

## Habinteg poll results finding that over two thirds of Brits say their homes are no-go zones for wheelchair users

Today, to mark the close of #ForAccessibleHomes week 2019 we are publishing new poll results about the accessibility of British homes.

Please look out for coverage and social media promotion of the findings and get involved if you can.

### Results:

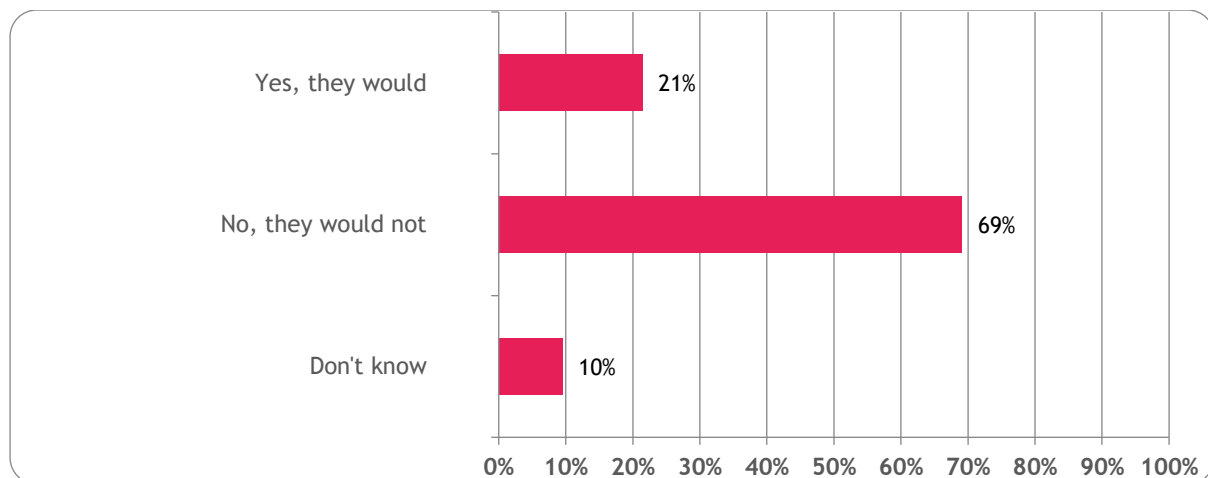
The poll results reveal:

- Only 1 in 5 (21%) say a wheelchair user would reasonably be able to access all areas of their home,
- Almost 7 in 10 (69%) confirmed it would not be possible
- Under a third of respondents in England (31%) felt that wheelchair users would be able to make use of the appliances in their home including accessing the wardrobes and opening fridges/ovens

### Wheelchair users – access all areas

In England based on a sample size of 1,738:

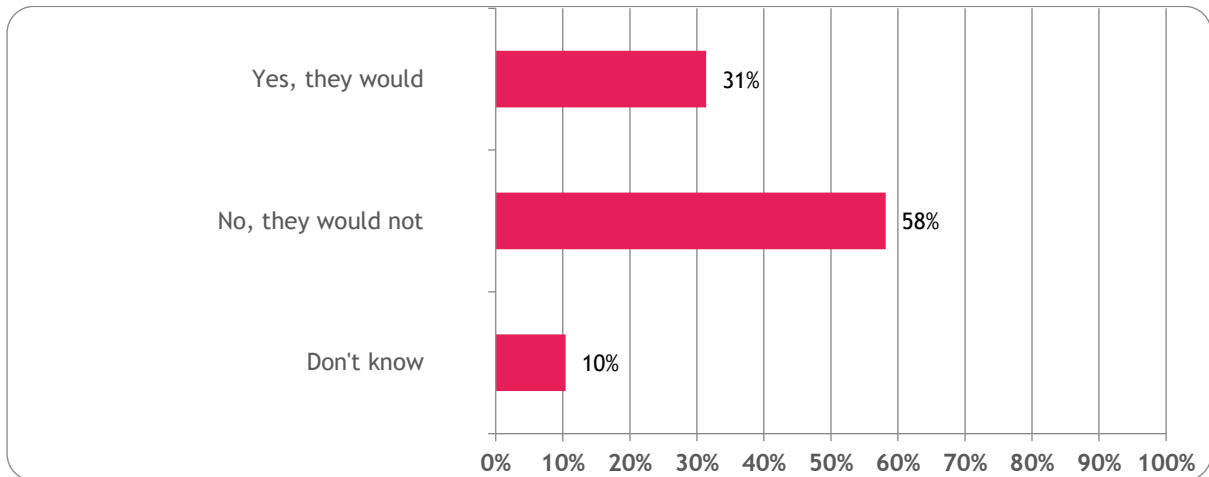
- 69% of respondents said a wheelchair user would not be able to access areas of their homes e.g. manoeuvre in the space/through doorways.
- 21% of participants said they would be able to manoeuvre through the home and gain access
- 10% said they didn't know.



