

# Hammersmith and Fulham Disabled People's Housing Strategy 2021

**Strategy:** this means a big picture plan.

## Objective 2

The council must make sure that disabled residents have better access to information about housing.



**Objective:** this means the Council's goals to make housing services better for disabled residents. If these objectives become a reality housing services will be fairer for everyone.

**Resident:** in this document this means people living in Hammersmith and Fulham.

## Background information:

The council will do more to support disabled residents who apply for support with housing. The council must make sure disabled residents understand the way this support works and how decisions are made about housing.



Residents must be given clear and accessible support for housing. This support must respect people's choices and rights.



The Public Sector Equality Duty is a law that says councils and health authorities must make sure people with **protected characteristics** have the same chances as everyone else.



**Protected Characteristics:** this means when the law says that people must not face discrimination because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Disabled People's Commission 'Nothing About Disabled People Without Disabled People' report said that there was not enough accessible information for Disabled people. This is a barrier which stops disabled people from living equal lives.



**Nothing About Disabled People Without Disabled People report:** this is a report that looks at how to make independent living a reality.

In 2017 and 2018, disabled residents took part in focus groups. They had some important ideas about making sure disabled residents had better access to information.



## They said that councils must:

- Make sure that people know about important steps for housing. For example, residents must know and understand about the **Housing Register, Housing Allocations, and Transfers.**



**Housing register:** this is the list of people who live in council houses.

**Housing allocations:** this means the way that the council decides who gets housing and which houses or flats they can live in.

**Transfers:** this means when the council moves people from one house or flat into a different house or flat.

- Explain how **adaptations** work.

**Adaptations:** here, this means when houses are changed to make them more accessible for Disabled people.



- Make it clear who disabled residents can get in touch with for different services.



- Give more information about support services. For example, they must give support to teenagers and young adults about how to get housing when they become adults.



- Explain all the housing options that disabled residents can access.



- Explain how local housing works and explain about the laws around housing. Make sure disabled residents know their rights.



Disabled residents also said the way that the council assesses people for housing can be very confusing.



# How can the council make sure disabled residents have better access to information?

Hammersmith and Fulham Council can support disabled residents to have better access to housing services.

They can do this by giving information which is very accessible and clear. Residents should be given information often about the latest updates.

Here are some important ways for the council to make sure disabled residents have better access to information. The council must:

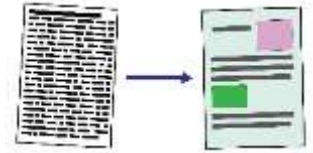
- Think about using one standard of accessibility. This is a way to make sure everyone follows the same rules about making information accessible.

For example, the NHS has one standard to make their services accessible. This means everyone follows the same rules, so it is fair for everyone.





- Use simple words when talking about important changes.



- Listen to disabled residents and ask the right questions.



- Make sure people know about the barriers to housing that disabled residents face. People must know about how barriers affect disabled residents with health conditions or impairments that can't be seen.



- Make sure disabled residents have access to British Sign Language interpreters.



- Give clear definitions about important words. For example, the council must explain what accessible means.



- Look at the barriers that stop disabled residents accessing information and talking to the council.



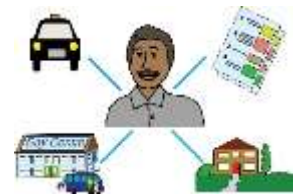
- Give information about ways of working and services. This information should be easy to access for everyone.



- Make sure everyone knows who to get in touch with about different services.



- Make sure services are specific for each person. What works for one resident might not work for another resident. The council must realise this.



- Give really good customer service. If disabled residents can access information, they will have better access to services. This will support disabled residents to live equal lives.



The council will make sure their relationship with residents is better, by looking at the problems that disabled residents are facing.



For example, at a recent focus group with people who were renting council houses, only half of the people there knew the name of their housing officer.



