

**CAPABILITY SCOTLAND**

**1 IN 4 POLL – HOUSING SURVEY**

**FINAL REPORT**

**November 2010**



equality • choice • control



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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**Market Research  
Market Intelligence**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

This report describes the results of a self completion survey that was commissioned by Capability Scotland and conducted by Scotinform. The survey was carried out with Capability's 1 in 4 Poll members to explore their views on the housing system in Scotland.

The objectives of the survey were to:

- assess views on access housing for disabled people
- explore views on the different types of housing tenure
- look at priorities for development of housing

A copy of the questionnaire is in Appendix One at the end of the report.

### 1.2 Methodology and Sample

A self-completion questionnaire was mailed or emailed to 504 1 in 4 Poll members. A total of 151 completed questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 30%. The Poll took place between 26 August and 20 September 2010.

The response rate for each method is shown below:

**Table 1.1: Breakdown of responses**

| Method       | Number sent out | Number returned | Response rate % |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Mail         | 307             | 102             | 33%             |
| Email        | 197             | 49              | 25%             |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>504</b>      | <b>151</b>      | <b>30%</b>      |

### 1.3 Profile of Respondents

Table 1.2 shows the profile of respondents, indicating that there was a good response from both men and women and three quarters of responses were from over 45 year olds.

**Table 1.2 Profile of respondents**

Base: all respondents

|                   | Number of respondents | %  |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----|
| Male              | 68                    | 45 |
| Female            | 77                    | 51 |
| No reply          | 6                     | 4  |
| 18- 24 years old  | 6                     | 4  |
| 25-34 years old   | 9                     | 6  |
| 35-44 years old   | 22                    | 15 |
| 45-54 years old   | 47                    | 31 |
| 55-64 years old   | 46                    | 30 |
| Over 65 years old | 19                    | 13 |

Table 1.3 highlights that, in total, just over 80% of respondents were either disabled or had a long term medical condition/illness. Approximately one third of respondents either cared for or lived with a disabled person.

Note: responses in Table 1.3 add up to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

**Table 1.3: Type of respondent**

Base = all respondents

|   | Number of respondents | %         |
|---|-----------------------|-----------|
| I am a disabled person                          | 104                   | 69        |
| I have a long term medical condition/illness    | 34                    | 23        |
| <b>Total disabled/medical condition/illness</b> | <b>122</b>            | <b>81</b> |
| I care for a disabled person                    | 35                    | 23        |
| I live with a disabled person                   | 19                    | 13        |
| No reply  | 1                     | 1         |

For the first time in a 1 in 4 poll, members were asked their sexual orientation and ethnic group. The responses are shown in Tables 1.4 and 1.5 and show that 89% of respondents were straight, with 5% gay, bisexual or transgender. 95% of respondents were from a white ethnic background, with only 1% saying they were from another ethnic group.

**Table 1.4: Sexual orientation**

Base = all respondents

|             | Number of respondents | %  |
|-------------|-----------------------|----|
| Straight    | 134                   | 89 |
| Gay         | 5                     | 3  |
| Bisexual    | 1                     | 1  |
| Transgender | 1                     | 1  |
| No reply    | 10                    | 7  |

**Table 1.5: Ethnic group**

Base = all respondents

|                        | Number of respondents | %  |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----|
| White Scottish         | 121                   | 80 |
| White other British    | 21                    | 14 |
| White other background | 2                     | 1  |
| Mixed                  | 2                     | 1  |
| No reply               | 4                     | 3  |

## 2. HOUSING AND INDEPENDENT LIVING

### 2.1 Factors that Make a House Feel Like a Home

The five key things that respondents said, unprompted, made their house feel like a home are shown below, along with quotes to illustrate how people described what was important to them. This illustrates the combination of factors that are involved in a house feeling like a home. The findings are quantified in Table 2.1 on the next page.

- **people** - friends/family/neighbours

*“Family, having a sense of belonging.”*

*“Being close to family, friends, support.”*

- **access** – into/within the home and to services/facilities

*“Access to property as a whole e.g. suitable accessible parking, accessible entrance, bathroom, kitchen and bedroom.”*

*“Access to services – shops, transport, medical services, trades, people, entertainment.”*

- **feeling safe and secure**

*“Freedom from crime and bad neighbours”*

*“Security through social connection with neighbours and community.”*

- **location**

*“Being close to amenities and places you need to attend regularly”*

*“Close to amenities, doctors, shops, etc.”*

- **feeling comfortable/warm**

*“Warm and up to standard.”*

*“Comfortable, warm and secure.”*

The list of aspects mentioned by more than one respondent is shown in Table 2.1 and the list of other responses (each mentioned by only one respondent) is shown in Appendix Two.

**Table 2.1: List of things that make a house a home** (mentioned by more than one respondent)

Base = all respondents

|   | Number of respondents |
|---|-----------------------|
| Friends/family                          | 45                    |
| Ease of access into/within the home     | 40                    |
| Safety/Security                         | 36                    |
| Location                                | 30                    |
| Warmth/Warm Conditions/Heating          | 30                    |
| Comfortable/comfort                     | 27                    |
| Good neighbours                         | 20                    |
| Access to services/facilities/amenities | 19                    |
| Comfortable furnishings                 | 18                    |
| Personal belongings                     | 18                    |
| Independence                            | 16                    |
| Safe environment/surroundings           | 13                    |
| Clean/tidy                              | 8                     |
| Peace and quiet                         | 8                     |
| Garden                                  | 7                     |
| Loving companion                        | 7                     |
| Size of property                        | 7                     |
| Welcoming                               | 7                     |
| Adapted/adaptable                       | 6                     |
| Design space/layout in house            | 6                     |
| Décor                                   | 5                     |
| Good condition/type of house            | 5                     |
| Meets personal needs                    | 5                     |
| Price/affordability                     | 5                     |
| TV                                      | 5                     |
| Disability parking at home              | 4                     |
| Happy                                   | 4                     |
| Long term tenancy                       | 4                     |
| Sense of belonging/familiarity          | 4                     |
| Enough space and light inside/outside   | 3                     |
| Having food in the kitchen              | 3                     |
| Care package                            | 2                     |
| Community Pride                         | 2                     |
| Convenience/suitability                 | 2                     |
| Memories                                | 2                     |
| Security of Tenure                      | 2                     |

## 2.2 Access to Housing for Disabled People

61% of respondents felt that disabled people and non-disabled people did not have the same access to suitable housing.

Unprompted comments on the reasons why there was not equal access to suitable housing focussed on the **lack of housing that was accessible** or had the adaptations required by disabled people.

*“Housing is designed for non disabled people. Add any disability and some aspect of the housing will disadvantage a disabled person.”*

*“1 in 4 has a disability/long-term condition but housing stock has not matched need. Only 1 in 50 homes are suitable, this leads to ad hoc adaptations which are stripped on change of ownership/tenancy. The last two decades saw extensive house building programmes by the private sector yet only recently have building regs stipulated level access and ground floor WC. Housing stock should reflect the needs of society - all of society.”*

*“If you want to buy a house when in a wheelchair, you will look for years (in my case 8 years) If renting -there is the concern that if you don't take what is offered, you will get nothing - and usually what is offered is less than suitable for the various needs.”*

*“I am a wheelchair user and I can't even visit friends and family let alone stay with them. It took me ages to find anything suitable for myself.”*

Limited finance was an issue for a small number of respondents

*“Limited financial resources make it harder to acquire the 'Perfect House' in the first place and then meet all the needs of the household. Space and essential equipment cost money, if there are limited resources these are areas that compromise has to be made.”*

*“Disabled people find it hard to access some buildings and can sometimes need more space. May have less income to spend on rent or mortgage.”*

A few respondents also highlighted that it was much harder for disabled people to obtain council housing.

*“Because of the limitations of some disabled people the time in which they have to wait for LA housing is longer. Also private housing can be unaffordable to a fixed income or access may be restricted.”*

*“The council ignores disabled people when they need special adaptations done to the home, ie walk in showers, ramps special handles and grip rails. This is probably because of council cuts which is very unfair and therefore the disabled person has to fork out the money themselves as the council won't help them. It's the only way the disabled person can get the house adapted for them to*

*make it safer. Also disabled people are put in beside drug addicts or alcoholics or trouble makers. Therefore putting them into an unsafe and vulnerable environment.”*

*“Unfair points system, medical professional may not understand impact of disability when deciding points allocation. Accessible housing not available in every area.”*

It was also felt that disabled people were more likely than non-disabled people to rely on social housing.

