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## **HOUSING DISCUSSION INVOLVEMENT EVENT REPORT**

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SCOTTISH DISABILITY  
EQUALITY FORUM AND GUIDE DOGS FOR THE  
BLIND ASSOCIATION SCOTLAND**

**TUESDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2010**



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## 1. Background to the Event

Capability Scotland and the Glasgow Centre for Independent Living (GCIL) were selected through the Housing Voluntary Grant Scheme as the Scottish Government's key strategic partner for housing and disability issues.

A key part of this project is a series of seven involvement events giving disabled people the opportunity to tell the Scottish Government about their housing issues and ways in which the housing problems faced by disabled people can be solved. The involvement events are running from August to October 2010.

This information is intended to feed into the Scottish Government's discussion "Fresh Thinking, New Ideas" which is calling for radical solutions to the housing crisis in Scotland.

This is the report of the fifth event, held in conjunction with Scottish Disability Equality Forum and Guide Dogs for the Blind Association in Inverness on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

15 disabled people with a range of different impairments and conditions attended the event including people with hearing impairments, wheelchair users, people with physical impairments and people with visual impairments.

## 2. Design of the Event

The involvement day was designed around four key discussion areas:

1. What makes a house a home?

The participants were asked to think specifically as disabled home owners or tenants and consider what makes a house a home.

2. Experience of the housing system and uptake of opportunities

This was an open discussion about disabled people's experiences of the housing system in Scotland. We were particularly interested in:

- Difficulties faced getting suitable socially rented housing
- Barriers faced by disabled people needing to adapt their homes or get specialist equipment
- Difficulties experienced by those wishing to buy
- Problems experienced by those renting privately or wishing to rent privately
- Issues of getting accessible and appropriate information and advice about housing

### 3. Priorities for Government spending

This was a group activity in breakout groups using an A3 activity sheet and pre-printed post-it notes. We asked participants to pick five priorities from the list below and rate them one to five:

1. Building more low-cost housing
2. Keeping rents low
3. Giving disabled people priority for social housing
4. Encouraging people to downsize and redistributing larger houses to disabled people who need them
5. Making sure that new build housing meets the needs of disabled people
6. Making sure that disabled people get the help they need to adapt their houses
7. Designing homes that can be adapted much more easily
8. Building more sheltered housing
9. Building more residential care homes
10. Making sure that disabled people get the help they need to move when their house no longer meets their needs

### 4. What should be state funded and what should be privately funded?

This was a discussion about what sort of adaptations participants thought should be funded by the state and what sort of adaptations disabled people should pay for themselves. Participants also discussed the factors that should influence this such as income levels and priority of need.

## 3. Results of the discussions

### 3.1 What makes a house a home?

These group discussion brought forward five key characteristics that make a house feel like a home:

- Security and Safety
- Control
- Accessibility
- Maintenance
- Local Amenities

#### Security and Safety

The majority of participants thought that a house must be safe in order to feel homely. In order to feel safe homes must meet basic standards such as having a working fire alarms and window locks. Alarms were identified as a particular issue for those with sensory impairments who often need specialist equipment. One deaf participant told us that she had waited 5 years for a suitable alarm to be fitted in her home, during which time she didn't feel safe. Participants also thought that homes should have secure entry system.

Safety of the surrounding area is also vital and good street lighting, safe footpaths, open spaces and well maintained common spaces are necessary if people are to feel safe while out an about.

It was also highlighted that security is not just about locks and alarms. It's about belonging to a strong community. Some felt that in the past there was more of a sense of community and that this created a safety net. People would look out for others within their close, building or street. This is not the case nowadays because of poor planning, design and changes to society as a whole. Many participants also felt that in the past areas tended to have a little of everything that was necessary for a community to function, such as housing, shops, industry, and schools. Nowadays, there is a sense that communities are disjointed and fragmented, with people travelling miles to work and having little local contact. Participants felt that this is something the Scottish Government, housing association, planners, local authorities and communities needs to tackle together.

Some participants said they felt driven from their communities by high crime and drugs in their area. They felt this must be addressed immediately. Some said that feeling threatened by local people lead them to want to live less independently. They said they would rather go back to old fashioned models like pensioners cottages or even go into residential care than feel victimised.

Participants also thought that feeling safe is a particular issue for people with disabilities. One woman with a visual impairment said she felt slightly more vulnerable and that she was more reliant on the good will of others than most people for directions etc.

