing register, be involved in influencing the design and establish the best location, where possible.

This innovative approach has been duplicated in a major site in Thanet demonstrating the closer links between housing and social care to the benefit of the local and future population.

### **6.3 Care and Support Specialised Housing Fund**

Registered Providers, Local Authorities, Private Sector Developers and Community Groups who have HCA Investment Partner status are able to apply for the Care and Support Specialised Housing Fund. Successful bids for the first round of the Fund, which was for affordable housing, were announced in July 2013. 86 providers, outside of London, are set to receive around £101million to develop more than 3,000 affordable homes for older people and adults with disabilities or mental health needs. Ashford Borough Council had the only successful bid in Kent for this funding, which will enable the delivery of 12 units of accommodation for people with learning disabilities at Farrow Court, Ashford. Key outcomes of the Fund include:

- Improving the appeal of specialised housing options available by increasing the variety, quality and number of units available, particularly for sale or shared ownership
- Supporting the supply of well-designed, affordable schemes including a specialist element
- Supporting the supply of specialist housing across the wider market, including private market housing
- Improving joined-up working at a local level between local authorities, housing developers (private and affordable), Health Professionals, Social Services and Local Planners.

The fund supports the delivery of homes that provide a long term solution rather than a temporary stay for those who do not need residential care but would benefit from an adapted home suitable to their individual needs.

The type of housing for people with disabilities supported by the fund includes both semi-independent and independent living as long as they meet current and future individual needs. This includes wheelchair accessible and other adapted housing.

Concurrently with the launch of the affordable housing bid round, responses were also invited to help inform development of the second phase of the funding which will aim to stimulate development in the wider private market. The Department of Health and the HCA are reviewing all responses and will use the information gathered to develop the private market housing funding proposition.

### **6.4 Home Ownership for People with Long-term Disabilities (HOLD)**

The HOLD scheme forms part of the 2011-15 Affordable Homes Programme and is a shared ownership scheme that allows a person with a long-term disability to 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.

### **6.5 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)**

A DFG pays towards the cost of providing adaptations and facilities to enable a disabled person to continue living in their accommodation. It is a means tested grant (apart from in children's cases) that is administered by the Local Housing Authority and is tenure neutral. The maximum grant available is £30,000 which can cover work to:

- Make it easier to get into and out of the accommodation (e.g. widening doors and installing ramps)
- Ensure the safety of the disabled person (e.g. through a specially adapted room or improved lighting)
- Make access easier to the living room, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom (e.g. providing a stair lift, or providing a downstairs bathroom)
- Make it easier to use kitchen and bathroom facilities (e.g. replacing baths with level access showers)
- Improve or provide a heating system or adapt heating or lighting controls to ease use
- Improve access and movement to enable the disabled person to care for another person in the household, such as a spouse or child
- Improve access to and from the garden

Registered Providers may fund some adaptations to their own stock. In Kent and Medway, some of the Local Housing Authorities and Registered Providers have signed up to a joint minimum standard for funding adaptations in order to bring more clarity for users and better equity in funding adaptations between Local Housing Authorities and Registered Providers.

Changes to the funding regime are planned from 2015-16 where DFGs will be included in the new Integration Transformation Fund. This will be administered by top-tier Local Authorities as opposed by lower tier Local Authorities, as a single pooled budget for health and social care. The implications of these changes on the DFG delivery are unclear at this stage.

## 6.6 Third Sector funding

Some charities provide financial support to assist disabled people in very specific circumstances to adapt their own homes. This route can sometimes be used when the disabled person may not be eligible for a DFG or where the assessment results in the need for a financial contribution by the disabled person that they cannot afford.

## 7. New build housing

### 7.1 Identifying need and opportunities

Accommodation for people with disabilities is an on-going need across Kent. The [Accommodation Strategy](#) commissioned by Kent County Council Families and Social Care identifies the level of accommodation needed and where it is needed in relation to vulnerable groups including those with physical and sensory disabilities. This should be used by Local Housing Authorities to inform their housing strategies for their district.

Developers and Local Housing Authorities should consider ways of identifying opportunities to provide suitable accommodation to meet this demand. Developers should try to work with local Landowners to secure land for accommodation for people with disabilities where they are aware that there is a local need.

Local Housing Authorities and other public sector agencies could consider using their own land for the development of accommodation for people with disabilities. Ashford Borough Council has used this process to deliver two units for disabled tenants at Orion Way on a former allotment site.

