

Wheelchair Accessible and Adaptable Student Accommodation

Practice Note November 2022

This note provides clarification on the accessibility requirements of the London Plan 2021 for self-contained and non-self-contained student accommodation.

Building Regulations (2010) Approved Document M Access to and use of buildings

[Volume 1 - Dwellings](#) defines:

- A dwelling as 'A house or flat'
- a flat as 'Separate and self-contained premises constructed or adapted for residential purposes and forming part of a building from which it is divided horizontally' and
- confirms that student accommodation is treated as hotel/motel accommodation.

[Volume 2 Buildings other than dwellings](#) notes that:

- 'Purpose built student living accommodation, including that in the form of flats as defined in regulation 2(1), should be treated as hotel/motel accommodation in respect of space requirements and internal facilities.'
- 'A proportion of the sleeping accommodation in hotels, motels and student accommodation should be designed for independent use by wheelchair users. The remainder should include facilities for people who do not use a wheelchair, but may have mobility, sensory, dexterity or learning difficulties.'
- 'Sleeping accommodation, where provided for a significant number of people, e.g. in hotels, motels and student accommodation, should aim to be convenient for all. People who use wheelchairs are likely to require greater provision of space and access to en-suite sanitary accommodation. A proportion of rooms will, therefore, need to accommodate wheelchair users. In student accommodation, it is beneficial to have a wheelchair-accessible toilet available for use by disabled visitors.'
- 'Sleeping accommodation will satisfy Requirement M1 if: ... *For wheelchair-accessible bedrooms* g. at least one wheelchair-accessible bedroom is provided for every 20 bedrooms, or part thereof' (Building Regulations / Part M).

Applying London Plan Policies

A number of London Plan policies relate to accessibility in accommodation.

London Plan Policy D5 Inclusive design (part B) states that development proposals should achieve the highest standards of accessible and inclusive design and that they should be able to be entered, used and exited safely, easily and with dignity for all.

London Plan Policy D7 Accessible housing applies M4 standards which are set out in the Building Regulations. In turn the Building Regulations standards only apply to dwellings – which (as above) means a self-contained house or a flat.

London Plan Policy E10 H states:

'To ensure sufficient choice for people who require an accessible bedroom, development proposals for serviced accommodation should provide either:

- 1) 10 per cent of new bedrooms to be wheelchair-accessible in accordance with Figure 52 incorporating either Figure 30 or 33 of British Standard BS8300-2:2018 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment. Buildings - Code of practice; or
- 2) 15 per cent of new bedrooms to be accessible rooms in accordance with the requirements of 19.2.1.2 of British Standard BS8300-2:2018 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment. Buildings - Code of practice'

As the Building Regulations make clear that student accommodation is to be treated as a hotel/motel accommodation, for the purposes of ensuring provision of accessible student accommodation, in addition to London Plan policy D5, the relevant part of Policy E10 Part H also applies to development proposals for new non-self-contained student accommodation.