*“All surveys conducted confirm that disabled people do not have equal access to housing and rely mainly on social housing providers. Many of the major builders are not particularly interested in disabled people as potential house buyers - witness the inaccessibility of many site sales offices. Builders comply with statutory regulations as to access but do not think about being proactive in design for disabled people, particularly wheelchair users.”*

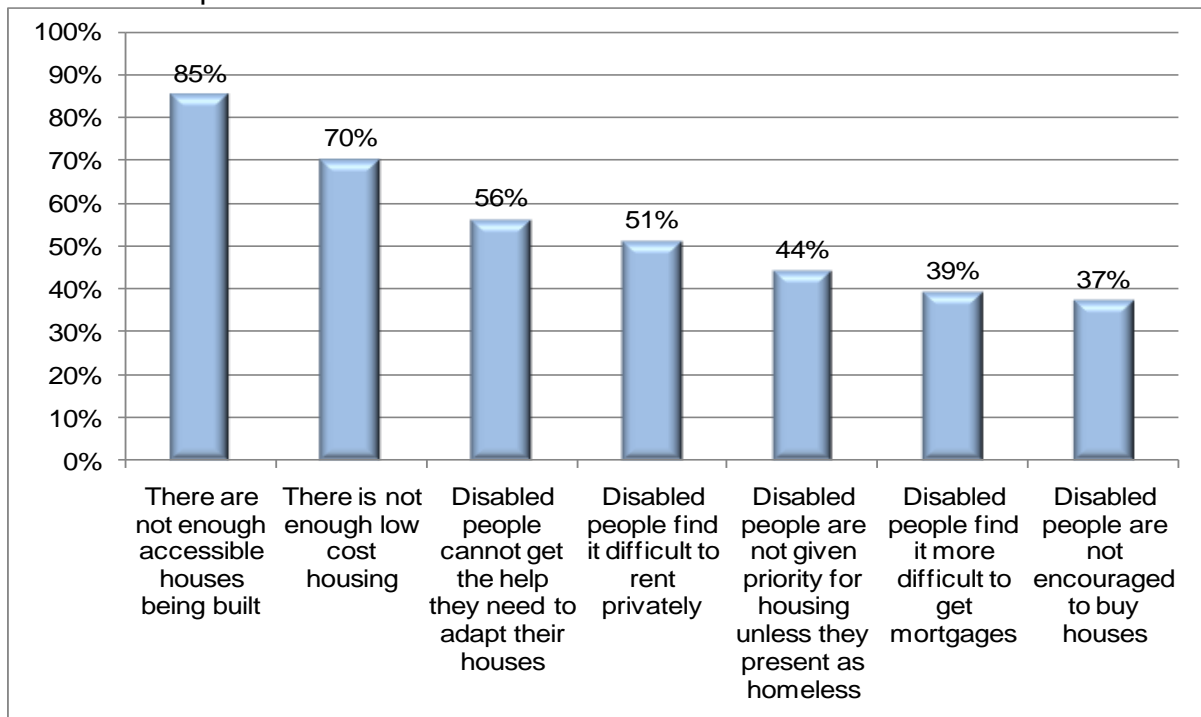
The full list of responses is shown in Appendix Three.

### 2.3 Main Barriers to Accessible Housing in Scotland (prompted)

The main barriers, prompted, for disabled people in accessing suitable housing were perceived as ‘not enough accessible housing being built’, followed by ‘a lack of low cost housing’. Access to mortgages and attitudes towards disabled people purchasing houses were least likely to be perceived as barriers.

**Chart 2.1: Barriers preventing disabled people from accessing suitable housing (prompted)**

Base = all respondents



## 2.4 Priorities for Independent Living for Disabled People in Scotland

Respondents were shown a list of issues and asked to rank the priorities for independent living for disabled people in Scotland.

Two issues emerged as the top priorities for independent living for disabled people:

- promoting a culture of equality and human rights
- developing a social care fit for the future

The two issues that were rated as lowest priority for independent living were 'bringing an end to child poverty' and 'increasing democratic participation and active citizenship'.

The results are shown in Table 2.2 with the rankings shown using two methods:

- mean score based on 1 = top priority and 10 = lowest priority
- the percentage of respondents ranking each one as the top priority.

**Table 2.2: Ranking of priorities for independent living (prompted)**

Base = respondents rating each area

|  | <b>Mean score</b> | <b>% rating as 1st priority</b> |
|--|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Promoting a culture of equality and human rights            | 3.83              | 34%                             |
| 2. Developing a social care system fit for the future          | 3.98              | 22%                             |
| 3. Building stronger, safer communities                        | 5.06              | 16%                             |
| 4. Meeting the future housing challenge in Scotland            | 5.11              | 19%                             |
| 5. Improving opportunities for employment                      | 5.17              | 10%                             |
| 6. Tackling health inequalities                                | 5.20              | 10%                             |
| 7. Increasing life chances through learning and skills         | 5.31              | 10%                             |
| 8. Ending poverty  | 5.42              | 16%                             |
| 9. Bringing an end to child poverty                            | 6.07              | 12%                             |
| 10. Increasing democratic participation and active citizenship | 6.37              | 7%                              |

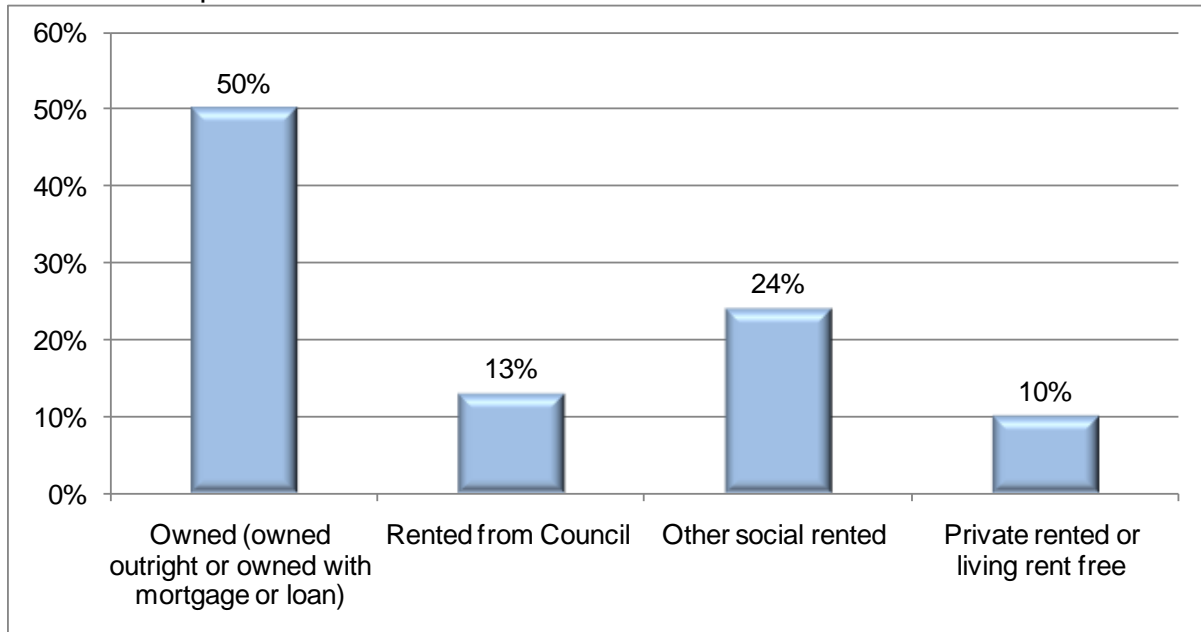
### 3. HOUSING TENURE

#### 3.1 Your Home

Half the respondents owned their own home: this is significantly lower than the Scottish average of 67% recorded in the 2008 Scottish Household Survey. The proportion renting from the Council and renting privately was similar to the Scottish average, with a higher than average proportion saying they were in other social rented accommodation.