### 7.2 Consultation and engagement

Developers should ensure they consult with Local Housing Authority Planners early on in the design phase of new accommodation for people with disabilities as this can help to improve the planning application process further down the line. Working through any issues together at the pre-application stage can save a lot of time and prevent potential delays during the planning process by ensuring that the planning application submission answers questions of design, quality and addressing local need. The [Kent Viability Protocol](#) is a tool that can be used where there are any issues over viability, to help ensure that housing is delivered in a timely and effective manner.

It is also recommended that all plans for accommodation for people with disabilities are approved by the Kent County Council Occupational Therapist Team in the relevant locality before the submission of a planning application. Detailed specifications should be agreed before the building work begins. Plans should include floor plans, elevations and site layout.

As mentioned in our qualitative research (section 5), potential residents of the development should, wherever possible, be involved in the housing design process from the beginning as they are best placed to know what their needs are and what works for them on a day-to-day basis.

### **7.3 Type**

Bungalows are the preferred type of accommodation for people with disabilities, particularly for wheelchair users, as they provide a level access to all rooms making it easier to move around the property. It is acknowledged that this is not always economically viable if the space required increases land and build costs.

### **7.4 Location**

Developers should carefully consider the location of the development. The location should be one that ensures the disabled person is able to integrate as fully as possible in the community rather than being isolated or disconnected. Thought should be given to how the disabled person will be able to have safe and relative ease of access to family and social networks, work, local amenities and transport links. This is very important for supporting independence, feeling secure, and ensuring inclusion and participation in the local community.

### **7.5 Design**

Good design is crucial for the on-going success of new developments planned for people with disabilities. Good design will ensure the disabled resident can use the accommodation safely, comfortably, with dignity and confidence.

Developers should make sure that accommodation for people with disabilities blends in as much as possible with neighbouring properties to help residents feel more included in the local surroundings as opposed to being set apart from it. For example, a level location both outside and internally negates the need for ramps and rails making the accommodation less obviously housing for people with disabilities.

### **7.6 Wheelchair accessible housing design**

Basic wheelchair dimensions should be accounted for in the design. A standard manual self-propelling wheelchair is 1,169mm long and 635mm wide and so a space of 1,500mm is required to turn 360 degrees. Further attention would need to be given to additional space allowed due to elevated leg rests, reclining back rests, wider chairs that accommodate larger people, and larger more robust chairs or scooters for outdoor use.

The Habinteg *Wheelchair Housing Design Standard* provides the most comprehensive and widely used set of design standards for wheelchair accessible housing, which takes account of current guidelines and regulations, and promotes the long term costs and other benefits of designing to wheelchair accessibility standards. It is recognised that this is not part of regulation and sees local and varied application from district to district which, for developers, can add to the time and costs to the redesign of individual schemes.

The Government is reviewing the approach to housing standards with a view to rationalising and simplifying them. This could potentially see standards, such as the Wheelchair Housing Design Standard and Lifetime Homes, integrated into a nationally described standard set. This review is welcomed as it is hoped it will provide clarity. Until the outcome of the review is known, Kent and Medway authorities have examples of good practice on wheelchair housing design that can be used as guidance for developers. One such approach is that of Ashford Borough Council's *Wheelchair Accessible Housing Design Standards*.

## **CASE STUDY – DELIVERING WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE HOUSING AT CRYOL ROAD, ASHFORD**

A small working group of representatives from Kent County Council, Ashford Borough Council and Moat set about developing design standards for wheelchair accessible housing. The aim was to use the standards to guide the delivery of units that are 'fit for purpose' for wheelchair users and ready for use with the basic requirements installed (such as bathrooms, kitchens, carports and wheelchair storage and charging), in lieu of more bespoke installations that might be required later on outside of the 'development window'.

The idea is that a set 'menu' of items from the standards could be selected for the 'fit for purpose' property and given to the Developer to deliver. This would include build and specification costs to demonstrate to Developers and Registered Providers that the costs were not inhibitive.

With the approval of Exeter City Council, the group used their wheelchair standards as a template, adjusting it accordingly. The source of Exeter City Council's standards was Habinteg's Wheelchair Housing Design Standards.

A suitable site to pilot the standards was found at Cryol Road using HCA Affordable Homes Programme funding. Working in conjunction with Richard Daniels Architects, a planning application was put together using the Design Guide as the basis for the delivery of 2 x 3 bedroom houses for wheelchair users as part of a 7 unit development of properties for rent.

