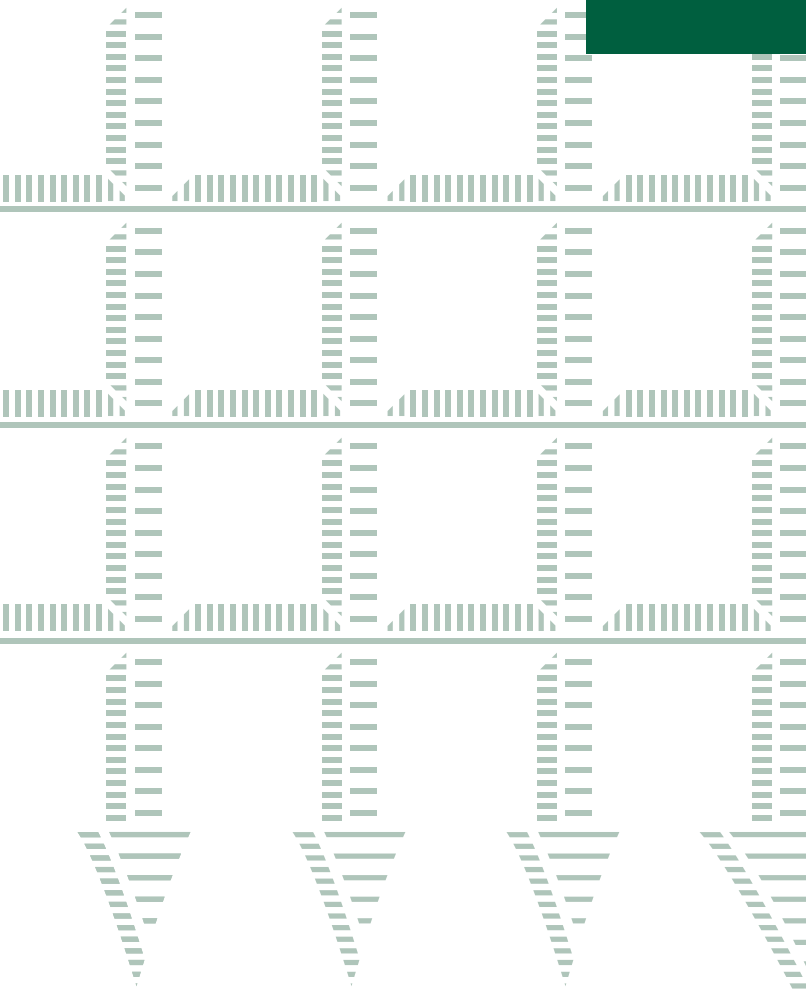


Housing, Communities and Local Government
Committee

Disabled People in the Housing Sector: Government Response

Second Special Report of Session 2024–25

HC 761



Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee

The Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and its associated public bodies.

Current membership

[Florence Eshalomi](#) (Labour; Vauxhall and Camberwell Green) (Chair)

[Mike Amesbury](#) (Independent; Runcorn and Helsby)

[Lewis Cocking](#) (Conservative; Broxbourne)

[Chris Curtis](#) (Labour; Milton Keynes North)

[Mr Lee Dillon](#) (Liberal Democrat; Newbury)

[Maya Ellis](#) (Labour; Ribble Valley)

[Mr Will Forster](#) (Liberal Democrat; Woking)

[Naushabah Khan](#) (Labour; Gillingham and Rainham)

[Mr Gagan Mohindra](#) (Conservative; South West Hertfordshire)

[Joe Powell](#) (Labour; Kensington and Bayswater)

[Sarah Smith](#) (Labour; Hyndburn)

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No. 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

This Report, together with formal minutes relating to the report, was Ordered by the House of Commons, on 4 March 2025, to be printed. It was published on 6 March 2025 by authority of the House of Commons.

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Commons 2025.

This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament Licence, which is published at www.parliament.uk/copyright.

Committee reports are published on the Committee's website at www.parliament.uk/hclg and in print by Order of the House.

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 6232; the Committee's email address is hclgcom@parliament.uk. You can follow the Committee on X (formerly Twitter) using [@CommonsHCLG](https://twitter.com/CommonsHCLG).