## Wheelchair users – make use of the appliances furniture in any room

Respondents were also asked if a wheelchair user could make use of the appliances/furniture in any room excluding the bathroom e.g. access the wardrobes, open the oven/fridge etc.):

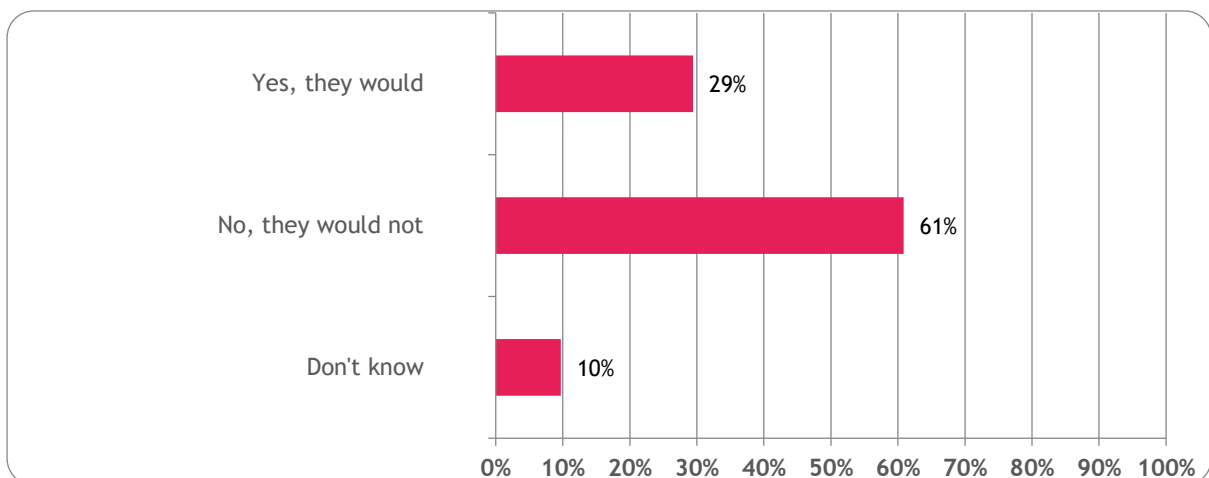
- 58% of participants said no, they would not
- 21% said yes, they would
- 10% said they don't know.



## Wheelchair users – use the toilet/bathroom facilities

Poll respondents were asked if a wheelchair user could use the toilet and bathroom facilities e.g. reach the sinks and turn on the taps.

- 61% said no, they would not,
- 29% said yes, they would
- 10% said they didn't know.



These results come off the back of Habinteg's insight report launched in June which revealed an imminent crisis in the supply of all types of accessible homes:

- Outside London under a quarter (23%) of new homes due to be built by 2030 are planned to be accessible, negatively impacting on the health and independence of older and disabled people.
- Just 1% of homes outside London are set to be suitable for wheelchair users despite 1.2 million wheelchair users in the UK and a rapidly ageing population.
- By 2030 there will only be one accessible new home built for every 270 people in the West Midlands, one accessible new home for every 52 people in the East of England, and one accessible new home for every 24 people in London.

Under the current rules Local Planning Authorities are responsible for setting requirements through Local Plans for new homes to be built to the higher 'optional' access standards – the accessible and adaptable standard (M4(2)) and the wheelchair user dwelling standard M4(3).

**1. Local plans set policies for new developments**, and they are the way that the government expect to see accessible housing introduced. In 2015 the government introduced optional access standards through Building Regulations which local planning authorities should use to set their policies. The optional standards are:

- \*M4 (2) Category 2 'Accessible, adaptable', which provides basic access and adaptability similar to the Lifetime Homes Standard, benefiting to all households over the lifetime of the home.
- \*\*M4 (3) Category 3 'Wheelchair user dwellings', broadly equivalent to Habinteg's Wheelchair Housing Design Guide.

**2. Accessible homes standards:**

- M4(1) Category 1 is the regulatory baseline. Whilst it offers some basic accessibility features it fails to guarantee the true 'visitability' and adaptability that many households will need over their lifetimes
- In order to set requirements for accessible homes planning departments must demonstrate the need in their area and show that overall the plan is viable for delivery.
- Although some developers and local authority building companies may choose to build to accessible standards as a quality indicator, local plans are the way in which standards can be set for all developments and all tenures by the local planning authority.

You can find the [full Insight Report on our website](#).

## **Get involved**

Please join the conversation by following us on twitter: <https://twitter.com/Habinteg>

If you have any questions about the poll please contact:

Nic Bungay, Director of Strategy & External Affairs, [nbungay@habinteg.org.uk](mailto:nbungay@habinteg.org.uk) or 020 7822 8719

Christina McGill, Head of Communications, [cmcgill@habinteg.org.uk](mailto:cmcgill@habinteg.org.uk) or 020 7822 8715