Planning approval for this development was approved during March 2013. Work on site is expected to start during mid-February 2014 with completion over a 40 week period. The overall costs will be determined over this build period and used to inform the final outcomes.

Specific design criteria and dimensions can be found in Ashford Borough Council's *Wheelchair Accessible Housing Design Standards* but the main considerations are outlined below.

### **7.6.1 External environment**

There should be easy access to the property by vehicle, wheelchair, mobility scooter or other mobility aid with protection from the elements, especially at the point of transferring out of the vehicle and into the main entrance.

### **7.6.2 Main entrance**

If the property is in a communal block it is important to limit the number of doors the wheelchair user will have to negotiate.

A separate entrance directly into a ground floor flat would be easier for the wheelchair user and negate the need to have remote opening devices on communal doors that have proved to be a maintenance problem.

A wheelchair user may use a larger powered chair for outdoor use. Opening the main entrance door can be difficult for many especially if returning with shopping or simply sitting in a larger chair. It is therefore good practice to provide a remote control door opener as part of the door locking mechanism.

### **7.6.3 Internal environment**

If hallways and corridors are too narrow, doorways will need to be made wider to allow for mobility in a wheelchair. Footplates and wheel trims can cause damage to doors that are too narrow, so careful consideration needs to be given to the location of radiators, fuse and meter boxes and additional storage space for charging of health equipment so as to not impede on the corridor space. A square hallway with rooms leading off is a more efficient use of space than corridors with rooms leading off.

#### **7.6.4 Bedrooms**

Sufficient space will be needed for the wheelchair user to turn full circle beside the bed and circulate around the bed to reach all bedroom furniture and a dressing table/worktop, to open windows and adjust radiator controls.

Double bedrooms should be provided even in single person homes as wheelchair users prefer a double bed to make moving and turning in bed easier and safer as well as allowing flexibility if personal circumstances change. In houses, the bedroom should be located on the ground floor.

#### **7.6.5 Bathrooms**

Managing all toileting and bathing functions without assistance is of paramount importance for the wheelchair user but allowance also needs to be made for those who do require assistance by ensuring sufficient space for safe moving and handling in this area.

A disabled person may take considerable time in the bathroom; therefore properties of two or more bedrooms should have an en-suite bath/shower room for the wheelchair user and a separate bathroom for other household members. Individuals have unique methods for using the bathroom so one standard design may not necessarily fit all.

Consultation with the Occupational Therapist is suggested to establish the exact specification and positioning of fixtures and fittings including the equipment required.

#### **7.6.6 Living and dining**

There should be space to access all furniture fittings and windows with space to transfer onto a chair or settee. There may be a requirement for a specialist adjustable chair necessitating additional space, and allowance for operating a computer with good standard of lighting. Square or rectangular rooms will assist with practical furniture layouts as opposed to long and narrow rooms, which are restrictive.

#### **7.6.7 Kitchen**

The kitchen can be the most challenging room to design as it is not usually known at the design stage who the main user of the kitchen will be. Flexibility in design is required with a balance between space to accommodate both the wheelchair user and the ambulant user.

The wheelchair user needs to minimise the amount of fetching and carrying between work surfaces and manage the majority of tasks from one wheelchair position. Space is required beneath main work areas meaning storage usually supplied in these areas should be provided in an accessible way elsewhere. The kitchen should be planned around the main work area and should be U or L shaped. Work surfaces, including sinks and hobs, should be lowered for the wheelchair user and also be adjustable to enable able bodied persons, such as household members or carers, to make use of them.

### **7.7 Sensory disability housing design**

People with sensory disabilities, in general, will not require highly specialised accommodation unless they have additional needs associated with other forms of disability. Good design principles for accommodation for people with sight loss centres on way finding and reducing hazards so as to ensure safe movement around the home. For people with a hearing impairment the focus on design is around optimising conditions for visual communication and effective alert systems. Most measures for the design of accommodation for people with sensory disabilities are practical and low cost solutions that do not add significantly to the overall build cost.

#### **7.7.1 Sight loss**

It is recommended that for comprehensive design detail the *Housing for People with Sight Loss Design Guide* by the Thomas Pocklington Trust and Habinteg is referred to (see Annex A). Generally, there are five key aspects for successful design for people with sight loss that focus on space and layout, lighting, colour and contrast, texture, and security.

## Space and layout

Adequate space and a logical layout make it easier for a person with sight loss to move around the home safely. The layout should be simple with direct routes between rooms and no obstacles in and around the routes. Open plan living, kitchen and dining spaces ease movement. Consistency in where key items are placed in terms of their location and height should be provided for, such as the location of switches and sockets, door and window handles, and taps.