Second Special Report

Our predecessor Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee published its Seventh Report of Session 2023–24, [Disabled People in the Housing Sector](#) (HC 63), on 24 May 2024. The Government response was received on 24 February 2025 and is appended below.

Appendix: Government Response

Introduction

1. The government welcomes the former Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee report on disabled people in the housing sector published in May 2024. We are grateful to the Select Committee for their inquiry and to all of those who provided evidence, including disabled people sharing their lived experiences of seeking accessible housing.
2. The inquiry took place in the first half of 2024 and took evidence from a range of stakeholders, including the then government.
3. Following the General Election on 4 July, the new government has considered the report carefully. This government understands how important the right housing arrangements are in enabling disabled people to live safely and independently in their local communities. Everyone should be able to live in a home that is decent and suitable for their needs. This government recognises the scale of the housing crisis, which includes accessible housing, and our [Plan for Change](#) sets out our clear ambition to deliver 1.5 million new homes in England, including homes that can fit everyone’s needs. We have already taken significant steps including a reformed National Planning Policy Framework with mandatory housing targets, a £500m top up to the current Affordable Homes Programme announced at budget and a further £300m top up announced in February

2025, £500m for the Local Authority Housing Fund (£450m announced in July 2024 and a further £50m in February 2025), and changes to Right to Buy discounts. We are determined to increase supply and deliver the biggest boost to social and affordable housing in a generation, ensuring secure, affordable and quality housing for all.

4. Beyond these first steps, government will be publishing a long-term housing strategy later this year, setting out a long-term vision for a housing market that works for communities, builds 1.5m high-quality homes, and delivers the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding for a generation
5. Following careful consideration of the Committee's report, we have set out our response to the recommendations below.

Responses to recommendations

Barriers to accessible housing

LUHC Select Committee Report conclusion:

Disabled people are not a homogeneous group with a single set of housing needs. Rather, Government policy must seek to address the many barriers which disabled individuals face, which vary widely. Too often too many disabled people are failed by current housing policy. We have been particularly pained to hear of the impact on disabled people's dignity, health and wellbeing of living in unsuitable accommodation. It is intolerable that many disabled people are living in unsuitable accommodation for years without hope. It is essential that the Government, local authorities, and the housing sector work together to prioritise disability inclusion and address the barriers that disabled people are currently facing.

We have found little evidence that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities is fully recognising the housing needs of disabled people, let alone treating disabled people's needs as a priority in housing policy. In particular, it is deeply concerning that the Government's new Disability Action Plan fails to directly address housing at all, despite clear evidence of the knock-on effect of housing on all aspects of disabled people's lives. Moreover, the only substantive reassurance that the Minister for Housing and Homelessness was able to provide us with was that she had "heard from lots of people on the ground" in her capacity as the Ministerial Disability Champion.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the Government should take action based on the concerns that the Minister has heard.

Government response:

6. The Committee refers to the Disability Action Plan published by the previous government on 5 February 2024 and oral evidence from the previous government. This government notes the conclusion of the previous Committee's inquiry. Disabled people should not face barriers to the safe and suitable accommodation they deserve. This government will work with local authorities and the housing sector to address key challenges encountered by disabled people. Since the General Election, government has sought to engage actively and extensively to ensure that policy is informed by a wide range of views and input.
7. The government has appointed in each department to ensure we break down barriers to opportunity for disabled people right across the government's long-term missions and put the voices of disabled people at the heart of everything we do. As the lead minister for MHCLG, Rushanara Ali MP, Minister for Homelessness and Democracy, will work with Ministerial colleagues and officials to ensure that the views of disabled people are heard and meaningfully integrated as we develop our long-term housing strategy and wider departmental policies.
8. This government is also committed to implementing the measures in the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023. These measures will ensure that those living in supported housing receive support that meets the new National Supported Housing Standards, a suitable home for them and an appropriate landlord. In addition, local authorities will complete strategies to assess supply, demand and unmet need in their local areas across all types of supported housing, including for those with disabilities who require supported housing. A consultation on the detail of these reforms was launched on 20 February and will be open for 12 weeks. Delivery of new homes through the current Affordable Homes Programme 2021–26 includes capital grant funding to promote new supply of supported housing. The government will set out details of new investment to succeed the 2021–26 Affordable Homes Programme at the Spending Review.