**In the focus groups, disabled residents told us that they want the council to:**

- Explain how adaptations work.
- Explain about all the housing options for disabled residents.
- Tell residents more about **Home Swapper** and cheaper rent options.



**Home Swapper:** this is a website that councils and people who live in council housing can use. They can use this website to swap their houses or flats with other people.

- Explain the **intermediate housing** options.

**Intermediate housing:** this is a housing option for people who can't get social housing but can't afford to rent or buy private houses. People who earn less than £60,000 per year, can rent a house or flat. People who earn less than £90,000 per year, can buy a house or flat.





- Explain the **shared ownership** options.

**Shared ownership:** this means when people can buy part of a house or flat and rent the other part of it. For example, a person might buy 25% of the house and pay rent for the other 75%.

- Let them know about local building plans.
- Explain the law and how this affects your housing options.
- Give information about housing options for young disabled residents who are nearly adults.



It is important that disabled residents know how decisions are made about who gets different types of housing and how changes to housing are made.



The council must explain how decisions are made and how they choose who can get housing. They must also explain how people can stand up to decisions that they don't agree with.



Disabled residents who are applying for housing must know what to expect. They must know when they will get housing and who to get in touch with about questions or issues.

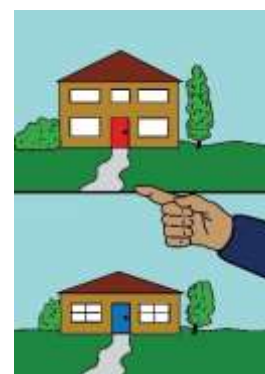


## Our commitments

**Commitments:** this means what the council promises to do, to make our objectives a reality.

### What promises can we make about making sure disabled residents have better access to information?

**1. We will:** work with Disabled People's Organisations to find housing options that meet the needs of all different residents. We will work with Disabled People's Organisations to give advice about housing to disabled residents.



**This will mean that:** more disabled residents will know about their housing options. They will understand clearly about the housing that they can access.



**2. We will:** make sure all disabled residents know about all the housing options and services that they can access.



**This will mean that:** disabled residents will know what to expect. They will know who to get in touch with about different issues when they are accessing housing services.



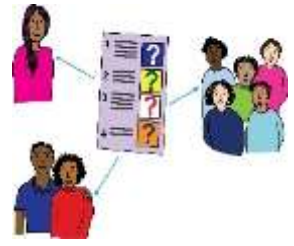
**3. We will:** make sure all disabled residents know how to find out about plans for building work in the local area.



**This will mean that:** disabled residents will have a clear idea about building work that is happening in the local area. They will know exactly what the land is being using for.



**4. We will:** Make the links between different groups stronger. We will make sure groups in different areas of the council work together and share information. We will work with groups outside the council too.



**This will mean that:** disabled residents will be able to use council services easily. They will have more information about services outside of the council that they can access.





# Our Action Plan

**Action plan:** this means the steps that the council must take to make our objectives a reality.

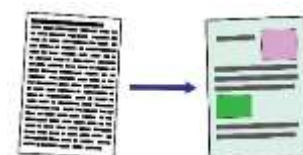
## What steps must we take to give better housing information to disabled residents?



### Action 1:

We will work on writing new information that is easy to understand. This information should talk about all the different housing options that disabled residents can access. We will give out leaflets which:

- Give advice about housing options.
- Give information about **disabled facilities grants**.



**Disabled facilities grants:** this is money that disabled residents can get from the council to help them pay for building work to make their homes more accessible. This helps them be more in control of their lives and to live in an independent way.



- Give information about **adaptations**.



**Adaptations:** here, this means when houses are changed to make them more accessible for Disabled people.

**Outcome, this means the changes that our work will lead to:**

This will mean that leaflets are more accessible.



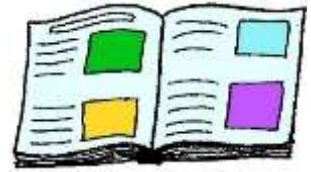
**Who is responsible for making sure this happens?**

- Housing solutions
- Housing services
- Adult social care



## Action 2:

Make sure disabled residents have accessible information about the council's responsibilities as **landlords**.