**Chart 3.1: Housing tenure**

Base = all respondents

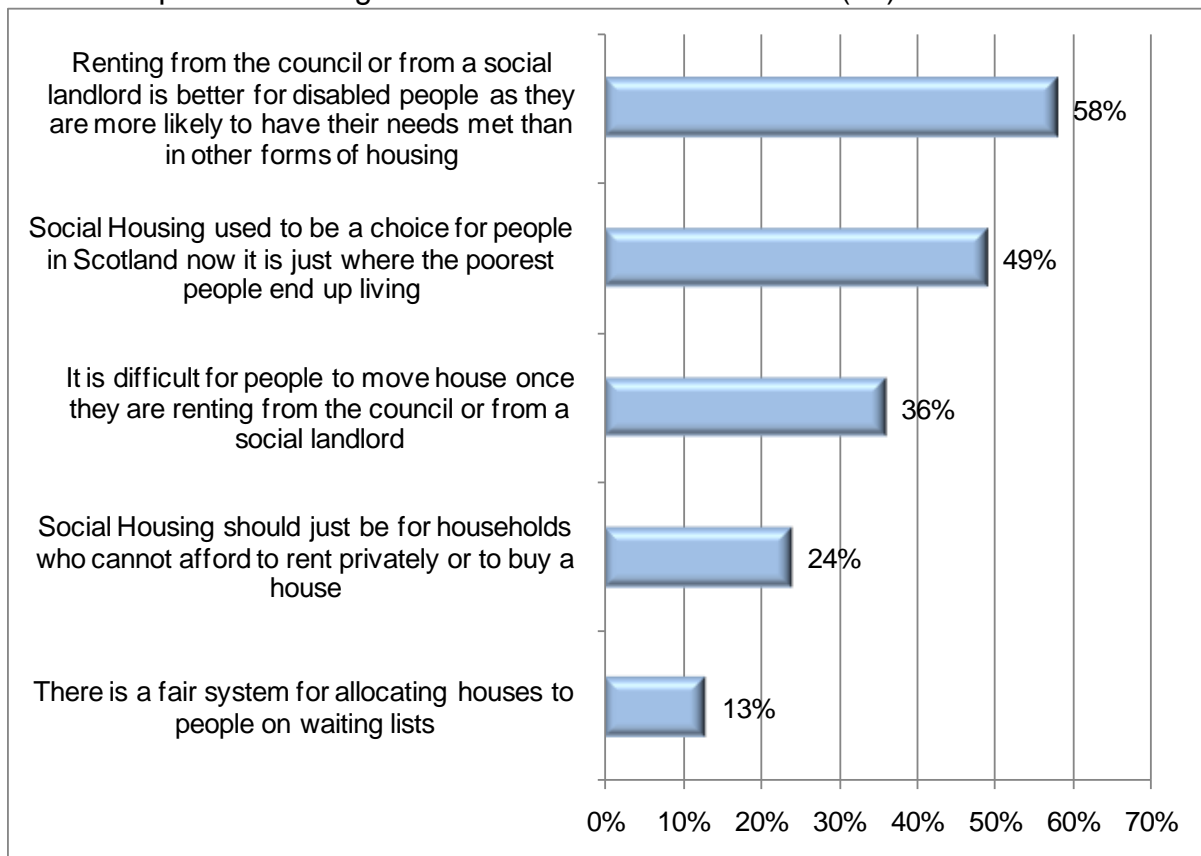


### 3.2 Views on Living in Social Rented Accommodation

There were very mixed views on social housing amongst respondents who lived in social rented accommodation. There was a clear majority (58%) of people who felt that 'renting from the council or from a social landlord is better for disabled people as they are more likely to have their needs met than in other forms of housing', but nearly half of those in social housing felt that it was 'now just where the poorest people end up living.' A third of people renting felt it was 'difficult for people to move house' and a quarter felt that 'social housing should be for households who cannot afford to rent privately or to buy a house'.

**Chart 3.2: Views on social rented accommodation**

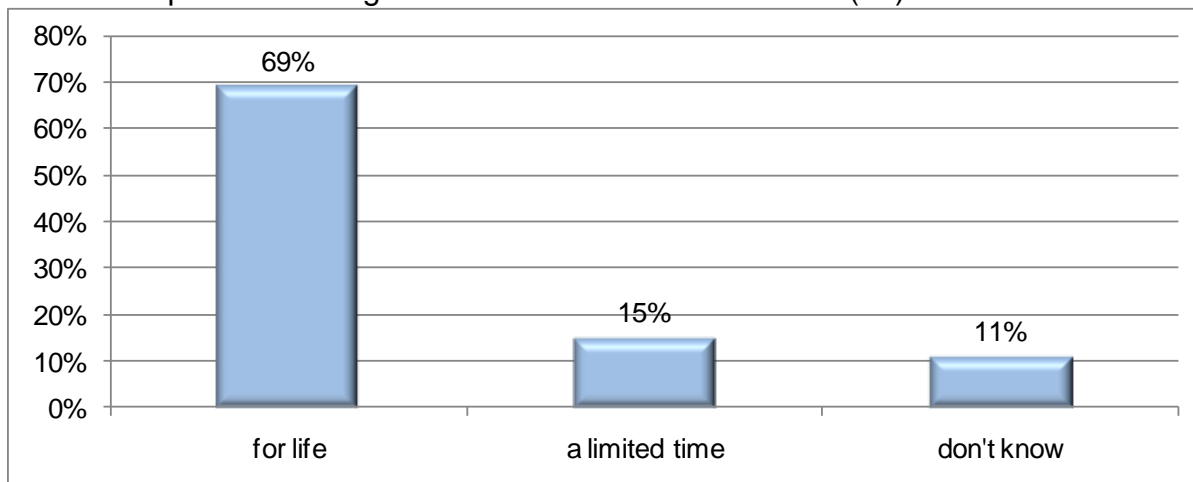
Base = respondents living in social rented accommodation (55)



Respondents living in social rented housing were clearly in favour of tenancies for life, with 69% saying they would prefer this option, compared with 15% saying they wanted tenancies for a limited time.

### Chart 3.3: Views on length of tenancy

Base = respondents living in social rented accommodation (55)



People who preferred a tenancy for life gave the following reasons:

*“People need to feel secure, a short term tenancy would not do this.”*

*“That`s the only way your 'house' can be a home.”*

*“Renting is a safety net for those who cannot afford a mortgage.”*

*“Only for life if disability is permanent.”*

*“Now that I'm disabled (& have been since 1990) & know that I'd rather be settled without having to many thoughts (good or bad) about the future.”*

*“In some circumstances the disabled person life expectancy may be short or long, but the removal of possible time restriction can lift a great deal of stress.”*

*“Or till the person passes away or wishes to move.”*

*“Where would people live after 5 years or a limited time? Many couldn't afford to live elsewhere.”*

*“A house is often a home that tenants have invested many years and a lot of money in decor and upgrades as councils do not do more than basic requirements.”*

*“I need to know that I will have somewhere to live and make it a home without limit of time.”*

*“If you can afford to move then you should have that option, otherwise that is what public housing is for.”*

*“Disabled and vulnerable people especially, in fact everyone needs a sense of security and belonging.”*

*“People need security regarding their home.”*

*“I don't want to lose my home after 5 years.”*

*“Living with a disabled daughter I would want her to remain in the home she knows with surroundings she knows.”*

*“Why make life even more insecure and stressful for tenants.”*

*“Disabled people need permanent circumstances where it is right and it should remain so.”*

*“People, whether disabled or not, like to put their own stamp on their living surroundings. If you are living in a property that you will have to move from in 5 years you will not be encouraged to look after that property.”*

*“Limited tenancy would create ghettos”*

The reasons given by those who preferred tenancies for a limited time were:

*“Tenancies should be initially for a trial period to make it easier to evict 'problem' tenants. But if there is no problem of course they should be renewed.”*

*“I do not think you should be evicted at the end of the tenancy but the Landlord should have the opportunity to review occupation level, arrears position, past behaviour. There should not be an automatic right for your children to 'inherit' a property.”*

*“Five years to assess where the housing needs of a tenant are still being met by the house she or he is living in and if not trying to find more suitable accommodation if the disability is a progressive one then being access every five years might help problems from arising or get to point of being a crisis.”*

*“If for life it may count against new housing being built.”*

### 3.3 Views on Renting From Private Landlord/Letting Agency

The responses from the 15 respondents who rented privately are shown in Table 2.3 based on the number of respondents (due to the small sample size).

They were most likely to feel that everyone should have this option, but also felt that rents were too high in the private rented sector.

**Table 3.1: Views on renting privately**

Base = respondents who are renting privately (15)

|  | Number of respondents |
|--|-----------------------|
| Renting privately should be an option for everyone regardless of disability          | 10                    |
| Rents are too high in the private rented sector                                      | 8                     |
| Renting privately provides more choice and flexibility                               | 6                     |
| Landlords and letting agents do not consider disabled people as likely tenants       | 6                     |
| It is difficult for people to move house once they are renting privately             | 5                     |
| Disabled people cannot get aids or adaptations to a house they are renting privately | 5                     |
| Renting privately is a temporary and short-term housing option                       | 4                     |