Increasing the supply of accessible homes

LUHC Select Committee Report conclusion:

We welcome the Government's announcement that it intends to make the M4(2) accessibility standard mandatory for all new build homes. This amendment to building regulations is an important policy change which will greatly increase the availability of accessible homes for disabled people. However, we are deeply concerned that the Department has made little progress towards implementing this policy in practice.

Moreover, it is unclear why the Department did not seek to launch the further ‘technical consultation’ soon after its July 2022 announcement of its M4(2) policy change. The delay to implementation continues to afflict the daily lives of thousands of disabled people who are searching for accessible new build homes, while stakeholders from across the sector remain “left in the dark”, with little clarity as to the timeline for implementing the M4(2) policy change.

The Building Safety Regulator’s (BSR) timeline to run a full technical consultation process for six months, starting on an undecided date between May and July 2024, would make it unlikely that the M4(2) baseline policy could be implemented until spring 2025, at the earliest. This is an excessively long timeline considering the sector’s demand for certainty and the evidence that there is likely to be widespread consensus among responses.

It is imperative that the Government’s M4(2) policy commitment is now implemented

as soon as possible. If this is not done, thousands of disabled people will continue to be left with their housing needs unmet.

Recommendation:

Accordingly, we recommend that:

(a) The BSR should launch the technical consultation immediately with an expedited timeline that is made public.

(b) The BSR and the Department should allocate additional resources to ensure that the consultation response is published within a maximum of six weeks of the consultation closing date, rather than the planned 12 weeks.

(c) The BSR should complete the full technical consultation process within four months, rather than the six months currently planned.

Government response:

9. We note that this recommendation relates specifically to a commitment made by the previous government. This government is committed to ensuring that our housing market works for everyone, including disabled people. We recognise that the accessibility of new build homes, and accessibility standards for buildings in general, present challenges for many disabled people. We are working with the construction sector to introduce updated standards in several areas of the Building Regulations and, as part of this ongoing work, we want to ensure that people are able to live

in homes that meet their particular needs. The government intends to set out its policies on the accessibility of new homes in the near future and will provide details about necessary technical consultation when we do so.

LUHC Select Committee Report conclusion:

We support the Minister for Housing and Homelessness's call for local authorities to assess their local need for M4(3) wheelchair user standard homes. However, we do not believe that the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) goes far enough to match this ambition.

Recommendation:

At the next NPPF review, the Government must include an explicit requirement for local authorities to assess the local need for homes at M4(3) wheelchair user standard. The NPPF should also encourage local authorities to include a required minimum percentage of M4(3) standard homes in their local plan, with the precise figure based on their local need assessment. If the Government does not make these changes at the next NPPF review, the Department must set out in writing to us, upon publication of the revised NPPF, how it plans to increase the supply of new homes built to the M4(3) standard to meet the needs of wheelchair users.

Government response:

10. This government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework on 12 December 2024. Local needs are community-specific, and that is why our revised Framework makes clear that it is for local authorities to assess the size, types and tenure of housing needed for different groups, including older people and those with disabilities. It also includes changes to promote the delivery of mixed-use sites, including housing designed for specific groups such as older people, and to ensure that local planning authorities are able to prioritise the types of affordable homes their communities need. We are determined to create a more diverse housing market; one that delivers homes quickly and responds to the needs of a range of communities.
11. As we have set out above, we will be setting out our policies on the accessibility of new homes in due course.

LUHC Select Committee Report conclusion:

We are concerned that most local authorities do not keep a register of the accessibility of their own housing stock, despite some disabled people living in temporary accommodation for years while waiting for accessible social housing.

Recommendation:

The Government must require all local authorities to keep a register of accessibility of homes in their own housing stock and require local authorities to keep a detailed record of all accessible social housing within their local authority area. Local authorities should be encouraged to publish this information so that disabled people can access this information in appropriate accessible formats.