**Landlords:** this means people or groups who own houses and rent them out to people. The council owns homes and rents them to residents. This means the council is a landlord.

This information should be put into easy read too. The council must give information to disabled residents about their responsibilities by law, as landlords.



**Outcome, this means the changes that our work will lead to:**

People will have better access to information about the council's responsibilities by law.



**Who is responsible for making sure this happens?**

- Housing Strategy
- Housing Solutions



## Action 3:

The council must write easy read versions of the:

- Housing Strategy
- Housing Allocation Scheme, this is the council's plan about who can rent council homes
- Home Buy Allocation Schemes, this is the council's plan about who can buy council homes



## Outcome, this means the changes that our work will lead to:

This will mean that more people will be able to access the Housing Strategy, the Housing Allocation Scheme and the Home Buy Allocation scheme.



## Who is responsible for making sure this happens?

- Housing Strategy
- Housing Solutions



## Action 4:

Give out the most recent information to Disabled residents about who to get in touch with about housing. Disabled residents who are staying in council housing must be given useful information, such as the number and email address of their housing officer.



## Outcome, this means the changes that our work will lead to:

More disabled residents will have information about who to get in touch with about housing.



## Who is responsible for making sure this happens?

- Housing Solutions
- Housing Services





## Action 5:

Work with Disabled Persons' Organisations and **housing associations**. Work with them to look at which disabled residents need council housing.



**Housing associations:** these are organisations that rent houses and flats. They aim to give access to cheap and good housing to people who need it.

## Outcome, this means the changes that our work will lead to:

This will mean that the council will have better information about how many disabled residents need council housing.



## Who is responsible for making sure this happens?

- Housing Solutions
- Housing Services



## Action 6:

Give out information that disabled residents can use to get in touch with Disabled People's Organisations and other local groups.



**Outcome, this means the changes that our work will lead to:**

Disabled residents will have more access to information about Disabled People's Organisations and other local groups.



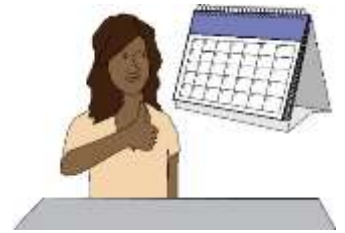
**Who is responsible for making sure this happens?**

- Housing Solutions
- Housing Services



## Action 7:

Make sure disabled residents are given information about housing early on. Make sure this information is helpful for each resident. This will help residents to get ready for important changes around housing.



For example, young people must be given information about moving into council housing when they become adults.



They must be given this information early on. Residents must be given information about moving to **supported housing**. They must be given this information early on.



**Supported housing:** supported housing is for people who need support to live in an independent way in their homes.

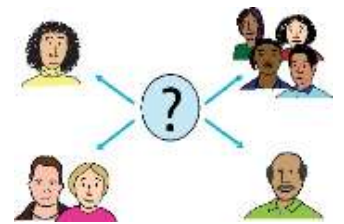
## **Outcome, this means the changes that our work will lead to:**

This will mean that disabled residents will have access to important information earlier on.



## **Who is responsible for making sure this happens?**

- Housing Solutions
- Housing Services



## Action 8:

Review how accessible the council's website is.



## Outcome, this means the changes that our work will lead to:

The council can use feedback to make their website more accessible.



## Who is responsible for making sure this happens?

- Housing Strategy
- Corporate Communication





# How could we measure the changes that our work leads to?



## We could ask these questions:

- How many disabled residents have been given information about useful services?
- How many disabled residents were given the latest information about housing services? How many were given accessible information?
- How many people worked with Disabled People's Organisations?
- How many people are visiting the council website?



We could also ask for feedback about accessible information. We could find out whether disabled residents felt like the information was useful.