### Control

Another characteristic of a home is being allowed to make simple decisions about how you use and what you do to your house and garden. One participant lives in a complex with a shared garden and has been told she can only put her washing out on certain days. "That really doesn't make me feel in charge and at home."

Many participants also noted that you have to be free to do what you want to do in your home. If a person can't get the adaptations they need to do normal everyday things then they don't feel settled and at home. One lady's landlord wouldn't help her with changing the lighting so she couldn't read or carry out everyday tasks without help.

Having control over how a place is decorated and what furniture you have is also important as it gives you a sense of pride and ownership. In the long run this means people take better care of their homes and might do little repairs and odd jobs they would otherwise leave.

### Accessibility

Some participants stated that in order to feel completely at home it was essential that their house be completely accessible. One person stated that she had lived in places where she was 'a prisoner in her own living room'. She couldn't get upstairs or out of the backdoor into her garden. She said this meant most of the house didn't feel like 'hers'.

Small problems within the home can often become massive obstacles to everyday tasks. They can often seem insignificant but can completely prevent people from living independently. Examples included aids such as handrails, shower chairs, plugs and sockets at the right height.

### Maintenance

Many felt it was important that local surroundings are well maintained. Small changes like making sure hedges are kept under control and paths well salted in winter can make a huge difference to a disabled person's ability to get out and about.

### Local Amenities

Other aspects of the surrounding area that were seen as important were proximity to shops, banks, amenities, and the availability of open area for dogs and children.

### **The following represent a consolidation of the views expressed:**

- The Scottish Government should focus on how people can be made to feel safe in their homes and communities. This could be through encouraging local initiatives such as neighbourhood watch or increased investment in community policing. Ensuring social landlords continue to support community development and wider role initiatives is also essential.
- The Scottish Government must ensure there is increased awareness of the right to aids and adaptations, grants and home maintenance across all sectors. There is also a need for investment in services such as Care and Repair and Disabled Persons Housing Services.
- The Scottish Government should ensure the planning process takes account of access to transport, shops, employment and education within the local area if a sense of community is to be developed.
- Planning decisions should involve the local community, including people with disabilities and hard to reach groups.

### **3.2 Experience of the housing system and uptake of opportunities**

#### Refurbishment Standards

The group felt that there was a need for standards for refurbishment and renovation to be introduced - in addition to the current standards that exist in relation to new buildings. These might cover certain aspects of design and interiors such as which colours are acceptable to some people with autism. One participant noted that “the wrong colours and lighting in a house can be extremely physically painful to some people with autism. People just don’t know about this, or if they do they don’t take it seriously.”

Refurbishment standards might also deal with the kinds of flooring that is best for people with mobility impairments. Such standards are seen as particularly important because there are relatively few new homes being built and there is a need for an immediate improvement in the current supply of accessible housing.

#### Holistic approach to aids and adaptations

Participants felt that local authorities and registered social landlords need to take a more holistic and long term approach to aids, adaptations and renovations for people with disabilities.

When assessments are being done they should look at both current and future need of the individuals. For instance, where an individual has a degenerative condition, his/her future needs to be considered and adaptations made now that will last into the future. The individual should also be given information on how to plan now for their future housing needs. The group were keen on the idea of a ‘housing health check’.

Assessments should also look at the individual’s home holistically. For instance, one participant was given an assessment and as a result all the doorways in his house were widened. Unfortunately, the hallways were still too narrow. This meant that although was a big wide door on the bathroom, he couldn’t get along the corridor to actually use it. Failure to think holistically resulted in a lot of money being wasted.

The group thought there should also be more coordination between health, social care and housing. An example of this was given by a participant who said explained that wheelchair sizes are changing all the time. But are wheelchair manufacturers aware of the building standards etc? Do they know when a chair is just too wide to be practical in most homes? Joined up thinking is required. There should also be more investment by the health service in aids and adaptations which help to prevent bed blocking and make people safer in their homes. This will also reduce emergency admissions.

Participants also felt that financial decisions should be more holistic and based on longer term considerations. Often, denying adaptations will be more costly in the long run as people trip or fall and end up in hospital or in residential care. In many cases occupational therapists will make recommendations for aids and adaptations – but these recommendations are not taken forward because the council simply can't afford to. Essentially, local authorities make up their own eligibility criteria to fit with what they can afford to do. This not only increases their outgoings in the long term, it also constitutes the fettering of discretion and is illegal.