Government response:

- 12.** Local authorities are best placed to decide the types of social homes their communities need, and the government expects them to have a robust understanding of the accessibility of homes in their own housing stock.
- 13.** Under section 166A of the Housing Act 1996, a local housing authority's allocation scheme must include a statement as to the housing authority's policy on offering people a choice of accommodation or the opportunity to express preferences about the accommodation to be allocated to them. It is for housing authorities to determine their policy on providing choice or the ability to express preferences.
- 14.** Section 166A(9) of the Housing Act 1996 also sets out that local housing authorities are required to frame their social housing allocation schemes in such a way that an applicant has the right to request such general information as will enable them to assess whether housing accommodation appropriate to their needs is likely to be made available and, if so, how long it is likely to be before such accommodation becomes available.
- 15.** For a local authority to provide such information to an applicant who requires accessible housing they will need to know both the accessibility needs of the applicant and have records of the accessible housing in their area and its availability.
- 16.** Local housing authorities are free to set their own allocation schemes in accordance with the legislation and statutory guidance and will take different approaches to meeting these requirements in relation to accessible accommodation. For some this may be done by maintaining a separate register of accessible housing while others may choose to do this by integrating this information into their main housing register.
- 17.** The government values local authorities' ability to design allocation schemes to meet local needs. The government therefore does not believe that mandating accessible housing registers is an appropriate action to take. The government does however agree with the Committee on the importance of local authorities holding detailed information on the accessibility of their properties and being able to provide prospective tenants with information about accessible housing. We will explore if

further guidance, or clarification of existing guidance, is needed to support local housing authorities in effectively managing their stock and in making accessible housing information available in meeting the requirements under section 166A of the Housing Act 1996. We will work with local housing authorities on this and explore the sharing of best practice.

LUHC Select Committee Report conclusion:

The proposed new Property Portal presents a compelling opportunity to improve information about the accessibility of properties in the private rented sector. This would provide a clear benefit to disabled people.

Recommendation:

Once the Renters (Reform) Bill comes into force, the Secretary of State must use its provisions to require landlords to include information about the accessibility of their property/properties in their entries in the private rented sector database. This must include any specific accessibility features or adaptations that are already installed, in order to better support the housing needs of disabled people in the private rented sector.

Government response:

18. The government is delivering its manifesto commitment to transform the experience of private renting, with our Renters' Rights Bill introduced as a priority and making progress through Parliament. The Bill will improve security for tenants and drive up standards in the sector. It will create a Private Rented Sector (PRS) Database to help landlords understand their legal obligations and demonstrate compliance (giving good landlords confidence in their position), alongside providing better information to tenants to make informed decisions when entering into a tenancy agreement. It will also support local councils – helping them target enforcement activity where it is needed most. Landlords will need to be registered on the database in order to use most possession grounds.
19. The PRS Database will improve the information available to tenants before they enter tenancy agreements, supporting more informed rental experiences. The government recognises the significance to disabled renters of understanding the accessibility status of properties.
20. The PRS Database is not intended to be a property listing website, it is a tool tenants can use to confirm a property is registered and meets certain requirements. The department is currently considering what information will be recorded on the PRS Database and made available to the public and will outline this in regulations. We are working with a range of stakeholders to understand what information is essential for tenants, as well as the balance of burdens across different users.

21. Officials have met with Disability Rights UK, Inclusion London, Accessible PRS, Independent Age, and Age UK, and are considering their recommendations for recording accessibility information on the Database.

LUHC Select Committee Report conclusion:

We are surprised that the Department does not hold any data on the number of new builds completed to the M4(2) and M4(3) standards in England, especially given that local authorities are already required to provide data on the supply of new homes to central Government annually. The Department must require local authorities to report on the supply of new homes at [a] M4(2) standard and [b] M4(3) standard specifically in their annual data submission to the Department.

Recommendation:

The Department must publish this data annually as part of the ‘Housing supply: net additional dwellings’ statistical release.

Government response:

22. The English Housing Survey collects data on the accessibility of homes and publishes national level information periodically. Local authorities should assess the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community, including older people and people with disabilities, and reflect this in their Local Plan. The statistical series ‘Housing supply: net additional dwellings’ uses a simple data collection focused on providing an accurate measure of housing supply overall. To require local authorities to provide details on type and specifications of housing units would impose a new burden.

Recommendation:

The Government should provide funding, in line with the new burdens doctrine, to local authorities to ensure that they can carry out these additional requirements and duties to the best of their ability.