### 3.4 Views on Owning Your Own Home

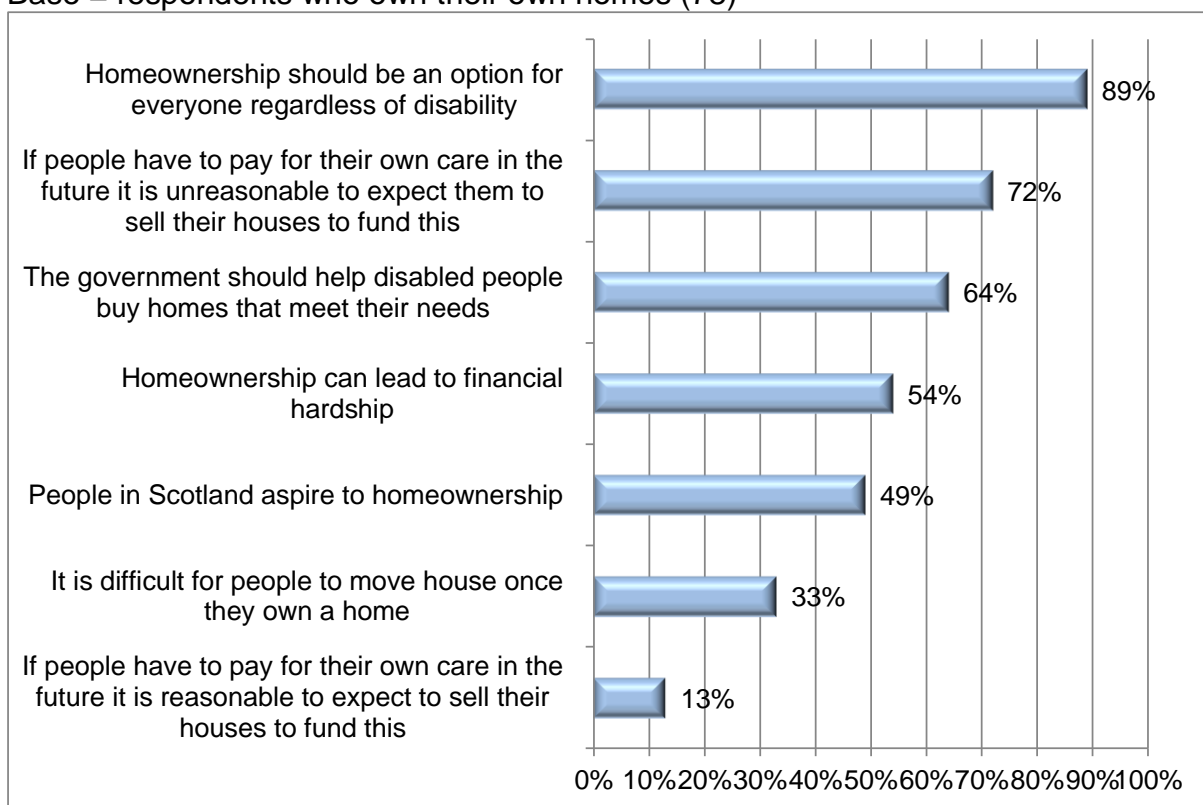
Almost all home owners (89%) felt that ‘home ownership should be an option for everyone, regardless of disability’ and three quarters felt it was ‘unreasonable to expect disabled people to sell their houses’ to pay for their own care.

Two thirds of homeowners felt that ‘the government should help disabled people buy homes that meet their needs’, suggesting there is strong support for government assistance with adapting disabled people’s homes.

On the negative side, just over half the homeowners said that ‘homeownership can lead to financial hardship’ and a third of homeowners felt it was ‘difficult for people to move house once they own a home’.

#### Chart 3.4: Views on owning own home

Base = respondents who own their own homes (78)



## 4. ACCESSIBILITY

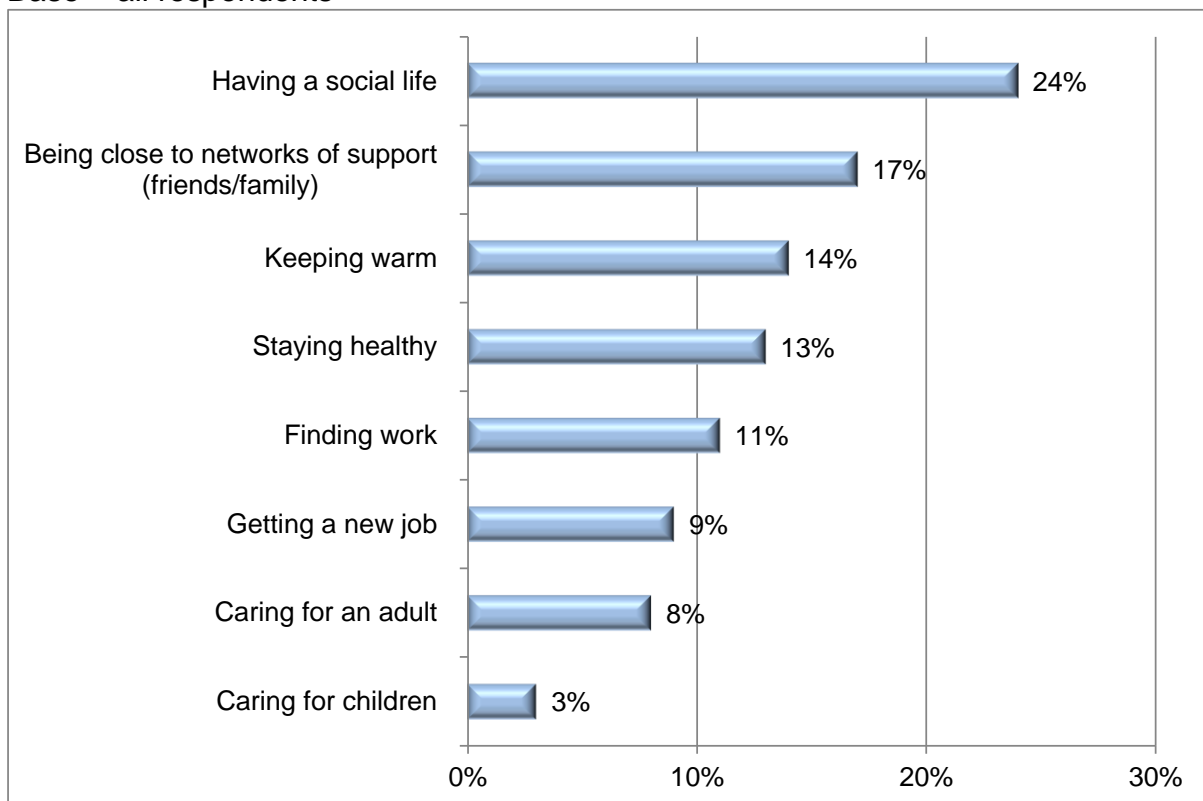
### 4.1 Main Barriers to Access

A quarter of respondents said that where they lived was a barrier to having a social life, followed by 'being close to networks of support' (17%), 'keeping warm' (14%) and staying healthy' (13%).

Respondents were less likely to mention barriers to employment, but it was not clear whether respondents were actually currently in work or seeking employment.

**Chart 4.1: Current barriers presented by where currently live (prompted)**

Base = all respondents



18% of disabled people said they were unable to access every part of their home. The comments on why respondents cannot access every part of their home were:

*"The bathroom is too small for my wheelchair, my full time carer has to try and get me from the bathroom door to the toilet."*

*"There is an upstairs bedroom and access to it is...can you guess...? Yep! Upstairs."*

*"Following CVA I do not have active use of my left arm & leg."*

*"There is a stair and my daughter is confined to a wheelchair. The stair is not suitable for a stairlift."*

*“There are two bedrooms upstairs but I do not need access to them as I have all I require downstairs.”*

*“I am finding it difficult to open front entrance door.”*

*“Upstairs/downstairs confined to a wheelchair.”*

*“Some doorways too narrow for wheelchair.”*

*“My disabled son cannot access every part.”*

*“En suite toilet too small for wheelchair.”*

*“One room in house not wide enough for electric wheelchair, cannot access front or back door, too narrow and two steps down, also loose stone covering.”*

*“Kitchen door not wide enough for my wheelchair.”*

*“Can't access back garden/drying green, through two doors, one locked, along a corridor, up narrow steep stairs.”*

*“I am now unable to walk up the stairs without help. I need to do this to access my toilet and bedroom.”*

*“Kitchen cupboards too high.”*

#### **4.2 Aids/Adaptations at Home**

Three quarters of respondents had aids/adaptations installed at home to help a disabled person live independently. The council had helped three quarters of these respondents with getting their aids/adaptations. Many of the comments on the assistance provided were very positive about the local authorities' involvement and the role of the Occupation Therapist in providing assistance. Negative comments on the experience highlighted issues with the length of time taken for the installation; concerns about the costs; and issues with the quality and of contractors. Each of these points is illustrated below under the relevant heading.

