

2010 BROXBOURNE STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL HOUSING FOR PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

Purpose

People with physical disabilities have different needs for housing to enable them to live in the community as independently as possible. The supply of social rented housing suitable for this group is very limited in Broxbourne. As part of this strategy, available supply of significantly adapted housing has been mapped and need from housing register applicants assessed. The strategy seeks to make best use of available resources to meet the needs of this vulnerable group.

Definition

Physical disability affects a wide range of people in many ways. It can arise as a result of an accident, illness or congenital disorder and may be caused by a range of health conditions such as neurological, circulatory, respiratory and musculo-skeletal disorders.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) has defines disability as:
a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

The Equality and Human Rights Commission defined a physical impairment as:

a condition affecting the body, perhaps through sight or hearing loss, a mobility difficulty or a health condition.

This strategy focuses on the housing needs of physically impaired people in Broxbourne and the loss or limitation of activity imposed on physically disabled people through the design of housing.

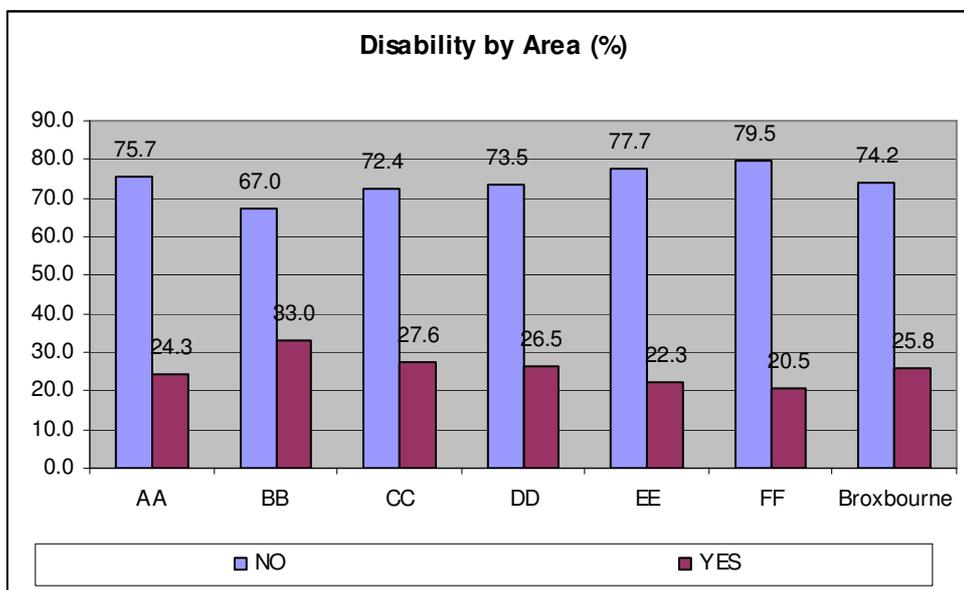
Number of People with Physical Disabilities in Broxbourne

The Health Survey for England 2001 provided information at a national level on the number of people who have disabilities and enables local estimates of people expected to have physical disabilities. The survey showed how the prevalence and severity of disability increases with age. Nationally, 7.5% men and 8% of women of working age reported having moderate disability, and 2.5% of men and 2% of women of the same age group reported having serious disability. In those aged 85 and above, 72% of men and 73% of women had a moderate or severe disability. In Broxbourne, there were estimated to be 1,700 people over 85 in 2010. This was forecast to increase by 47% by 2020. The most common type of physical disability was walking difficulty, which 38% people with long term disability experienced.

The 2009 Broxbourne Private House Condition Survey estimated that 25.8% heads of household had a disability or infirmity. The definitions used are shown below but included people with asthma, many of whom may not need adapted housing.

Bed bound
A total wheelchair user
Mainly wheelchair user but can stand for short periods
A wheelchair user ONLY outdoors
Walks only with frame or other aid
Walks unaided but unsteady or blind / deaf
Fully mobile – none of the above e.g. asthma

Distribution per Dwelling of Anyone Disabled by Area Respondents (%)
 (Source – Broxbourne Borough Council HCS 2009)



Area Key:

