

Disability factsheet

Accessible Housing

This factsheet provides information about the different housing options that disabled people may have when looking for an accessible house.

Why are you looking for a new home?

You may want to move out of your parents' home and find a house of your own, you may need a bigger or smaller house as your family needs change or you may need a new house because you are starting or finishing a relationship. You may be looking for another house because your current home is not suitable for your needs.

What to consider before you move?

Accessible housing in Scotland can be difficult to find, so if it is possible to adapt your current home, this could be a better option than trying to find new accessible accommodation. Our Housing Adaptations factsheet can give you more information about how to get adaptations to your home.

There are a lot of things to consider and find out about if you are thinking of moving to a new area. Our "Moving to Scotland" factsheet has a selection of information sources that may help a disabled person, or a family with a disabled child, plan their move to or within Scotland. If you are considering buying a house or renting privately, it is important to know what aids and adaptations you need and how to get advice on whether a house might be suitable to be adapted. You can contact an occupational therapist at your local social work department to ask whether they can advise you on this.

What type of housing is available in Scotland?

- Social housing provided by local authorities, housing associations or housing co-operatives
- Privately rented accommodation
- Home ownership

Social Housing

Social housing is provided by local authorities, housing associations or housing co-operatives all of which offer housing at an affordable rent. However, social housing is in high demand and applying for, and obtaining, a home may be a lengthy process.

If you visit the local authority's housing department you can find out about what social housing options are available in your area and register yourself on the relevant waiting lists.

Common Housing Register (CHR)

Some local authorities have a CHR. This is a single waiting list for all social housing and registering with a CHR will remove the need to fill in a different form for each housing provider.

Council Housing

If you wish to apply for council housing you can register with the council and your housing needs will be assessed. The fact you are a disabled person will not automatically qualify you for special treatment but the council will assess your needs and might consider you a "high priority" because of the effects of your disability or health needs.

Housing Associations

The housing department can also provide you with details of the housing associations in your area. If there is no Common Housing Register, you can register with these housing associations individually and your needs will be assessed in a similar way to council housing applications.

Housing Co-Operatives

The local authority housing department can also provide information about local housing cooperatives. Housing cooperatives are very like housing associations but they are jointly owned and run by their tenants. This means that the tenants take responsibility for arranging repairs, making decisions about rent and who joins or leaves the co-operative. Living in a housing cooperative can be a good way to get affordable housing and may give you more control over where you live.

Disabled Persons Housing Services (DPHS)

Some local authorities have a DPHS, which can advise disabled people who are looking for accommodation in that area. Contact the Advice Service to find out whether there is a DPHS in your area.

What private rented accommodation is available?

Renting privately is sometimes more attractive to people seeking new housing because it doesn't involve the same application processes and waiting lists. Some local authorities have a Landlord Accreditation scheme which lists properties available from private landlords and letting agents who are committed to good standards in private renting. Landlords should be registered and you can check this at the National Landlord Registration website: www.landlordregistrationscotland.gov.uk

If you are a disabled person and looking to rent privately then it is important to consider whether the property is suitable for your needs. There are many things to think about when

assessing the accessibility of a property and Shelter Scotland provides a very useful checklist on their website. If you need adaptations to your privately rented accommodation, then you can contact the occupational therapist at the local authority for further advice. Your landlord cannot unreasonably deny you permission to carry out adaptations that you have been assessed as needing. There are a few websites which advertise accessible properties for rent. Contact the Advice Service for more information.

Tenancy

When you rent from the council, housing associations, housing cooperatives or private landlords you will sign a tenancy agreement. This is a contract which sets out the legal terms and conditions of your tenancy. It is important to remember that your rights can vary with different types of tenancies. You can get more information from Shelter Scotland.

What about buying a house?

You may think buying a house would provide a solution to finding a suitable property. If you want to buy a property, there are a number of considerations including:

- How do you find a property that meets your needs?
- If you can't find a suitable property, how do you find one that can be adapted for your needs?
- Where can you get financial assistance to buy a property?

Finding a property to buy can be difficult as each individual has different needs. In addition there are not many adapted properties on the property market. Most adapted properties will be advertised in the same way as un-adapted properties for example in a Solicitors property centre or with an estate agent. The description of the property should include any adaptations. However there are a few websites which only advertise adapted properties for sale. Contact the Advice Service for details. If your only income is welfare benefits, then an organisation called Housing Options Scotland may be able to advise on the possibility of buying in these circumstances.

There are shared ownership and shared equity schemes and Housing Options Scotland can also give advice about these.

Helpful Organisations

Home2Fit

This is Scotland's accessible housing register. You can register with Home2Fit to help you search for and find a home suited to your needs in the area of your choice. It covers properties for rent and sale. The website also has a page about housing options.

Homes2Fit

117-127 Brook Street

Glasgow

G40 3AP

Email: admin@home2fit.org.uk

Website: www.home2fit.org.uk

Shelter Scotland
4th Floor
Scotiabank House
6 South Charlotte Street
Edinburgh
EH2 4AW
Tel: 0808 800 4444
E-mail: info@shelter.org.uk
Website: <http://.scotland.shelter.org.uk>

Housing Options Scotland
The Melting Pot
5 Rose Street
Edinburgh
EH2 2PR
Tel: 0131 247 1400
E-mail: info@housingoptionsscotland.org.uk
Website: www.housingoptionsscotland.org.uk

February 2015

Our Advice Service

Advice Service Capability Scotland is a national disability advice and information service. We specialise in information on cerebral palsy.

We offer:

- information on Capability Scotland services
- advice on cerebral palsy
- general advice on disability issues

You can get in touch with us by calling, e-mailing or writing a letter.

This Factsheet can be made available in other formats e.g. audio, large print



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