- **Positive experience of council**

*“I have only good experiences (up to this point at any rate), although I could do with help at this time to my house into order to start getting Direct Payments.”*

*“The council provided free, an internal rail and external rail to assist negotiating steps.”*

*“Very good and smooth.”*

*“Adaptations installed at entry. Efficient process between East Lothian Council and sub-contractor.”*

*“Grateful to Aberdeenshire Council for stair and bath lift.”*

*“Highland Council where helpful/paid part of aids and adaptations.”*

- **Positive comments on occupational therapist**

*“My occupational therapist was a real good help to me. Luckily when I moved in I had a shower tray instead of a bath. Far safer and better as I can't get in and out of a bath. The occupational therapist supplied me with a shower chair and lots of other aids. She got the council to come and put grab rails in the shower for me and also a rail outside my front door to help me get up the step.”*

*“I had good support/advice from OT's and also 'care and repair' in this area.”*

- **Length of time taken**

*“Long drawn out. Designed by the LA to encourage you to lose the will to live!!”*

*“OK but very lengthy.”*

*“Council paid but were slow.”*

*“I have been quite lucky to get adaptations done and paid for by the local council although it has taken quite a long time.”*

*“In general the council has been helpful but sometimes the process out takes a while.”*

*“Started process of wet room installation - it is taking a long time.”*

*“Long time scale/too many meetings/too many rules.”*

- **Costs**

*“My experience with adaptations were not just costly but stressful occasions.”*

*“Adaptations very expensive and poor quality workmanship.”*

- **Quality of contractors**

*“Council helpful but contractors not helpful.”*

*“Needs assessed by council of referral made, some adaptations carried out by landlord took a long time to transpire, rest of work carried out and paid for myself as quicker and not have to deal with 'cowboy' types sent by the council who wrecked my property.”*

A couple of respondent provided detailed answers which illustrated the difficulties faced by many disabled people:

*“Contacted OT for assessment of property. She came to assess with the Council Grants Officer (CGO) CGO asked why we wanted our kitchen door widened when it was obvious our disabled son wouldn't be able to use the kitchen to cook himself a meal. I pointed out that I was aware of my son's limitations but the kitchen had a table as that's where we ate our food so was pretty crucial he had access. I also stated that I didn't find it unreasonable that my son have access to all the rooms in his home! It took a long time to get the adaptations completed as we were left to get on with it and find builders and tradesmen ourselves. We were let down by many and it took 8 years to get the work done. (Driveway and level access front door, widening all the internal doors, removing part of a wall in the hall so the wheelchair could pass and wet floor shower room) We paid 50% of the costs of the adaptations plus a good bit extra to have a ramp in keeping with the property fitted. The council wanted to stick an ugly metal ramp to the front of the house. We had to increase our mortgage to cover the costs of the adaptations will be paying for them till the mortgage is paid off (not anytime soon!).”*

*“The OT was too busy, so I was asked to obtain most quotes myself. By doing this, I discovered what a corrupt system the Council uses. Every workman knows that he can charge extra if he is on the Council list. When I found an excellent builder to create a second exit in case of fire, the Council would not consider him because a) his price was too low. b) he was not on their list c) a second exit is not considered necessary. Ask any disabled person: they'll tell you differently. But their voice is not heard. Hundreds of pounds were spent on shoddy workmanship. When I refused to pay out on one occasion until the job was finished (a door had been put on upside down: there was no handle: in installing said door, an interior wall had been knocked down by mistake, there was resentment at having to repair the damage) there was a furore. It would have been easier - and in every case apart from the bathroom - more cost effective to do without the Council grant. I could have achieved a higher standard of workmanship - had control over what was done, and not tolerated a 'That'll dae' attitude. It was only for a disabled person, after all..... It is still all documented, if it is of any use.”*

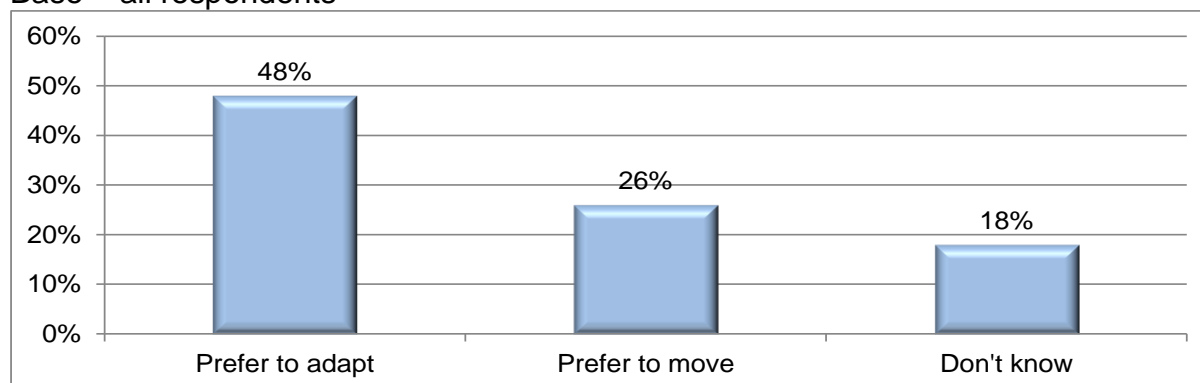
## 5. THE FUTURE

### 5.1 Views on Homes in the Future

Just over one in four respondents (28%) said their house would not be suitable for their household in 10 years' time. Respondents were split on whether they preferred to adapt their home or move house in the future if their house became unsuitable because of disability or ageing: half the respondents said they would prefer to adapt and 26% said they would prefer to move.

**Chart 5.1: Preference for moving or adaptation**

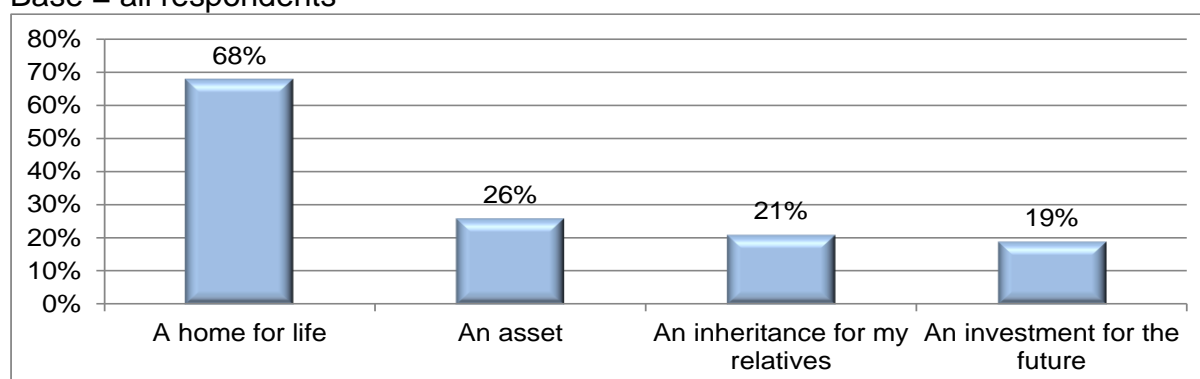
Base = all respondents



Two thirds of respondents perceived their home as 'a home for life', confirming the high proportion that preferred to adapt their home if it became unsuitable (see Chart 5.1). Between a fifth and a quarter of respondents saw their home as being an asset, an inheritance or an investment.

**Chart 5.2: Views on role of home**

Base = all respondents



### 5.2 Views on Housing Health Checks

56% of respondents said that they would be interested in 'housing health checks'<sup>1</sup> being considered by the Scottish Government.

<sup>1</sup> Housing health checks were explained in the questionnaire as: "together with an adviser, an individual might go through their current housing situation, including what they might be looking for in the future (e.g. adaptations, moving into a different tenure or staying in the same property but changing the tenure) and how they might get there."