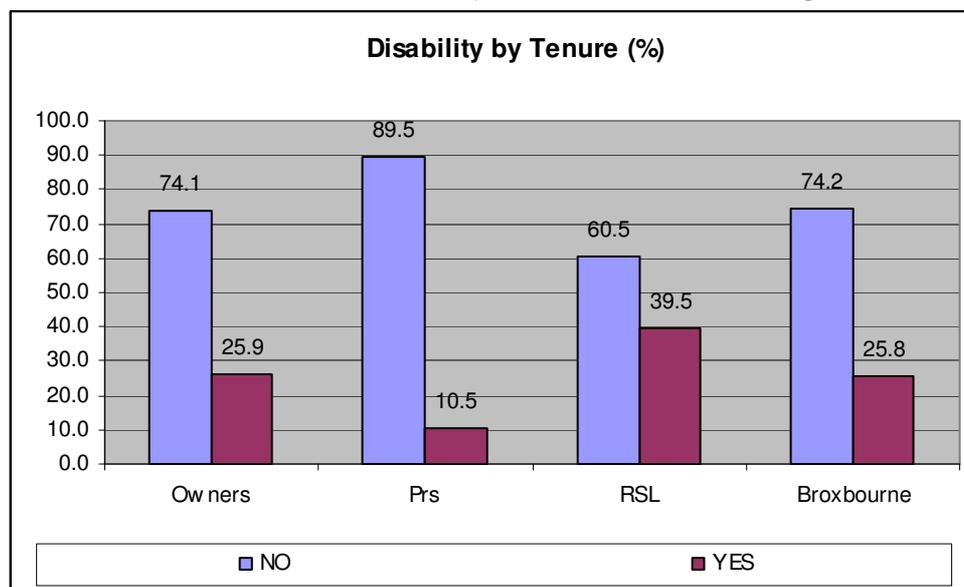
AA – Hoddesdon North	DD – Waltham Cross
BB - Bury Green	EE – Hoddesdon South & Broxbourne
CC - Wormley & Cheshunt	FF - Goffs Oak/ Flamstead End

The table above shows the response of heads of households when asked whether they had a disability by area in which they lived. The highest proportion of people with a disability was in Bury Green at 33.0 %. The lowest proportion was found in Goffs Oak/ Flamstead End at 20.5%. People with a disability were concentrated in the Registered Social Landlord (RSL) sector with 39.5% RSL tenants having a disability as compared to only 10.5% in the private rented sector.

Distribution per Dwelling of Anyone Disabled by Tenure Respondents

(%)

(Source – Broxbourne Borough Council HCS 2009)



Key: Owners – Privately owned

RSL - Registered Social Landlord

Prs – Private Rented Sector

Broxbourne – All Private Stock in Broxbourne

In all, there are estimated to be 11,500 people with disabilities in Broxbourne, allowing for households with more than one person with disabilities in a household or where the person with disabilities was not the head of household.

The respondents were asked whether the home had any adaptations and whether any additional adaptations were needed. The results are shown below for all tenures and the RSL sector alone. The most commonly installed and needed adaptation was grab or hand rails followed by bath/ shower adaptations.

Self-Assessment of Adaptations Needed (%)

(Source – Broxbourne Borough Council HCS 2009)

All tenures				
Does the house have or need any of? (%)	Has	Needs	Total	No Need
Wider doorways	0.7	0.3	1.0	99.0
Stair lift or lift	1.7	1.4	3.1	96.9
Ramp	1.5	0.4	1.8	98.2
Grab rails or hand rails	7.2	5.5	12.7	87.3
Hoist	0.8	0.2	1.0	99.0
Redesign kitchen	0.4	0.6	0.9	99.1
Redesign or relocate WC	2.5	1.3	3.8	96.2
Redesign or relocate bath / shower*	6.0	3.5	9.5	90.5

Door answering or opening	1.4	0.9	2.3	97.7
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❖ Figures rounded to one decimal places for report in this table.

Types of Adaptations needed by RSL Tenants

Self-Assessment of Adaptations Needed (%)

(Source – Broxbourne Borough Council HCS 2009)

RSL				
Does the house have or need any of? (%)	Has	Needs	Total	No Need
Wider doorways	3.3	0.5	3.8	96.2
Stair lift or lift	1.4	0.5	1.9	98.1
Ramp	3.8	0.5	4.3	95.7
Grab rails or hand rails	10.0	6.7	16.7	83.3
Hoist	1.4	0.0	1.4	98.6
Redesign kitchen	0.5	1.0	1.4	98.6
Redesign or relocate WC	3.3	1.0	4.3	95.7
Redesign or relocate bath / shower*	11.4	4.3	15.7	84.3
Door answering or opening	6.7	0.5	7.2	92.8

Demand for Adapted housing in Broxbourne in the Public Sector

Broxbourne has the lowest stock of social housing in Hertfordshire. Only 13% total housing stock is in the public sector including RSL. Because of its proximity to London, house prices are comparatively high but average income levels do not fully reflect this, resulting in property being less affordable than in Watford or Harlow. There is an acute shortage of social rented housing and many applicants on the housing register have long waits for rehousing. This strategy aims to review procedures and policies to enable the Council and its RSL partners to make best use of the scarce housing resources available.

Those registering on the housing register are asked whether they need any disabled adaptations, and if so, to indicate which type (See Appendix I for the list). As at February 2010, 190 of the 2,650 households registered (7.2%) said that they needed at least one adaptation. An Occupational Therapist's (OT) assessment may be required to confirm these requests. Applicants with mobility difficulties are also asked to indicate if they need more suitable properties e.g. access without steps.

39 of the households registered indicated that they needed fully wheelchair accessible properties. However, only 9 of these had an OT report confirming the need and were medium to high priority (400 points or over). Of these 67% were on the transfer list and were already social housing tenants.