Some examples of effective use of space include:

- Routes between the bedroom and bathroom are as short as possible
- There is space to move around on both sides of the bed
- There is enough space to move around in bathrooms and kitchens
- There is sufficient provision of storage to reduce clutter
- If the resident has a guide dog, there is sufficient space for a dog bed, equipment and a dog run

Some examples of logical layout include:

- In kitchens, the sink and cooker are close together. Cookers are at eye-level and there are continuous worktops
- In bathrooms, it is easy to reach the WC
- Risk is minimised for walking into obstacles, such as using open shelving, sliding cupboard doors, automatic door closing, eye level cupboard doors that open no wider than the surface below
- Paths and hallways are wide enough for two people to walk together

## Lighting

The effective use of lighting helps to enhance and maximise low levels of sight. Lighting should be designed appropriately to suit the individual wherever possible. There should be an even level of light that is free of glare and adjustable for flexibility. Natural light should also be maximised as much as possible to improve energy efficiency and sustainability but without allowing the home to become too hot.

Lighting should:

- Have dimmer switches so lights can be adjusted for flexibility
- Be switched and controlled separately to meet needs for different activities
- Be even so there are minimal shadows and dark areas
- Be used to illuminate dark areas, such as inside cupboards and wardrobes
- Be used for when a particular activity is undertaken through providing 'task lighting'

The lighting should be placed appropriately in:

- The main entrance with sensor automated lights at the front door
- Hallways and stairs with lights at the head and foot of stairs and on landings with controls at the bottom and top of stairs and both ends of the landing
- Living and dining areas using a mix of ambient and task lighting
- Kitchens with under unit lighting above work surfaces and task lighting over hobs and around sinks and other utilities, as well as lights in units
- Bathroom with lights over mirrors, shaver points and basins
- Bedrooms with bedside lamps, lights over dressers and inside cupboards and drawers

Light can create glare which causes dazzle and makes it harder to see. This should be avoided through:

- Using shaded light fittings
- Using non-reflective materials, such as a matt or satin finish on doors, handles, walls, work surfaces, floors, tiling, appliances and controls
- Fitting vertical blinds to prevent glare from lights and windows



## Colour and contrast

Colour and contrast helps to differentiate between an object and its surroundings so as to assist with way finding around the home. Colour is most effectively used with contrasting shades of the same colour. Walls and ceilings should be painted in a light matt colour to maximise the use of lighting and brightness. Colour contrast strips on walls are also a useful way finding solution.

Colour contrast should be used on:

- Doors that contrast with the wall and the door frame with a leading edge of the door to contrast with the rest of the door. Door handles are a colour that contrasts with the door.
- Steps and stairs where the edge should contrast with the rest of the stair or step. The colour of the stair or step contrasts with the adjacent wall
- Light switches, plug sockets, taps and controls that contrast with their surroundings
- Grab or handrails that contrast with the wall
- WC's, basins, baths and shower units that contrast with their surroundings

## Texture

People with sight loss often rely on the use of touch and feel to guide them around their home. Some examples of the use of texture include:

- Texture used on doors to locate key holes and locks
- Tactile floor surfaces to indicate the top and bottom of stairs and steps
- Tactile controls and taps
- Tactile hazard paving

## Security

People with sensory disabilities may be perceived as vulnerable and so security is very important to them. To assist with identifying visitors, design features should include using clear glazing on front doors, a door viewer or audible caller recognition, video door entry system, CCTV or webcams.

### 7.7.2 Hearing impairment

Design considerations for people with hearing impairments focus on space and proximity, light, colour, and acoustics. These features optimise conditions for visual communications, for example:

- Although space standards will not be an issue for people with hearing impairments, the space between two people who use sign language tends to be greater than those who are using spoken language
- Having visual connections between rooms can enhance sensory awareness and effective communication around the home
- Lighting should be "attuned to deaf ears" so that there is no glare, shadow or backlighting that could hinder signing and lip reading
- Colour can be used to contrast skin tone to highlight sign language and facilitate visual way finding
- Good acoustics can help people with a hearing impairment to communicate effectively. Reverberation from hard surfaces such as walls and floors should be avoided as these cause sound waves that can be distracting for people using assistive technology such as hearing aids. Soft furnishings and carpets can help towards reducing reverberation

Equipment for the home that assists people with hearing impairments include, for example:

- Hearing loops
- Textphones
- Listening devices
- Alerting devices such as specially adapted doorbells, alarm clocks and smoke alarms that use strobe lighting and vibrating pads. Referrals can be made to the Kent Fire & Rescue Service for a range of fire safety devices for sensory impaired people

### **CASE STUDY – VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS AND ALERT SYSTEMS**

Philip Corby Close is a housing scheme for deaf people in Thanet. The scheme, provided by Sanctuary Housing, was built adapted from the start and contains four units let on a social rent basis. Each unit has flashing lights for the fire alarm in each room and there is a video door entry system so that residents can see who is at the door.