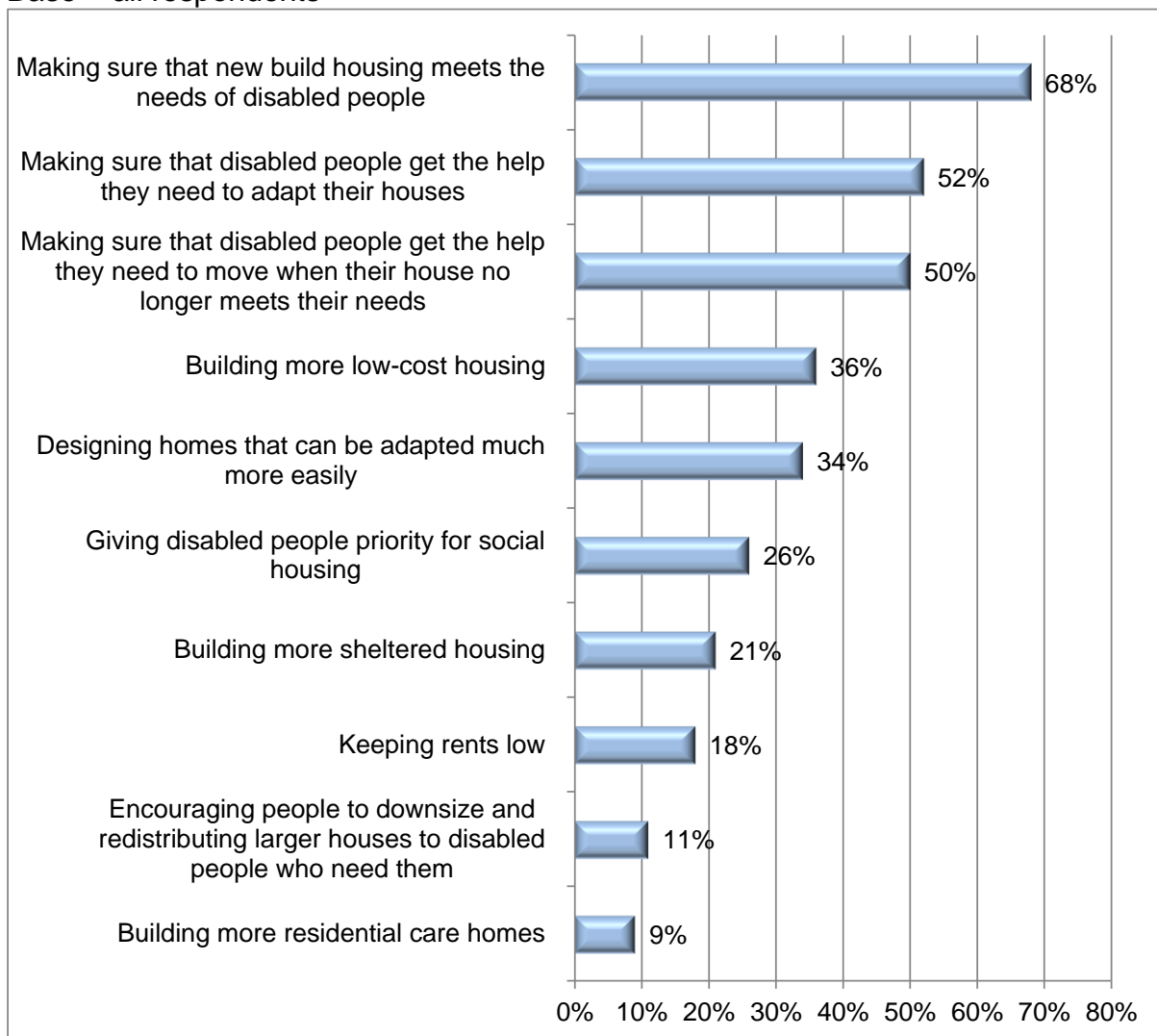
### 5.3 Priorities for the Scottish Government

The final question asked respondents to choose the three things that the Scottish Government should focus on to improve housing for disabled people. The responses showed that the following were the top priorities (mentioned by 50% or more of respondents):

- Making sure that new build housing meets the needs of disabled people
- Making sure that disabled people get the help they need to adapt their houses
- Making sure that disabled people get the help they need to move when their house no longer meets their needs

**Chart 5.3: Priorities for the Scottish Government (prompted)**

Base = all respondents



## 5.4 Final Comments

50 respondents made final, unprompted comments on what the Scottish Government should focus on to improve housing for disabled people.

A fifth of the comments related to the need for a **better understanding** of the needs of disabled people, either generally or for specific facilities:

*“To be more flexible - we are all different and what one person may need could be very different from the next person's needs. We are individuals and can't be conveniently put in a box.”*

*“Realising that help is needed and if given the people could integrate into society as productive participants.”*

*“Make sure that the needs of disabled people are assessed and appropriate action is taken in each case.”*

*“There are regulations in place for extension sizes etc but no extra room is given for equipment. People can have 3-4 pieces of big equipment. I have 2 wheelchairs a standing frame and walking frame and parts of my house are a fire risk for my family but because it's a private residence that's okay (no its not).”*

*Small group homes for disabled people so they are not lonely and isolated much of the time.*

*“Remember, many of us live alone but do need space for storing equipment and sometimes need a friend/relative/carer to stay overnight or for a few days. My neurologist insists on this when there is a need to change my medications ie dosage. Nor do I wish to live in a commune ie sheltered housing.”*

*“People cannot make use of these very small toilets (actual toilet not the norm) even with bars.”*

*“New build downstairs toilets are tiny - for disabled people to use.”*

*“Ensure hallways are bright and spacious as too often they are dark and narrow especially staircases.”*

*“Better access both inside and out and more protection of disabled parking bays outside your property.”*

*“Don't assume to know what a disabled person needs - all individual so houses need to be easily adapted. All doorways should be wide enough for wheelchairs.”*

Other respondents highlighted the need for the Government **to listen** to disabled people and ensure they were involved in consultations.

*“Involve disabled people at every process of the work they do. This way, they might have a voice and the Government might get things right the first time for vulnerable people.”*

*“Try listening to the disabled would be a start.”*

*“Think disabled.”*

*“Speaking to disabled people themselves and to people caring for them.”*

*“More consultation with disabled people.”*

*“Designers assume what we need. Please use disabled in consultation as early and as often as possible.”*

Six respondents commented on different types of **home ownership**:

*“Make local authorities allocate housing in a fair and thoughtful manner.”*

*“Estates private and council should have homes adapted for disabled use - whether you buy or rent or have shared ownership or private landlord.”*

*“At present the housing list is still based on the points system, disabled people should be offered suitable housing on their disability needs, not the number of points they can get. Which results in the disabled person being put on a long waiting list because they do not have enough points.”*

*“Allowing tenants to buy their house on condition that it reverts to landlord upon their death.”*

*“I haven't ticked low cost housing in any of the above questions because it tends to be, frankly, crap (built to minimum standards with an expected life of 20 years) and in already deprived neighbourhoods. Acknowledge that the majority of disabled people are elderly, and don't expect or deserve their standard of living to drop dramatically just because they now have additional needs.”*

*“Helping people living in private rented accommodation to make sure they have a reasonable standard of insulation and that their homes don't leak when it rains. Since there's no comments box at the end of this survey, I'll use this space to tell you that I am transgender and bisexual. Transgender status is not a sexuality so presenting it as a choice, where only one option can be checked, is ridiculous. Furthermore, as a transgender person with an identity outside the gender person, I find it frustrating that, in the same survey where I can note that I am transgender, I am requested to check a box identifying myself as male or female, with no 'other' option.”*

**Finance** was mentioned by five respondents:

*“Make sure there are grants for older people to adapt housing.”*

*“Make sure that money is available for people to get the support they need.”*

*“Make more money available for adaptations.”*

*“Abolish means testing for disabled persons.”*

*“Enabling disabled people to buy/own their own property.”*

Respondents also highlighted that the Government should not view housing in isolation, but consider it in relation to **the local community**:

*“Yes, the local infrastructure also needs to meet disabled people’s needs, e.g., good access to medical services, transport, shopping, social amenities, etc.”*

*“Overall accessibility (surroundings/transport etc.).”*

*“Helping disabled people get their full potential out of life. Helping them to contribute to society in as full a way as possible and receiving appropriate reward for this. Encouraging active community life where everyone has something to offer and contribute.”*

*“As this is a health issue - GPs/health centre/practice nurses may be suitable to utilise - increase/improve communication/feedback in order to aim to meet the needs of individuals. An assessment tool could be designed and implemented and completed with health issues/concerns in mind. As by providing appropriate housing, which could reduce financial burden on the NHS. Truly providing a caring social society/service/network could be beneficial.”*

Comments highlighted the importance of **support** to help disabled people live independently.

*“Encouraging the development of housing services that cater for the specific needs of disabled people, e.g. the Disabled Persons Housing Service at the Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living. In addition the following actions are also important - Building more low-cost housing, keeping rents low, making sure that disabled people get the help they need to adapt their houses and encouraging people to downsize and redistributing larger houses to disabled people who need them. There is no point in giving disabled people priority for social housing if there is no available housing that meets their needs.”*

*“More help for carers to make suitable adaptations to their house when disabled person they care for is unable to live independently.”*

*“Better system of social care to enable independent living in suitable housing.”*

*“Improving support for people to sustain their own tenancy/home eg social work and care staff.”*

One respondent felt that legislation would make a difference to the issue of accessible homes for disabled people:

*“It would be absolutely wonderful if every disabled person in Scotland had a home that met all their needs. However, in addition to their needs in their own home disabled persons’ want to be able to visit relatives, friends, colleagues and others in their own homes but are unable to do so due to poor access and consequently find their own adapted homes - prisons! Legislation on new build properties (although delayed for a number of years) is at last starting to address the issue but more can be and should be done to enforced change through the legal process where a greater comprehensive legislative approach on access by the Scottish Parliament can bring about greater equality within our society.”*