129 households on the housing register said that they needed a level access shower but not wheelchair accessible accommodation. Of these 95 were medium to high priority. Housing Options staff will be contacting those applicants requesting significantly adapted properties to ask for OT assessments. Work to clarify the need for wheelchair adapted housing suggests that a significant proportion of applicants will not currently need those adaptations. The majority of the applicants are over 60 years of age.

Young Physically Disabled People

There is a small number of teenagers with physical disabilities living with parents in adapted housing who may want to move to more independent living in the future. Many of these are likely to want housing in the public sector. Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) estimates that there are approximately 20 young people aged 14 -18 in the Broxbourne, East Herts and Royston area who have significant physical disabilities. Therefore there are likely to be no more than 5-8 in Broxbourne. Some will want to move into independent housing once adult. They will usually need two bedroom accommodation so that a carer can stay. There will also be young people with physical disabilities over 18 living with parents but as yet there are no assessments of the number who might want to live independently in future.

Supply of Adapted Properties in Broxbourne

A mapping exercise was carried out with RSLs with significant affordable housing stock in the borough to establish how many adapted properties there were in the borough. There was only one purpose built wheelchair bungalow in the social housing stock. The table below summarises the number of properties with adaptations.

RSL	Number of wheelchair properties	Number of Properties with significant disabled adaptations (hoist, stair lift, extension etc)	Number of properties with level access showers	Number of Properties with adapted kitchen
Aldwyck HA		4	18	
Broxbourne HA	5	16	500#	2
Metropolitan HT	1	5*	8	5
Paradigm HG		2	7	
Sanctuary HA				1
Springboard		1		

* locally agreed wheelchair standard # approximate

RSL Policies regarding Adaptations

The RSLs were also asked about which adaptations to properties they recorded, how they prioritised letting of adapted properties to disabled applicants etc. A summary of the responses is shown in Appendix II. There was significant variation as to the data held on which properties were suitable for wheelchair users. Some RSLs held extensive records of adaptations on their property data bases, others aimed to record these when the property became void and was inspected.

Consultation with Stakeholders

The strategy was formulated in consultation with the major stakeholders such as RSLs and Herts CC as well as the Broxbourne Housing Association's Disabled Tenants Panel.

Identifying those Most in Need of and Nominations to Adapted Properties

From the data above it can be seen that the supply of adapted accommodation in the public sector in Broxbourne is quite small given that the total social housing stock is approximately 5,000 homes. The supply of wheelchair accessible homes is tiny but there are also few applicants in the borough needing this type of housing. The challenge is to ensure that any wheelchair accessible accommodation that comes vacant is allocated to those most in need of that type of home. A procedure for nominating applicants is attached in Appendix III.

There is more accommodation available that is not fully wheelchair accessible but has significant adaptations i.e. not just a level access shower or grab rails. Close partnership working with RSLs can help to ensure that those applicants who need these adaptations are prioritised for these properties where possible. This can then avoid any unnecessary expenditure on adaptations and also avoid people with disabilities having to wait unnecessarily for adaptations to their new home. A procedure for nominating applicants to properties with significant adaptations is attached in Appendix IV.

Applicants need to be made aware of possible options but should be able to continue to exercise choice and refuse nominations without penalty. However, RSLs will continue to be able to refuse a nomination on the grounds that the property is not suitable for the applicant e.g. an applicant with mobility problems bidding for third floor flat in a block without a lift. An OT will also be able to veto the nomination of a property that in his opinion cannot be made suitable for an applicant.

Applicants will normally be expected to accept a property with its existing adaptations unless this is agreed before sign up with the RSL. Applicants without physical disabilities who bid for a property which is advertised as having a level access shower should not normally be able to request its removal on taking up the tenancy.

New Build Properties

The Council's Affordable Housing Strategy states that on new build schemes 10% affordable units should be suitable for wheelchair users providing the Council can demonstrate the need on the specific site. The work carried out to refine the housing register data will make it easier to establish need for particular property types. A checklist has been drawn up (See Appendix V) to assess the suitability of the site for wheelchair housing with regard to proximity to facilities etc. From the data established so far it can be seen that the need will have to be carefully assessed and potential tenants identified at an early stage. Partnership working with OTs will also be key to the success of delivering such homes. People with profound disabilities tend to have very specialised needs. A family with a disabled child may need significantly different adaptations to a family where the parent is physically disabled or to an elderly person.

Lifetime Homes are not fully wheelchair accessible properties but are built to readily adapt to the changing needs of their residents through their whole lives. They are readily adapted to the needs of the majority of people with physical disabilities. The width of doorways, the entrance door and corridors is wider than provided for by the Building Regulations Part M. All homes should have a WC at entrance level and for homes with three or more bedrooms the WC has to be fully accessible for a wheelchair. Among other things, there are also provisions to allow it to be easier to install level access showers in bathrooms in the future. On new build schemes, the Council has a target of all affordable houses and ground floor flats to be lifetime homes.

ACTION PLAN

An action plan to implement and build on these proposals is attached. This will be updated annually in consultation with stakeholders and reported to Community Services committee.