Government response:

23. As part of this government’s commitment to resetting the relationship with local government, we want to reduce the level of burdensome reporting requirements on local authorities, and so we do not intend to require this new data collection.
24. This government is committed to putting in place an approach to local government funding which enables local authorities across the country to provide the high-quality services that people rely on every day. The December 2024 provisional Local Government Finance Settlement has provided an additional £69 billion to local authorities in the next financial

year, a real-terms increase of 3.5% from 2024–25. Should new burdens be placed onto local authorities, these will of course be assessed and any net additional costs will be fully funded, in accordance with the New Burdens Doctrine.

Adapting homes: the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

LUHC Select Committee Report conclusion:

The Government-commissioned External Review of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) in 2018 made several appropriate and valuable recommendations on DFG funding, eligibility, and the delivery process, based on comprehensive evidence. It is therefore deeply disappointing that the Government has not published a response to the Review and has not acted upon its main findings, despite prolonged calls for it to do so.

Recommendation:

(a) The Government, in response to this Report, must therefore set out its response to each of the External Review’s recommendations in full;

(b) what action it has already taken to address each recommendation in the Review since it was published in 2018

(c) a timeline for the future implementation of each of the DFG reforms in line with those External Review recommendations which the Government accepts.

Government response:

- 25.** The government recognises how important home adaptations are in enabling disabled people to live as independently as possible in a safe and suitable environment. DFG funding helps adapt around 55,000 homes annually, helping disabled people and their families to live independently and well in their own homes for longer, and reducing demand for health and social care support.
- 26.** In 2018, an independent review concluded that key aspects were outdated and badly in need of reform. Several recommendations from the report were implemented, including through the 2022 publication of updated national [DFG delivery guidance](#). This government is undertaking further reform of the DFG, as set out below, and will continue to consider the recommendations of the independent review as it does so.
- 27.** Although the landscape has changed since the report was published, the government recognises that key challenges remain.

28. Additionally, in recent years the level of funding for the grant has not kept pace with inflation. This government is now taking action to ensure that the DFG grant is properly funded and fit for the future, so that more people can live well for longer in their own home. The government has:
- a. committed an additional £86 million funding for the DFG in 2024–25, on top of the £625 million paid to local authorities in May 2024. This brings total funding for 2024–25 to £711million.
 - b. confirmed a further £711 million DFG funding for 2025–26.
29. Further details of action being taken on specific key recommendations are below.

LUHC Select Committee Report conclusion:

The £30,000 upper limit on individual DFG applications is sufficient to cover the cost of most DFG applications. However, the fact that the upper limit has not changed since 2008, despite recent rising construction costs, means the DFG does not meet the needs of some applicants whose adaptations cost more than £30,000. Consequently, a small number of disabled people who require more complex adaptations may struggle to afford to self-fund the home adaptations they need.

Recommendation:

The Government should immediately review the £30,000 upper limit on individual DFGs, with consideration for regional variation in construction costs, and set new regional upper limits. Going forward, the new upper limits must also take account of inflation and construction costs.

Government response:

30. This government is reviewing the suitability of the current grant upper limit. As recommended, the review is taking account of inflation and construction costs, and we are also considering the variation in costs between regions. We expect the review to conclude later in 2025. Given that any rise in the upper limit will require additional funding, the government will say more about its future approach after the Spending Review. In the interim, local authorities have considerable discretion and may fund adaptations above the current £30,000 upper limit in line with a local policy or in exceptional circumstances.

LUHC Select Committee Report conclusion:

Whilst we recognise the need for the DFG means test to be a well-evidenced process, the current DFG means test is unnecessarily complex and leads many applicants to drop out of the DFG process entirely. We are also concerned that the means test's passporting provisions can result in unfair 'cliff-edges' for applicants when they move into work.

Recommendation:

The Government should reform the means test to ensure it does not disproportionately penalise working disabled people, by introducing more gradual tapering of personal contributions for disabled people when they move into work.

Recommendation:

The Government must also simplify the means test. The Government should consider including assessment for the DFG as part of a reformed social care means test, as recommended by the External Review in 2018.

Government response:

- 31.** Local authorities have a significant degree of flexibility in how they deliver home adaptations funding, including in relation to the means test. For example, they can publish a housing assistance policy to increase the upper limit of the grant or remove means testing for grants costing under a certain amount. Some local authorities could therefore decide to take a specific approach to ensure a working age disabled person is not disproportionately penalised if they feel this might be occurring.
- 32.** We note the Committee's recommendations. To ensure the DFG is as effective as possible, we will continue to keep different aspects of the grant under consideration, including the means test.