## 6. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- The key things that make a house feel like a home related to people (friends/family/neighbours); access both within and around the home; feeling safe/secure; the location; and feeling comfortable/warm. Whilst the other elements are likely to be as important to non-disabled people, access is clearly a particularly important issue for disabled people.
- Six out of ten respondents did not feel that disabled people had the same access to suitable housing as non-disabled people. Unprompted, the main reasons for this perception was that there was a lack of housing that was accessible or had the adaptations required for disabled people. In addition, respondents highlighted issues with obtaining finance and difficulties in getting council houses.
- The main barriers to obtaining accessible housing were that there was not enough houses being built, not enough low cost housing, difficulties in obtaining help with adaptations and problems with renting privately.
- Choosing from a list of issues, disabled people said that the priorities for independent living were:
  - promoting a culture of equality and human rights
  - developing a social care fit for the future
- Half the respondents owned their own home, well below the Scottish average for home ownership (67%). Disabled people were far more likely than average to live in social rented accommodation.
- Views on social rented housing showed that tenants felt that their needs were more likely to be met by social landlords than in other forms of housing, but they also felt that it was 'where the poorest people end up living'.
- There was a clear preference for tenancies for life in social rented housing: this was seen as providing security and enabling disabled people and their carers to create a 'home'.
- Home owners felt strongly that home ownership should be an option for everyone and that 'the government should help disabled people buy homes that meet their needs'. Three quarters of homeowners said it was 'unreasonable to expect people to sell their houses to fund their care'.
- One in five respondents were unable to access every part of their home: the earlier findings identified the importance of access in making their house a home and this suggests that a significant minority of disabled people do not have the access they require to their homes.
- Three quarters of respondents had aids/adaptations installed at home to help them live independently. Their local council had provided assistance to three

out of four of the people who had adapted their home. Comments on the assistance provided by local authorities were generally positive, but respondents identified issues with the time taken for installation, cost and quality of contractors.

- Disabled people were likely to want to remain in their homes in the future, preferring to adapt rather than move. Two thirds of respondents said they saw their home as a 'home for life'.
- The key areas that the Scottish Government should focus on were:
  - Making sure that new build housing meets the needs of disabled people
  - Making sure that disabled people get the help they need to adapt their houses
  - Making sure that disabled people get the help they need to move when their house no longer meets their needs
- Final comments showed that disabled people felt that it was important that the Scottish Government focussed on understanding the needs of disabled people and listening to disabled people's views on housing.

## APPENDIX ONE: QUESTIONNAIRE

# HOUSING FOR DISABLED PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND

Without a safe, secure and accessible house it can be impossible to access employment opportunities, a decent education and an active social life. However, many disabled people in Scotland face significant barriers to finding somewhere suitable to live. We want to know what you think needs to change about the housing system in Scotland so that disabled people's housing needs can be met.

Please complete the questionnaire and either hand it back to the person who gave it to you or post back (no stamp required) to Freepost RLZG-UCTA-RRTT, Scotinform Ltd, 12b Timber Bush, EDINBURGH EH6 6QH by Friday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2010

All questionnaires will be returned to Scotinform, an independent market research company, for analysis. Scotinform work under the Market Research Society Code of Conduct: **all responses will be confidential** and you will not be identified in any way.

## SECTION 1: ABOUT YOU

- 1.1. Are you?**  
Male  Female
- 1.2. How old are you?**  
17 years old or under  45 - 54 years old   
18 - 24 years old  55 - 64 years old   
25 - 34 years old  Over 65 years old   
35 - 44 years old
- 1.3. Which of the following best describes you?**  
I am a disabled person  I care for a disabled person   
I have a long term medical condition/illness  I live with a disabled person
- 1.4. Do you consider yourself to be?**  
Gay  Bisexual   
Straight  Transgender
- 1.5. What is your ethnic group?**  
White Scottish  Black other background   
White other British  Asian Scottish   
White other background  Asian British   
Mixed  Asian other background   
Black Scottish  Other ethnic group   
Black British  Prefer not to say

## SECTION 2: HOUSING AND INDEPENDENT LIVING

- 2.1. What FOUR things do you think make a house a home? Please write in up to four things below**

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**2.2. Do you think disabled people and non-disabled people get equal access to suitable housing?**

- No
- Yes
- Don't know

**2.3. Please tell us why you say that**

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**2.4. What are the main barriers preventing disabled people from accessing suitable housing in Scotland? Please tick all those that you think apply**

- There are not enough accessible houses being built
  - There is not enough low-cost housing
  - Disabled people find it difficult to rent privately
  - Disabled people cannot get the help they need to adapt their houses
  - Disabled people find it more difficult to get mortgages
  - Disabled people are not encouraged to buy houses
  - Disabled people are not given priority for housing unless they present as homeless
  - Other barrier - please write in below**
- 

**2.5. Thinking about priorities for independent living for disabled people in Scotland, please rank the following in order of importance, where 1 = the most important priority and 10 = the least important priority.**

- Promoting a culture of equality and human rights \_\_\_\_\_
- Bringing an end to child poverty \_\_\_\_\_
- Improving opportunities for employment \_\_\_\_\_
- Increasing life chances through learning and skills \_\_\_\_\_
- Ending poverty \_\_\_\_\_
- Increasing democratic participation and active citizenship \_\_\_\_\_
- Developing a social care system fit for the future \_\_\_\_\_
- Tackling health inequalities \_\_\_\_\_
- Meeting the future housing challenge in Scotland \_\_\_\_\_
- Building stronger, safer communities \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION 3: YOUR HOME**

**3.1. Which of these different types of tenure describe your home?**

- Owned (owned outright or owned with mortgage or loan)
- Rented from Council
- Other social rented (including Social Landlord, Housing Association, Housing Co-op or Charitable Trust)
- Private rented or living rent free (private landlord, letting agency, a relative or friend)

Please answer Section 4 if renting from Council or other social rented SECTION 4: RENTING FROM THE LOCAL COUNCIL OR OTHER SOCIAL RENTED

4.1. Which of these statements, if any, do you agree with? Please tick all that you agree with

- There is a fair system for allocating houses to people on waiting lists
- Renting from the council or from a social landlord is better for disabled people as they are more likely to have their needs met than in other forms of housing
- It is difficult for people to move house once they are renting from the council or from a social landlord
- Social Housing should just be for households who cannot afford to rent privately or to buy a house
- Social Housing used to be a choice for people in Scotland now it is just where the poorest people end up living

4.2. Do you think a tenancy with a council, housing association or housing co-operative should be for a limited time, say 5 years, or do you think it should be for life?

- A limited time
- For life
- Don't know
- Please tell us why you say that:  

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Please answer Section 5 if you rent from a Private Landlord or letting agency SECTION 5: RENTING PRIVATE ACCOMMODATION OR LIVING RENT FREE

5.1. Which of these statements, if any, do you agree with?

- Renting privately provides more choice and flexibility
- Rents are too high in the private rented sector
- Renting privately is a temporary and short-term housing option
- It is difficult for people to move house once they are renting privately
- Renting privately should be an option for everyone regardless of disability
- Landlords and letting agents do not consider disabled people as likely tenants
- Disabled people cannot get aids or adaptations to a house they are renting privately

Please answer Section 6 if you own your own home SECTION 6: IF YOU OWN YOUR HOME

6.1. Which of these statements, if any, do you agree with? Please tick all the statements you agree with.

- People in Scotland aspire to homeownership
- Homeownership should be an option for everyone regardless of disability
- It is difficult for people to move house once they own a home
- If people have to pay for their own care in the future it is reasonable to expect to sell their houses to fund this
- Homeownership can lead to financial hardship
- If people have to pay for their own care in the future it is unreasonable to expect them to sell their houses to fund this
- The government should help disabled people buy homes that meet their needs

## SECTION 7: HOW ACCESSIBLE IS YOUR HOME?

- 7.1. Does where you live present a barrier to any of the following?**
- Finding work
  - Getting a new job
  - Staying healthy
  - Caring for an adult
  - Having a social life
  - Keeping warm
  - Caring for children
  - Being close to networks of support (friends/family)
- 7.2. Can you access every part of your home?**
- Yes
  - No
  - Don't know
- 7.3. If you cannot access every part of your home, at present, tell us why**
- 
- 7.4. Has your household had any aids and adaptations installed in your home to help a disabled person live more independently?**
- Yes
  - No
  - Don't know
- 7.5. Did you get any help from the council with getting aids and adaptations to your home?**
- Yes
  - No
  - Don't know
- 7.6. Please tell us about your experience of arranging and paying for aids and adaptations:**
- 
- 7.7. Do you think your house will be suitable for your household in 10 years?**
- Yes
  - No
  - Don't know
- 7.8. Would you prefer to move house or adapt your home in the future if it became unsuitable for your household because of disability or ageing?**
- Prefer to adapt
  - Prefer to move
  - Don't know

**7.9. Why do you say that?**

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**7.10. Do you think of your home as any of the following?**

- A home for life
- An asset
- An investment for the future
- An inheritance for my relatives

**SECTION 8: GETTING HELP WITH HOUSING**

The Scottish Government is considering offering 'housing health checks' at key stages in people's lives. Together with an adviser, an individual might go through their current housing situation, including what they might be looking for in the future (e.g. adaptations, moving into a different tenure or staying in the same property but changing the tenure) and how they might get there.