There is also a sense that disabled people are treated as charity cases by the local authority and social landlords. The participants said they are often made to feel as if they should be grateful for whatever they're given – whatever that is. People are seen as problems and if they complain they're ungrateful troublemakers. "You learn not to complain", noted one participant.

### Homelessness

The group felt that the number of people with mental health problems and learning difficulties who are homeless is completely unacceptable. 40% of homeless people have some sort of mental illness. In many cases this is because they find it difficult to maintain tenancies. There is a need for this issue to be addressed publically and for support to be offered to those who have mental health problems but want to maintain tenancies, keep up mortgage payments etc. One participant stated that society wouldn't find it acceptable if 4 in 10 homeless people were in wheelchairs – but the fact their disabilities are not immediately visible makes it okay.

### Homeownership

There are numerous obstacles to homeownership for people with disabilities. . One participant explained that he owned his home but, due to his schizophrenia, he couldn't get mortgage protection insurance. He worried that he would lose his home, or that if something happened to him he wouldn't be able to pass his home on to his son. He felt lucky for having an understanding employer who understood that he sometimes wasn't able to work but acknowledged that few people with health problems have this luxury and struggle with security of income.

### Emphasis on Physical Disability

Many participants felt that the Scottish Government and society as a whole tend to focus on 'obvious' disabilities and those with hidden disabilities suffer as a result. People with acquired brain injuries, mental health problems and autism need help and assistance, but this is not available because people don't understand or prioritise their conditions.

Many felt that staff involved in housing saw disability equality as a 'tick box exercise'. Staff were not making the effort to understand and address more complex conditions or problems that were not immediately apparent. As a result many conditions and disabilities are ignored. Many felt there was a need for staff training as people are often at the mercy of the housing officer they are dealing with. This is very worrying if that person is ignorant about their condition or has personal prejudices.

Some also felt there were double standards which amounted to a 'hierarchy of disability'. One participant stated, "If you are blind there is no OT that comes round to assess what would make it easier for you to live independently. You really don't get the same support that a person with a mobility impairment might get. You even have to pay for your white stick"

### Information and Communication

There is also the issue of information and communication for people with disabilities. Local authorities and other social landlords don't always provide large print, audio DVDs etc, despite the fact it is often their duty to make such a reasonable adjustment under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Given modern technology it's usually easy to make large print versions, or save BSL DVDs and just make a copy as required. It doesn't have to cost a fortune. Public bodies are not making the best use of the resources and technology that are available to them.

Public bodies also have to learn to be flexible about how they communicate with people, particularly in emergency situations. A deaf attendee asked what she would do if, for instance, her pipes burst. She can't phone her housing association because she can't use the phone. The most convenient thing for her to do would be to send a text message – but her landlord has refused to communicate with her via text. She supposes that she would have to physically go to her landlord's office to tell them about the pipes. This would involve arranging an interpreter which is time consuming and costly. Just letting her text would simplify the whole process.

### Planning

There is a need for disability and mobility to be considered during planning. Houses are often built too close together which means people are unable to get to their gardens or access the side walls. Most people will have a health or mobility problem at some point in their life and it's important that planners take this into account so they really can create homes for life.

With housing there tend to be large scale housing plans that attempt to satisfy everybody. Some participants felt that there was a need for more localised housing plans that really involved the local community and looked at local amenities. People need to be consulted in a meaningful way and given feedback.

Government, local authorities and landlords needs to do what they can to ensure communities can work and develop a sense of pride and self worth. One participant notes, "If you treat communities with disrespect people stop caring about themselves, never mind others."

### Priority for Housing and Temporary Accommodation

Many commented that points schemes used to allocate housing by social landlords are inconsistent and can be unfair towards disabled people. For instance, where there is more than one disabled person in the household this is not taken into account when calculating 'points'.

Participants felt that the Scottish Government doesn't understand the scale of the problem. One way to raise awareness of the problem would be to encourage disabled people in completely unsuitable accommodation to present themselves as homeless. However, this is a huge risk for many disabled people, particularly because temporary accommodation tends to be designed for single, able bodied people. Disabled people would probably be forced to stay in completely unsuitable accommodation and it might not be worth the risk.

