

DP6. Lifetime homes and wheelchair housing

- 6.1 Core Strategy policy CS6 indicates that Council will seek a variety of housing types suitable for people with mobility difficulties. Policy DP6 helps to deliver this by setting out our approach to lifetime homes and wheelchair housing.
- 6.2 Although mobility difficulties should be considered in the design of all forms of housing, the standards for lifetime homes and wheelchair accessibility relate primarily to the layout of self-contained homes. As occupants of student housing will only stay for a limited period, student housing is not expected to meet lifetime homes standards. The proportion of students who are wheelchair users should reflect the general population, therefore the Council expects 10% of student flats or study-bedrooms (together with supporting communal spaces) to meet wheelchair standards.

DP POLICY

DP6 – Lifetime homes and wheelchair housing

All housing development should meet lifetime homes standards. 10% of homes developed should either meet wheelchair housing standards, or be easily adapted to meet them.

- 6.3 The Council considers that people with mobility difficulties, including disabled people, should have access to a range of housing types that match the range available to those without mobility constraints. Mobility difficulties can affect children, young people, adults and older people. They can affect people who live in large families, small households and people living alone. Where people have support needs related entirely to a physical disability, the Council will seek to provide them with support in their own home.
- 6.4 A lifetime home supports the changing needs of a family's lifecycle, from raising children through to mobility issues in old age, essentially allowing people to live in their home for as much of their life as possible. Lifetime homes involve design features that have been tailored to foster accessible living, helping to accommodate old age, injury, disability, pregnancy and pushchairs. These features also allow a dwelling to be easily adapted for even higher levels of accessibility in the future, if the need arises. Lifetime homes exceed the requirements of Part M of the Building Regulations.
- 6.5 Lifetime homes standards will be applied to all developments of self-contained housing, including conversions, reconfigurations and changes of use (the standards do not apply to student housing). The standards will also be applied to proposals for bedsits or other permanent housing with shared facilities if the development could be occupied lawfully as self-contained dwellings in Use Class C3 without submission of a further planning application (please see paragraphs 9.2 to 9.3 for more details). The Council acknowledges that the design or nature of some existing properties means that it will not be possible to meet every element of the lifetime homes standard, for example in listed buildings, but considers that each scheme should achieve as many features as possible. All housing proposals should be accompanied by a submission showing how each of the lifetime homes standards will be met, with a full justification why any individual element will not be met. New build schemes are expected to incorporate all lifetime homes features. Further information on lifetime homes can be found in our Camden Planning Guidance supplementary planning document.
- 6.6 To provide independence and quality of life for wheelchair users, the Council will expect 10% of dwellings either to meet wheelchair housing standards, or be designed so a future occupier can easily adapt the dwelling to meet wheelchair housing standards. The percentage will be applied to all developments providing 10 or more self-contained homes, including conversions, reconfigurations and changes of use, and will also be applied to student housing. The percentage



will also be applied to proposals for bedsits or other permanent housing with shared facilities if the development could be lawfully occupied as 10 or more self-contained dwellings in Use Class C3 without submission of a further planning application (please see paragraphs 9.2 to 9.3 for more details). However, where proposals involve re-use of an existing building (particularly a listed building), the percentage will be applied flexibly taking into account of any constraints that limit adaptation to provide entrances and circulation spaces that are level and wide enough for a wheelchair user.

- 6.7 Ideally, wheelchair housing should be tailored to the specific needs of an individual wheelchair user and their household. Although tailoring housing to the occupier is rarely possible in proposals for speculative market housing, it can be achieved for affordable housing, where future occupiers can be identified by local housing managers, from the Housing Register (waiting list), and from transfer lists.
- 6.8 The Council will apply the wheelchair housing percentage across each affordability category in a scheme, generally seeking 10% of market housing, 10% of social housing and 10% of intermediate housing. For the 10% of market housing, future occupiers will often be unknown until after the homes have been fitted out. Where the 10% market housing is not fully fitted-out to meet the standards, it should be laid out to provide all the necessary circulation space within and between rooms, including bathrooms and toilets, as subsequent changes to these arrangements can be costly and difficult.
- 6.9 For social rented housing and intermediate housing, each type should include 10% of homes designed, built and fitted-out to meet wheelchair housing standards. The Council may use its affordable housing fund to support the creation of fully-fitted out affordable wheelchair accessible housing. We may seek to increase the percentage of affordable wheelchair accessible homes and reduce the percentage of market wheelchair accessible homes where this will enable us to meet the needs of identified future affordable housing occupiers. We may also agree to increase the percentage of social rented wheelchair homes and reduce the percentage of intermediate affordable wheelchair homes (or vice versa) where this will better enable us to meet the needs of identified future occupiers. More detailed information is included in our Camden Planning Guidance supplementary development document.

Key evidence and references

- Camden Housing Needs Study Update 2008
- The London Plan (consolidated with Alterations since 2004); Mayor of London; 2008
- Accessible London: achieving an inclusive environment – London Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance; Mayor of London; 2004