LUHC Select Committee Report conclusion:

We welcome the Government's decision to increase overall DFG funding allocations to local authorities in 2023/24 and 2024/25. However, the current DFG distribution formula is unfair and does not distribute funds according to local need. Oxford City Council sets a good example for how local authorities across England should develop local policies to offer small discretionary grants to support the wider needs of disabled people.

Recommendation:

The Government must establish a new distribution formula which is clearly based on local need and therefore fairer. In particular, the new formula must distribute funding with consideration for the current and projected number of disabled people; average income; and regional building costs in each local authority area.

Government response:

- 33.** As set out in the 2018 review, the current allocation formula for the DFG dates back to 2011. This government acknowledges that the formula is out-dated and does not fairly reflect current local need. We intend to review the way that funding is allocated to local authorities in England, taking into account demographic and economic changes since the current approach was established in 2011. This review will consider local variations in disability prevalence, income and regional building costs. Government proposes to consult on a new formula during 2025 with the aim to adopt a new approach as soon as possible.

Recommendation:

The Government should expand Foundations' remit to improve its DFG guidance and self-assessment tools for disabled people, to improve public awareness of the DFG and to support applicants and their advocates as they navigate the process. These updated resources should be developed to account for the specific needs of neurodivergent people.

Government response:

- 34.** This government continues to fund an organisation, currently Foundations, to act as a national body for DFGs and home improvement agencies. The current contract that commenced in October 2024 includes as a key component the provision of accessible information to the public, including disabled people as they navigate through the process of securing the adaptations they need to live safely and independently.
- 35.** The department will continue to work closely with Foundations to help ensure a quality service for disabled and neurodivergent people, including around DFG guidance and self-assessment tools.

LUHC Select Committee Report conclusion:

It is unacceptable that any landlords should refuse disabled tenants permission for reasonable accessibility adaptations, especially where these adaptations have been approved as part of a DFG application.

Recommendation:

The Government must continue its work with landlord associations and housing associations across England to issue DFG guidance to landlords, to reduce instances of refusal of accessibility adaptations. Once the Renters (Reform) Bill comes into force, the new Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman must consider all complaints involving a landlord's refusal to grant permission for accessibility adaptations, and must ensure that this service is properly communicated to disabled people. This would empower disabled people with greater access to redress without the need to go to court, thereby reducing the pressure on the justice system and the costs to the residents.

Government response:

- 36.** The department will continue to explore potential further changes to help support disabled people living in the PRS to access home adaptations.
- 37.** Provisions in the Equality Act 2010 mean that a landlord cannot unreasonably refuse a request for reasonable adjustments. Measures in this government's Renters' Rights Bill will improve the situation for disabled renters who request home adaptations. The abolition of section 21 will remove the threat of retaliatory eviction, empowering tenants to request the home adaptations that they need and to complain if their requests are unreasonably refused.
- 38.** The government's Renters' Rights Bill will also introduce a new Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman that will provide quick, fair, impartial and binding resolution for tenants' complaints about their landlord. This will bring tenant-landlord complaint resolution on par with established redress practices for tenants in social housing and consumers of property agent services.
- 39.** The Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman will have broad powers to put things right for tenants where it is determined that their landlord should have done something differently when an issue was first raised with them. All cases will be considered on their own merits, and nothing will prevent fair and reasonable complaints about accessibility adaptations from being escalated, contingent on the complaint being made within the scheme rules. The government is designing the Ombudsman service with all users in mind, as required by the Government Service Standard, and will ensure that any communications strategy adequately meets the needs of disabled tenants.
- 40.** The National Residential Landlords Association has published guidance in 2022 for landlords on making home adaptations available to those tenants who need them. <https://www.nrla.org.uk/resources/looking-after-your-property/adaptations>. Information for landlords on reasonable adjustments

and home adaptations is also provided in the How to Rent guide here: [How to rent - GOV.UK](#). Additionally, information for tenants on reasonable adjustments and home adaptations is provided in the How to Let guide here: [How to let - GOV.UK](#).

Conclusion

- 41.** Government is grateful to the former Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee for their report on disabled people in the housing sector and welcomes the opportunity to continue to work with the current Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee on the delivery of measures to address issues disabled people encounter in accessing suitable housing.