The benefits of the scheme are that deaf residents, whose first language is British Sign Language, have a sense of belonging within the community where they can communicate freely with each other. As a minority group within a hearing world, all residents greatly appreciate living within this environment.

## **8. Using existing housing stock**

Meeting the housing needs of people with disabilities does not rely solely on building new homes. Adapting a disabled person's existing home or facilitating a move to an already adapted home can transform lives and bring many benefits. Adaptations can give renewed independence, improved quality of life and greater choice for the disabled person to remain in their own home. Sometimes moving to more appropriate accommodation is often the best option if the home is not suitable for adapting, and moving can also bring people nearer to family or support.

### **CASE STUDY – PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE**

Mrs P was referred to the Home Improvement Agency In Touch for a stair lift and flush floor shower as she was finding it difficult to use the stairs and bath. She is 71 years old and lives on her own in a privately rented property. She has lived there for over 30 years and did not want to move.

Her landlord agreed to the adaptations and In Touch worked with the Local Housing Authority and Social Services to obtain the DFG.

During the process, In Touch informed Mrs P of their handyman service which was able to put in a cat flap and a bench for her kitchen. She also had her chair in her lounge raised to enable her to get in and out of it more easily.

Mrs P was extremely happy with her new shower and couldn't believe how easy it was for her to have a wash. She was now using it everyday instead of bathing once a week because of the effort and pain previously involved. She was also very happy with the stair lift because she often experiences bad days and now on one of those bad days she can still get upstairs safely.

### **8.1 Re-letting existing adapted accommodation**

With an ageing population and an improving life expectancy, the demand for adaptations has increased applications for DFGs. This has the unintended consequence of sometimes creating long waiting lists and delays. Using existing accommodation that has already been adapted to re-house disabled people goes some way towards meeting housing need.

Matching disabled people with adapted vacant Registered Provider accommodation is facilitated through Kent Homechoice. This uses mobility level icons on advertisements for ease of identification of suitable properties. One of the difficulties encountered in this is that identification of the adapted property only becomes apparent when the outgoing resident leaves, as records are not kept on adapted housing stock. It is recommended that this is strengthened so as to better plan for the re-let of these properties.

It is however, recognised that adaptations are specialised and tailored to the individual and so matching 'like for like' in terms of equipment requirements for a new resident coming into an existing adapted property is difficult to achieve. The timing of when adapted properties become available to let and matching suitable disabled housing applicants to them is also a challenging task considering the quick turnaround of allocations.

A good practice approach could be that when any void property is inspected, regardless of whether there are any existing adaptations within it, consideration is given to whether it can be adapted to meet the needs of a household on the housing register with a disability.

Local Housing Authorities may also consider giving higher priority to applicants on the housing register who wish to give up their adapted properties in order to assist in the release of this accommodation.

## **8.2 Mutual exchanges**

Some social housing residents may also be able to find more appropriate accommodation through mutual exchange, where they swap their property with another tenant. In Kent, properties can be advertised through Home Swap Direct. There may be households who no longer need the adaptations and a mutual exchange could help both sides move into accommodation more appropriate for their needs.

## **8.3 Using adaptations to aid hospital discharge**

Adapting homes in a timely way can speed up the discharge of people from hospital. Being at home following a stay in hospital often helps in the recovery process and releases the hospital bed for another person to use.

### **CASE STUDY – AIDING HOSPITAL DISCHARGE**

Mrs K was in hospital following the amputation of both her legs and was keen to go home. She did not have the funds to pay for a ramp into her property and was not allowed home until this was done. The Occupational Therapist referred her to Swale's Home Improvement Agency, Staying Put. A temporary wooden ramp and seven thresholds were subsequently lowered around her home.

Mrs K also needed a shower room and the kitchen units lowered which would be covered by a DFG. An application for an urgent grant was submitted. Following the work, Mrs K had improved considerably being at home. Because of the adaptations she can now cook her own meals and visit the local shops and café.