**8.1. If you were offered a housing health check would you want one?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**SECTION 9: FINAL COMMENTS**

**9.1. Which three things should the Scottish Government focus on to improve housing for disabled people in Scotland? Please select three options only.**

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

**9.2. Is there anything else that the Scottish Government should focus on to improve housing for disabled people?**

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**THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS SURVEY. PLEASE EITHER HAND BACK TO THE PERSON WHO GAVE IT TO YOU OR POST BACK (NO STAMP REQUIRED) TO THE FREEPOST ADDRESS ON THE FRONT OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE BY FRIDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2010.**

## APPENDIX TWO: LIST OF WHAT MAKES A HOUSE FEEL LIKE A HOME MENTIONED BY ONE RESPONDENT

- ownership of house
- I have pull-cords about the house and I also have a pendant.
- Being in sheltered housing I know that if things go wrong, the Council will know that somethings wrong, because of the sensors knowing that I am OK and mobile (at least to an extent).
- Being a Council house, I know that I can get in touch with them by pull-cords if I require assistance.
- Freedom from crime/bad neighbours (business as well as domestic).
- To have assistance as and when required so that you feel supported and then one would be contented.
- Homes to be designed for people with disabilities by people with a disability.
- Relaxation
- Bathroom with a window
- A shower
- A bed in the bedroom
- Big windows
- Disabled railings
- Lever taps
- Wet rooms
- Bright things
- Living with my mum
- Having help to keep house clean and tidy
- Choice
- Honesty
- Quality of life for individuals
- Family share same goals
- Each family member is listened to/contributes
- More access
- Good council
- Well maintained – promptly, appropriately ie no hassles/agro
- Getting on with the people you share a house with. A pleasant atmosphere
- No use having ‘state of the art’ facilities if you cannot use it

**APPENDIX THREE:  
UNPROMPTED REASONS FOR RESPONSE TO QUESTION: DO YOU THINK  
DISABLED PEOPLE AND NON-DISABLED PEOPLE GET EQUAL ACCESS TO  
HOUSING**

|  |
|--|
|  |
| <b>Reasons for saying that disabled people and non-disabled people <u>do not</u> get equal access to suitable housing</b>  |
| Because I live on top floor of a tenement with no lift and I've been denied a move. Also, been denied new kitchen and bathroom because my disability stopped me from moving everything in my house.  |
| Disabled people need more support of which there is less of, particularly in the current situation.  |
| Access ie stairs.  |
| It's impossible to live in a decent place if one is poor.  |
| Because of the limitations of some disabled people the time in which they have to wait for LA housing is longer. Also private housing can be unaffordable to a fixed income or access may be restricted.   |
| Unfair points system, medical professional may not understand impact of disability when deciding points allocation. Accessible housing not available in every area.  |
| Not enough housing built for disabled people.  |
| The onset of disability for many people is unplanned, so modifying your lifestyle and home to suit will probably mean a significant adjustment, some of which might not be possible due to financial reasons.  |
| All surveys conducted confirm that disabled people do not have equal access to housing and rely mainly on social housing providers. Many of the major builders are not particularly interested in disabled people as potential house buyers - witness the inaccessibility of many site sales offices. Builders comply with statutory regulations as to access but do not think about being proactive in design for disabled people, particularly wheelchair users. |
| Limited financial resources make it harder to acquire the 'Perfect House' in the first place and then meet all the needs of the household. Space and essential equipment cost money, if there are limited resources these are areas that compromise has to be made.  |
| Not enough suitable housing for disabled.  |
| There are very few accessible homes.   |
| Housing is designed for non disabled people. Add any disability and some aspect of the housing will disadvantage a disabled person.  |
| 1 in 4 has a disability/long-term condition but housing stock has not matched need. Only 1 in 50 homes are suitable, this leads to ad hoc adaptations which are stripped on change of ownership/tenancy. The last two decades saw extensive house building programmes by the private sector yet only recently have building regs stipulated level access and ground floor WC. Housing stock should reflect the needs of society - all of society.                  |
| Limited disabled housing and location of house in relation to get access to shops, town center, isolation if in difficult area or far away from shops or town or city centres.   |
| Insufficient suitable housing available for disabled people.   |
| Well, it's a long story - so people don't listen. Few able-bodies people have experienced it - so they don't understand. If you want to buy a house when in a wheelchair, you will look for years (in my case 8 years) If renting -there is the concern that if you don't take what is offered, you will get nothing - and usually what is offered is less than suitable for the various needs.  |
| Some property is still without full disabled access.   |

|  |
|--|
| I am a wheelchair user and I can't even visit friends and family let alone stay with them. It took me ages to find anything suitable for myself.   |
| I think of everybody as equals.  |
| Disabled people need easy access etc.  |
| Availability restricted for disabled.  |
| Not all houses accessible to physically impaired.  |
| Often buildings are not designed as disabled friendly.   |
| Every house I have lived in since 1984 has needed to be adapted.   |
| Far too few houses suitable for adaptation, on a single level, lower floor, 2 entrances.   |
| I live in one.   |
| I think there is a lack of suitable housing for many disabled people.  |
| Not enough social housing/house prices too high.   |
| Not all disabilities are taken into account.   |
| It is getting more difficult for people to get houses.   |
| Not enough houses suitable for disabled built.   |
| Not enough housing available, unable to buy, not enough funding.   |
| Lack of accessible properties limits choice for the disabled.  |
| Disabled people cannot access all that able-bodies can.  |
| Not enough low cost housing.   |
| Disabled people are often overlooked.  |
| Because there is a shortage of suitable accessible housing for disabled people.  |
| Looking at disabled friend's housing.  |
| There is not enough houses available.  |
| Limited suitable housing.  |
| Lack of suitable housing.  |
| Not enough suitable housing available.   |
| Disabled people don't only use walking aids and are not all 'elderly', they even come with family!   |
| Sometimes non-disabled just don't understand or listen to the needs.   |
| Limited availability of properties, limited availability some disabilities are hidden/invisible - yet effect/affect individuals, family and community experiences/lives. Accessibility - eg doorways, stairs can make it impossible or difficult for disabled - due to mobility reduced due to health age etc.   |
| There is inadequate facilities available both for disabled and able-bodied. Able-bodied people will get first refusal as disabled people have to pay their rents from benefits.  |
| There is not enough houses for disabled and everyone else.   |
| Disabled people find it hard to access some buildings and can sometimes need more space. May have less income to spend on rent or mortgage.  |
| Because disabled people tend to be ignored. They should be given cottages or first floor flats but in a safe environment. Also the council ignores disabled people when they need special adaptations done to the home, ie walk in showers, ramps special handles and grip rails. This is probably because of council cuts which is very unfair and therefore the disabled person has to fork out the money themselves as the council won't help them. It's the only way the disabled person can get the house adapted for them to make it safer. Also disabled people are put in beside drug addicts or alcoholics or trouble makers. Therefore putting them into an unsafe and vulnerable environment. |

|  |
|--|
|  |
| <b>Reasons for saying that disabled people and non-disabled people <u>do</u> get equal access to suitable housing</b>  |
| Would like to think so, although I could be wrong.   |
| Treating everybody equal.  |
| We all deserve equal rights.   |
| Well planned move out of residential area.   |
| Not all housing is suitable for disabled.  |
| Not all houses being built now are one level.  |
| <b>Reasons for saying '<u>don't know</u>' if disabled people and non-disabled people get equal access to suitable housing</b>  |
| Not enough experience to know one way or another.  |
| Some do and some don't. Even non-disabled and well-off people can find it hard to find suitable accommodation. It is hard work for disabled people, though.  |
| There are at least 2 people (men) in my stair who I suspect are not disabled, and yet, have been given a flat. There is a 3rd person (male) that I'm unsure about who keeps himself to himself, and is a mystery.  |
| We have not been involved in the system. We helped our son buy a small flat. There seems to be a big demand for public housing whatever the circumstances.   |
| It is almost impossible to provide a definitive response to the statement without further clarification. I would hope both disabled and non-disabled persons' have equal access to 'suitable' housing. Unfortunately, until we stop using terminology like reasonable and suitable there can be no real intent!  |
| Not tried to access housing for myself yet.  |
| I lost my home in Cornwall when I got out of my wheelchair and the DLA cut my monies for 5 awful years. I ended up in Scotland, and then ended up homeless. The DSS in Leith and many of the housing dept of Edinburgh and my then social worker didn't have a clue about disability because to them I didn't look disabled. Interestingly they were all men and did the boy bonding club ritual and I went through hell until a few years later my ex husband found out and only then did I get decent treatment and fixed my broken windows and filthy water tank. |
| Have not changed house since I became disabled.  |
| Have no experience.  |
| Have never sought a home via services.   |
| Never had child with disability and was lucky enough to get mortgage for own home.   |