#### **The following represent a consolidation of the views expressed:**

- The Scottish Government should produce guidance on refurbishments for increasing accessibility. This would cover, for instance, which colours should not be used for people with certain types of autism or sensory impairments.
- The Scottish Government and local authorities should take a more holistic and long term approach to funding aids and adaptations. There is a need for them to appreciate the long term cost of leaving people in unsuitable accommodation.
- The Scottish Government should develop its understanding, through research, of the housing needs of people with non-physical disabilities such as learning disabilities, autism and mental health problems.
- The Scottish Government should support initiatives that enable people with disabilities to buy and maintain their own homes. This might include working with banks, building societies and insurance companies to ensure there are no discriminatory obstacles to homeownership for people with disabilities.
- The Scottish Government needs to ensure communication standards and the duty to make reasonable adjustments is taken seriously by local authorities and landlords. The Scottish Housing Regulator should ensure that standards are upheld.
- The Scottish Government should ensure that the planning process takes into account local and community issues and that there is an opportunity for everyone to contribute to the debate.
- The Scottish Government needs to address the vast overrepresentation of people with mental health problems amongst the homeless population.

### **3.3 Priorities for Government spending**

Following 30 minutes of discussion in three small groups, the participants reported the following as their top five priority areas for the Scottish Government in relation to housing:

#### **Group 1**

This group felt the list of priorities given to them did not represent their main concerns. They also felt that there was a bias towards physical disability in the priorities as presented. Their first priority was not one of the options originally presented to them.

#### **1) Designing communities with a greater mix of units for people with different needs.**

The group felt this was essential to give people choice and control over their lives and to feel they were part of a real community.

Of the priorities they were given to choose from, the group felt the following were the most important

#### **2) Making sure new build housing meets the needs of disabled people.**

Although there was a sense this was being done as a result of changes to the building standards, which should ensure that all new homes are accessible to a degree. The group felt this had to be closely monitored in the future.

#### **3) Designing homes that can be adapted much more easily**

The group felt that lifetime home standards were essential and should be improved. They also felt it was essential to ensure that adaptations are not removed without good reason.

#### **4) Making sure disabled people get the help they need to adapt their houses**

Many of the most affordable housing is in the private sector and this is not accessible to people with disabilities because they can't always get adaptations done. There is a need to invest in and raise awareness of organizations Care and Repair.

#### **5) Building more low cost housing**

There are huge barriers to home ownership for disabled people. Shared equity schemes might be a good way for people to get into homeownership.

#### **Group 2**

Again this group didn't feel that the priorities they were given to choose from were quite right. One participant asked "What about those with learning disabilities or mental health problems? They also need support at home to live independently." Nobody is talking about where this support should be coming from. Despite this, the group made the following list of priorities.

#### **1) Building more low cost housing.**

The group would prefer to use the phrase 'Build more affordable housing'. They also noted that the houses didn't need to be new, that there should be more refurbishment of existing stock.

## **2) Making sure that new build housing meets the needs of disabled people**

The group felt there was a need for disability groups to agree some common standards in relation to refurbishment standards. What kind of flooring is most suitable across all disabilities etc.

## **3) Making sure that disabled people get the help they need to adapt their houses**

The group felt there was a need for more investment and more awareness of how people can get help with adaptations across all sectors.

## **4) Designing homes that can be adapted more easily.**

The group felt that there were lots of other issues that are priorities such as:

- Improving the outside environment and developing a sense of community.
- Social inclusion – people need to learn to value every member of society
- Homelessness needs to be addressed including the causes of homelessness, particularly amongst those with mental health problems.
- Need to help people manage with tenancy, again, particularly those with mental health problems

### Group 3

This group chose the above priorities but said they had a strong sense that the priorities they were given to choose from were very much aimed at people with physical disabilities and that this was generally what the Government thought about when talking about accessible housing.

## **1) Giving disabled people priority for social housing**

The group felt that disabled people have to wait far too long and that their needs are not fully understood or appreciated.

## **2) Making sure disabled people get the help they need to adapt their houses**

Participants felt that this would lead to savings in the long term and prevent people having to go into residential care.

## **3) Making sure that disabled people get the help they need to move if their house is no longer suitable.**

Again the group discussed a general failure to understand the needs of disabled people and the barriers to accessing suitable housing across all tenures.

## **4) Designing homes that can be adapted much more easily**

The group highlighted that fact that most people will experience disability at some point in their life and everyone will age. The Scottish Government doesn't seem to appreciate the problems this will cause if action is not taken immediately.