## **8.4 Choice and control over adaptations**

People with disabilities want choice and control over what is happening to their homes and the decisions made around adaptations. It is crucial to involve disabled people in assessments about their own needs and to keep them informed about the progress of the adaptations. Getting this right first time reduces the risk of the adaptations failing and wasting valuable resources. Sometimes this can be challenging due to the parameters of the funding criteria and requires a problem solving approach.

### **CASE STUDY – CHOICE AND CONTROL**

Mr B is a wheelchair user and needed his home adapted to enable him to access the upstairs. The option offered through the grant team was to provide a through floor lift and a shower room upstairs. Mr B did not want the shower room upstairs as this would limit the space and his daughter, who has mental health problems, still needed to use the bath.

Swale's Home Improvement Agency Staying Put, reviewed the situation and could see that changing the garage into a bedroom and shower room would be the best option for the whole family. This was only allowed if Mr B paid the difference. They assisted in getting the changes through planning by showing that converting the garage would not cause a parking issue. Estimates of the costs of the lift and shower that the grant would allow for were also obtained, which enabled the work to be carried out without too much cost to Mr B.

Mr B was really happy with all that was done for him to enable him to have the works carried out as he wanted.

## 9. Implementation

### 9.1 Governance and monitoring

This framework has been endorsed by the Kent Housing Group (KHG) and Kent Joint Policy & Planning Board (Housing) (JPPB). It will be owned by the JPPB who has responsibility for monitoring the framework against the criteria set out below. The JPPB will report detailed monitoring to the KHG Executive Board and provide regular briefings on progress to the whole KHG. This will be reported back to the KHG as part of the overall monitoring of the Kent and Medway Housing Strategy.

### 9.2 Monitoring criteria

The intended effect of this framework is to improve the availability of good quality and suitable housing for people with physical and sensory disabilities across Kent and Medway.

To assess whether this is being achieved, and establish where any potential blockages may be, the JPPB will monitor the following:

1. Number of wheelchair accessible housing units consented and completed
2. Number of planning refusals and reasons given
3. Number of people with disabilities registered on Kent Homechoice
4. Number of homes allocated through Kent Homechoice to people with disabilities
5. Number of adapted social housing properties\*
6. Number of existing homes adapted through DFGs
7. Number of re-lets of already adapted properties to suitable applicants

\* As Kent does not currently operate an accessible housing register, this will be a long term ambition to build a Kent-wide picture of adapted housing stock

Good practice examples will also be sourced where local housing authority policies and strategies identify housing for disabled people as a priority, and where people with disabilities have been involved in the planning and design of accessible housing.

### 9.3 Review

The lifespan of this version of the framework is one year. A formal review of the framework and its effectiveness will be carried out by the JPPB on behalf of KHG annually. If necessary, the framework will then be refreshed by the JPPB to reflect changes in policy and procedure and any recommendations from the review.

## USEFUL RESOURCES

- **Mind the Step: An Estimation of Housing Need Among Wheelchair Users in England** – Habinteg ([www.habinteg.org.uk](http://www.habinteg.org.uk))
- **Meeting the Housing Needs of Disabled People: A Current and Emerging Issues Study** – Habinteg ([www.habinteg.org.uk](http://www.habinteg.org.uk))
- **Lifetime Homes Design Guide** – Habinteg ([www.habinteg.org.uk](http://www.habinteg.org.uk))
- **Wheelchair Housing Design Guide** – Habinteg and Stephen Thorpe([www.habinteg.org.uk](http://www.habinteg.org.uk))
- **Housing for People with Sight Loss Design Guide** – Thomas Pocklington Trust and Habinteg ([www.pocklington-trust.org.uk](http://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk))
- **Home Adaptations for Disabled People: A Detailed Guide to Related Legislation, Good Practice and Guidance** – Home Adaptations Consortium ([www.cot.co.uk](http://www.cot.co.uk))
- **Kent Rural Housing Protocol** – Rural Kent: Supporting Kent’s Rural Communities – Kent Housing Group ([www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk](http://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk))
- **Kent Older Persons Housing Protocol** – Better Homes: Housing For The Third Age – Kent Housing Group ([www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk](http://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk))
- **Kent Viability Protocol** – Kent Housing Group, Kent Planning Officers Group, Kent Developers Group, Kent County Council, Homes and Communities Agency ([www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk](http://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk))
- **Kent Accommodation Strategy** – Kent County Council ([www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk))

