

## Housing

Evidence gathered to inform the development of the Mayor's London Housing Strategy (LHS) has identified that<sup>1</sup>:

- disabled people are more than twice as likely to be living in unsuitable housing as other Londoners.
- in 2008/09, less than half of wheelchair users moving into a housing association home were allocated a wheelchair accessible property. At the same time, 70 per cent of lettings of wheelchair accessible homes went to households with no wheelchair user.
- more than 60 per cent of households with a physically impaired member or with "multiple special needs" need adaptations.
- with an expected increase of around 200,000 older people in London by 2025, there is a need to build much more inclusive and flexible housing and to ensure that the housing market responds effectively.

### What we have done

The Mayor's London Plan, and the statutory London Housing Strategy, published in February 2010, contains a range of policies requiring the highest standards of accessibility and inclusion for new housing developments. The Housing Strategy also contains policies to ensure that disabled people are able to participate in choice based lettings schemes on an equal basis to other social housing applicants.

Given the changing age structure of London's population and, in particular, the varied needs of older Londoners, the London Plan and Housing Strategy require that all new housing should meet Lifetime Homes standards and at least 10 per cent must be wheelchair accessible<sup>2</sup>. Of the affordable homes funded through the Homes and Communities Agency between April 2008 and September 2009, eight per cent were wheelchair accessible<sup>3</sup>.

The London Accessible Housing Register (AHR) developed by the GLA, provides comprehensive information about the accessibility features of a property, and forms an integral component of choice based lettings schemes. The GLA launched a model for the London Accessible Housing register and a toolkit for assessing and categorising properties. This has been piloted by LB Tower Hamlets and RB Kensington and Chelsea, and is now being rolled out across London. A project co-ordinator is hosted at the RB Kensington and Chelsea, supporting social landlords to introduce the initiative locally. The project is accountable to a board comprising RB Kensington and Chelsea, the GLA and Communities and Local Government.

The Mayor's Housing Equalities Standing Group was set up to support and advise the Mayor on the equalities implications and aspects of the development and delivery of the London Housing Strategy. The membership of the group includes representatives from disabled people's organisations, who share knowledge and expertise about different aspects of housing and equalities in London. In addition, written responses representing the interests of disabled Londoners were also received during the period of public consultation on the London Housing Strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> Sources: GLA, London Housing Strategy, 2010;

GLA, 'Housing in London: The evidence base for the London Housing strategy', Nov 2009

<sup>2</sup> Lifetime Home Standards are set out at [www.lifetimehomes.org.uk](http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk)

<sup>3</sup> Homes and Communities Agency data, January 2010

**What we plan to do**

The Mayor will work with London boroughs to improve the supply of, and access to accessible housing. Through the London Plan and the London Housing Strategy, the Mayor will ensure that:

- all new homes in London are built to Lifetime Homes standards
- at least 10 per cent are wheelchair accessible or easily adaptable for residents who are wheelchair users
- new minimum design and quality standards will soon be introduced across all tenures, through the Mayor's London Housing Design Guide and through the London Plan and Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- The London Accessible Housing Register is rolled out across London, delivering high quality information on accessibility to all applicants for social rented homes.