**The following represent a consolidation of the views expressed:**

- The Scottish Government should do all it can to design communities that are suitable for all parts of society and which lead to a real sense of community and security. This might be achieved through wider engagement and resisting the temptation to make and implement rushed planning decision.
- The Scottish Government needs to invest in making it easier for disabled people to access and fund aids and adaptations that allow people to remain in their homes. This should not only relate to physical disabilities but also learning difficulties, sensory and cognitive impairments and mental health problems.
- The Scottish Government needs to ensure that there is an increase in the supply of affordable housing across all tenures and that barriers which currently prevent disabled people from accessing these homes are removed.
- The Scottish Government needs to ensure that social landlords are giving people with a wide range of disabilities sufficient priority in relating to accessing housing. This might be addressed through the national guide to allocations policy.
- The Scottish Government needs to monitor the implementation of the latest building standards, particularly with regard to accessibility standards.

**3.4 What should be state funded and what should be privately funded?**

Problem with the way the question was phrased

Participants were unhappy with the way this question was phrased. Some felt they were being asked to approve spending cuts when they didn't feel there should be cuts in relation to housing or adaptations for disabled people. One participant commented, "This whole question seems to be structured around asking why we deserve support. We always have to justify why we're worthy of suitable home when in fact basic should be our right. We're being asked to justify our existence and the fact that we're asking for a minimal level of quality of life."

There was a general fear that responses would be used to justify future cuts and therefore a wariness to make generalisations about who should pay for what. As a result the discussion was more focused on how housing for people with disabilities could be made more cost effective or save money in the longer term.

Fairness of current spending decisions

Many participants felt that investment needed to be targeted more fairly and that disabled people are not being sufficiently prioritised. One individual gave the example of universally free prescriptions as a spending decision not focusing resources on those who really need them.

The group agreed that generally speaking, it's not fair to make disabled people pay for aids or adaptations. Many see charges for aids as an additional and discriminatory expense put on disabled people that very few can afford. Means tested charges were also seen as a disincentive to go out and work or try and earn more money as "the more people work and earn the more is taken away by local authority to pay for essential items. What's the point?"

The fairness of the distinction between health and social care was also raised. One participant noted that, “People are not asked to pay for their hip replacement yet they have to pay for adaptation that helps them walk if they have a long term condition or disability. It’s not fair.”

### Investing to Save Money

Many participants felt that in order to save money in the future it is essential to invest in making aids and adaptations available now. The cost of people falling in their homes is massive and many of those older people who do fall never recover. It was felt that aids and adaptations allow people to stay in their homes and be independent for as long as possible. Efficient use of adaptations also minimizes bed blocking and saves the NHS money. It was felt that this was a particularly vital issue given Scotland’s rapidly ageing population.

The issues of removal of adaptations was also raised. It was felt that allowing tenants of RSLs to remove adaptations was a waste of money. It is better to make sure adapted and accessible homes are given to those who actually need them. One participant recommended that all RSLs should have a policy of non removal of adaptations.

Many also felt that better design of aids and adaptations might help. If aids and adaptations were more attractive and didn’t ‘stick out like a sore thumb’ then people might be less inclined to remove them in the first place.

The wider cost benefits of investing in accessible housing were also raised. It was felt that giving people suitable homes increases their overall well being. It also increases their ability to live independently – to visit friends, to go to college, to work. This ability to live independently has the potential not only to make the individuals better off, but also the country as a whole as people are enabled to work, participate and volunteer.

Another participant commented, “The Scottish Government and private developers are often reluctant to build homes that are truly wheelchair accessible because they have a larger foot print and are therefore more expensive to build. But what is the cost of the alternative?” Costs mentioned included an increase in the need for residential care, increased health care, social care and welfare benefits for those rendered unable to work.

The issue of access to information was also raised during the discussion. Participants felt that it was worth the landlords while to invest in communicating clearly with their tenants. A person could put themselves at risk of losing tenancy because they couldn’t access mail about their bills or housing rights. RSL’s should therefore have a duty to contribute towards the cost of a scanner for a blind person or make a commitment to sending text messages to a deaf person.

Information on the availability of housing was also discussed. One participant felt there was a need to draw together information about the availability of accessible homes across all the sectors so that people did not feel that the waiting list of their local authority or RSL was the only option open to them.

### Non Physical Disabilities

The issue of how the housing debate tends to centre around physical disabilities rather than cognitive or sensory impairments, learning difficulties, mental health problems was also raised. An example of this is the allocation of points by housing associations. Participants felt that many housing officers don't understand the extent to which a house can dramatically improve the life of a person with autism or a learning disability and this needs to be addressed. Furthermore, people with non physical disabilities often don't get a visit from an occupational therapist. This means that essential housing needs not being met and that nobody recognizes their responsibility to help. One participant noted "Eligibility criteria should not be based on the ability or inability to walk alone."