## INFORMATIVE WEBSITES

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Accessible Property Register (APR)</b>         | A register of accessible or adapted properties for sale and rent  | <a href="http://www.accessible-property.org.uk">www.accessible-property.org.uk</a>     |
| <b>Action for Blind People</b>                    | National charity that provides practical help and support to blind and partially sighted people   | <a href="http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk">www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk</a>   |
| <b>Action for Hearing Loss</b>                    | National charity that provides support for people with hearing loss and tinnitus  | <a href="http://www.actionhearingloss.org.uk">www.actionhearingloss.org.uk</a>         |
| <b>Aspire</b>                                     | National charity that supports people with spinal injury  | <a href="http://www.aspire.org.uk">www.aspire.org.uk</a>                               |
| <b>Care and Repair</b>                            | Charity that improves the housing and living conditions of older and disabled people  | <a href="http://www.careandrepair-england.org.uk">www.careandrepair-england.org.uk</a> |
| <b>Centre for Accessible Environments (CAE)</b>   | A charity that provides resources on inclusive design and access to the built environment for disabled and older people   | <a href="http://www.cae.org.uk">www.cae.org.uk</a>                                     |
| <b>Centre for Independent Living Kent (CiLK)</b>  | Charity that supports the positive promotion and update of Direct Payments and Independent Living for disabled people in Kent   | <a href="http://www.cilk.org.uk/index.htm">www.cilk.org.uk/index.htm</a>               |
| <b>Disability Forum</b>                           | Assists, advises and represents disabled people on a number of issues including benefits, housing, education, training, employment, equipment grants, travel and leisure access   | <a href="http://www.disabilityforum.tripod.com">www.disabilityforum.tripod.com</a>     |
| <b>Disability Rights UK</b>                       | Provides information, products and services developed by and for disabled people including the 'Disability Rights Handbook' and 'If only I'd known that a year ago...2013'  | <a href="http://www.disabilityrights.uk.org">www.disabilityrights.uk.org</a>           |
| <b>Disability Information Service Kent (DISK)</b> | Information service for people with a disability, older people, carers and service providers. Covers a range of topics including benefits, holidays, mobility and transport, care services and self help/support groups. Runs a mobile service which visits various locations in Kent | <a href="http://www.kentandmedway.nhs.uk">www.kentandmedway.nhs.uk</a>                 |
| <b>Disabled Living Foundation</b>                 | National charity that provides free, impartial advice and information about all types of equipment for daily living for older and disabled people   | <a href="http://www.dlf.org.uk">www.dlf.org.uk</a>                                     |
| <b>Elderly Accommodation Counsel</b>              | National charity that helps older people make informed choices about meeting their housing and care needs   | <a href="http://www.eac.org.uk">www.eac.org.uk</a>                                     |
| <b>First Stop</b>                                 | Independent, free telephone service offering advice and information to older people, their families and carers about housing and care options for later life  | <a href="http://www.firstopcareandadvice.org.uk">www.firstopcareandadvice.org.uk</a>   |

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|---|---|--|
| <b>Foundations</b>  | National body for Home Improvement Agencies and handy person services   | <a href="http://www.foundations.uk.com">www.foundations.uk.com</a>                               |
| <b>Habinteg</b>   | Registered Provider of accommodation for disabled people that also campaigns for accessible housing and inclusive design  | <a href="http://www.habinteg.org.uk">www.habinteg.org.uk</a>                                     |
| <b>Hi Kent</b>  | Hi Kent offers adults over 65 years who are deaf or hard of hearing with specialist information and advice, assessment and provision of equipment, resource centres to view equipment, lip reading Support Groups | <a href="http://www.hikent.org.uk">www.hikent.org.uk</a>   |
| <b>Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)</b>                           | National housing and regeneration delivery agency for England   | <a href="http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk">www.homesandcommunities.co.uk</a>                 |
| <b>Home Ownership for People with Long Term Disabilities (HOLD)</b> | Help to Buy scheme that helps people with long term disabilities buy a home on a shared ownership basis   | <a href="http://www.helptobuy.org.uk">www.helptobuy.org.uk</a>                                   |
| <b>In Touch</b>   | Home Improvement Agency for Kent and Medway (not including Swale who provides services under Staying Put – see below)   | <a href="http://www.intouchsupport.co.uk">www.intouchsupport.co.uk</a>                           |
| <b>Kent Association for the Blind</b>                               | Kent-based charity providing comprehensive support services for people with sight impairments in Kent, Medway and Bromley   | <a href="http://www.kab.org.uk">www.kab.org.uk</a>   |
| <b>Kent Homechoice</b>  | The choice-based lettings scheme for all council and housing association homes in Kent  | <a href="http://www.kenthomechoice.org.uk">www.kenthomechoice.org.uk</a>                         |
| <b>Kent Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (KASBAH)</b> | Registered charity that supports people with spina bifida and hydrocephalus as well as advice and support for people with learning and physical disabilities  | <a href="http://www.kasbah.org.uk">www.kasbah.org.uk</a>   |
| <b>Lifetime Homes</b>   | Provides resources to implement the Lifetime Homes Standard   | <a href="http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk">www.lifetimehomes.org.uk</a>                           |
| <b>Moat</b>   | Housing association that is the shared ownership Help to Buy agent for Kent   | <a href="http://www.moat.co.uk">www.moat.co.uk</a>   |
| <b>Motionspot</b>   | Private company that provides professional advice from independent occupational therapists and offers a wide range of modern adaptation equipment   | <a href="http://www.motionspot.co.uk">www.motionspot.co.uk</a>                                   |
| <b>Swale Staying Put</b>  | Home Improvement Agency for Swale   | <a href="http://www.swale.gov.uk">www.swale.gov.uk</a>   |
| <b>Thomas Pocklington Trust</b>                                     | Provider of housing and support for people with sight loss that also provides publications on housing design  | <a href="http://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk">www.pocklington-trust.org.uk</a>                   |
| <b>Wheelchair Users Group</b>                                       | Kent based charity that offers a free advocacy helpline, information service, fact sheets and talks and training around self-advocacy   | <a href="http://www.wheelchairusers.org.uk/index.html">www.wheelchairusers.org.uk/index.html</a> |

## CONTACTS

### KENT OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

#### Kent County Council

0845 330 2967

### LOCAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

#### Ashford Borough Council

Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PL  
01233 331 111

#### Canterbury City Council

Military Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 1YW  
01227 862 000

#### Dartford Borough Council

Civic Centre, Home Gardens, Dartford, Kent,  
DA1 1DR, 01322 343 434

#### Dover District Council

White Cliffs Business Park, Dover, CT16 3PJ  
01304 821 199

#### Gravesham Borough Council

Civic Centre, Windmill Street, Gravesend, Kent,  
DA12 1AU, 01474 337 000

#### Maidstone Borough Council

Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent,  
ME15 6JQ, 01622 602 000

#### Medway Unitary Authority

Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent,  
ME4 4TR, 01634 306 000

### HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCIES

#### In Touch

Ashford, Canterbury, Dartford, Dover, Gravesham,  
Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Shepway, Thanet,  
Tonbridge & Malling, Tunbridge Wells

0800 028 3172

Medway

0845 601 5471

#### Sevenoaks District Council

Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent,  
TN13 1HG, 01732 227 000

#### Shepway District Council

Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkstone, Kent,  
CT20 2QY, 01303 853 000

#### Swale Borough Council

Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent,  
ME10 3HT, 01795 417 850

#### Thanet District Council

Cecil Street, Margate, Kent, CT9 1XZ  
01843 577 000

#### Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West  
Malling, Kent, ME19 4LZ, 01732 844 522

#### Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Mount Pleasant Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent,  
TN1 1RS, 01892 534 227

#### Staying Put

Swale

01795 417 131



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Emma Barrett, Social Innovations Lab Kent  
Matthew Bushell, Kent County Council  
Amber Christou, Swale Borough Council  
Lesley Clay, Kent Joint Policy & Planning Board (Housing)  
Sally Duncan, Kent County Council  
Toni Easdown, Social Innovations Lab Kent  
Donna Francis, Wheelchair Users Group  
Lauren Hemsley, Thanet District Council  
Linda Hibbs, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council  
Naomi Hill, Kent County Council  
Caroline Hooper, Activmob  
Helen Homewood, Kent County Council  
Sue Horseman, Kent County Council  
Brian Horton, Horton Strategic Limited  
Anita Isles, Russet Homes  
David Jeffrey, Ashford Borough Council  
Karen Leslie, InTouch  
Caroline Lower, InTouch  
Annabel McKie, Southern Housing Group  
Jane Miller Everest, Kent County Council  
Marion Money, National Landlords Association  
Beryl Palmer, Kent County Council  
Jill Pells, Kent Housing Group  
Jo Pullen, Activmob  
Jo Purvis, Kent County Council  
John Roach, Kent County Council  
Francesca Sexton, Kent County Council  
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