### **The following represent a consolidation of the views expressed:**

- The Scottish Government need to think strategically and long term about its investment in housing for people with disabilities. There is a need to make preventative investments in developing accessible homes and funding aids and adaptations which will prevent higher health and social care costs.
- The Scottish Government needs to target investment at those who need it the most. In many cases this will include people with disabilities who often have a lower income and a higher cost of living. All spending decisions must be thoroughly equality impact assessed.
- People with disabilities should not be charged for essential aids and adaptations. The impact of means testing for aids and adaptations on independent living should be assessed.
- The Scottish Government should research and fully understand the housing needs of those with non-physical disabilities such as cognitive impairments, learning disabilities and mental health problems.
- The Scottish Government should ensure that RSLs implement policies to prevent the removal of adaptations from stock.

## 4. Summary of Views Expressed

- The Scottish Government should focus on how people can be made to feel safe in their homes and communities. This could be through encouraging local initiatives such as neighbourhood watch or increased investment in community policing. Ensuring social landlords continue to support community development and wider role initiatives is also essential.
- Many disabled people do not feel free to do the things they want in their homes because of inaccessibility. The Scottish Government must ensure there is increased awareness of the right to aids and adaptations, grants and home maintenance across all sectors. There is also a need for investment in services such as Care and Repair and Disabled Persons Housing Services.
- The Scottish Government should ensure that the planning process takes account of access to vital services, transport and employment and education within the local area.
- The Scottish Government should ensure that the planning process takes into account local and community issues and that there is an opportunity for everyone to contribute to the debate.
- The Scottish Government should produce guidance on refurbishments for increasing accessibility of housing. This might cover, for instance, an explanation of which colours should not be used for people with autism.
- The Scottish Government and local authorities should take a more holistic and long term approach to funding aids and adaptations. There is a need for them to appreciate the long term cost of leaving people in unsuitable accommodation.
- The Scottish Government should develop its understanding, through research, of the housing needs of people with non-physical disabilities such as learning disabilities, autism and mental health problems.
- The Scottish Government should support initiatives that enable people with disabilities to buy and maintain their own homes. This might include working with banks, building societies and insurance companies to ensure there are no discriminatory obstacles to homeownership for people with disabilities.
- The Scottish Government needs to ensure communication standards and the duty to make reasonable adjustments is taken seriously by local authorities and landlords. The Scottish Housing Regulator should ensure that standards are upheld.
- The Scottish Government needs to address the vast overrepresentation of people with mental health problems amongst the homeless population.
- The Scottish Government should do all it can to design communities that are suitable for all parts of society and which lead to a real sense of community and security. This might be achieved through wider engagement and resisting the temptation to make and implement rushed planning decision.

- The Scottish Government needs to invest in making it easier for disabled people to access and fund aids and adaptations that allow people to remain in their homes. This should not only relate to physical disabilities but also learning difficulties, sensory and cognitive impairments and mental health problems.
- The Scottish Government needs to ensure that there is an increase in the supply of affordable housing across all tenures and that barriers which currently prevent disabled people from accessing these homes are removed.
- The Scottish Government needs to ensure that social landlords are giving people with a wide range of disabilities sufficient priority in relating to accessing housing. This might be addressed through the national guide to allocations policy.
- The Scottish Government needs to monitor the implementation of the latest building standards, particularly with regard to accessibility standards.
- The Scottish Government need to think strategically and long term about its investment in housing for people with disabilities. There is a need to make preventative investments in developing accessible homes and funding aids and adaptations which will prevent higher health and social care costs.
- The Scottish Government needs to target investment at those who need it the most. In many cases this will include people with disabilities who often have a lower income and a higher cost of living. All spending decisions must be thoroughly equality impact assessed.
- People with disabilities should not be charged for essential aids and adaptations. The impact of means testing for aids and adaptations on independent living should be assessed.
- The Scottish Government should ensure that RSLs implement policies to prevent the removal of adaptations from stock.

This report is available in a variety of accessible formats. To discuss your requirements please contact the communications team at Capability Scotland on 0131 347 1052 or [communications@capability-scotland.org.uk](mailto:communications@capability-scotland.org.uk).

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