

SPACE TO LIVE

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE HOUSING IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

Final Research Report

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Gillian Young, Tony Donohoe, and Jill Cronin

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Disclaimer

All view and any errors contained in this report are the responsibility of the authors. The views expressed should not be assumed to be those of Scottish Borders Council or any of the stakeholders and residents throughout the Borders who assisted with this work.

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Executive Summary

In the last five years there has been increasing policy interest in the provision of affordable, accessible and adaptable housing for households that contain someone that uses a wheelchair. In 2016 the Scottish Government launched 'A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Delivery Plan 2016-21'. It highlighted the importance of housing in creating an inclusive society and in enabling disabled people to participate in society. In 2018 the Equalities and Human Rights Commission's 18-month inquiry into housing for disabled people concluded that the chronic shortage of accessible homes was a breach of disabled people's human rights and was a hidden housing crisis. Most recently, the Scottish Government issued guidance in March 2019. Building on commitments set out in the Delivery Plan, this requires local authorities to set targets for the delivery of wheelchair accessible homes across all tenures by December 2019 and plans for meeting them.

Against this backdrop, Scottish Borders Council commissioned this research to investigate:

- The numbers, profile and views of wheelchair users and other people with substantial mobility issues that are likely to require wheelchair or similar forms of accessible housing.
- The current stock of housing suitable for wheelchair users, particularly in the social rented sector.
- The challenges wheelchair users and their families experience in securing a suitable home and the factors that have contributed to this.
- Current and potential future shortfalls in the provision of wheelchair accessible homes, with particular reference to affordable housing provision.

The study was based on a mixed method approach and involved a rapid review of research and policy relevant documents, an analysis of available statistical evidence and telephone interviews with a diverse range of stakeholders from the public, voluntary and private sector, including organisations that represent people with disabilities in the Borders. The study also included an e-survey to allow wheelchair users and their families the opportunity to share their experiences. A total of 48 individuals submitted a valid response, of which 13 participated in in-depth follow up phone interviews.

The latest figures suggest that in 2017 around 23,500 individuals in the Scottish Borders were living with a disability. This is equivalent to 20.4% of local residents of all ages. This proportion has remained largely unchanged since 2012, which is consistent with national trends.

A major limitation of both national and local data is that disability is usually reported as a single category and does not distinguish between different forms of disability and the distinctive issues that people with different types of disability face. To work around these and other data limitations, we made use of prevalence rates derived from national surveys on wheelchair users and NHS England data on wheelchair patients to produce six alternative estimates of the numbers of households that contain someone that uses a wheelchair. These numbers were then 'triangulated' against DWP data on the numbers of people in receipt of one of the three main disability related benefits – Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments and Attendance Allowance. We also drew on prevalence rates to estimate the numbers of households that contain someone with substantial mobility issues that have to use other mobility aids such as a walking frame to move around their home and/ or the surrounding area. Overall, we estimate that:

- There are some 2,000 households in the Borders (3.5% of all households) where at least one member of the household uses a wheelchair (either indoors or outdoors or both), with estimates ranging from 1,600 to 2,300.
- A minimum of 600 households contain someone who has to use a wheelchair to move around their home. These households include 80 families with a child that is confined to a wheelchair.

These 600 households are very likely to require a highly specific and customised built or adapted home to ensure it is suitable for everyone in the household.

- There are a further 2,000 to 2,500 households, mostly older households, that contain one or more persons that do not use a wheelchair but experience substantial difficulties moving around their home.

There is a widely held perception that most people that live with a disability are older but this is much less the case for people that use a wheelchair. Around 43% of households that contain a wheelchair user is either a child or an adult of working age. Moreover, around 75% of householders has applied for social rented housing and whose household contains a wheelchair user and are under the age 65 years.

There are also marked differences in the tenure distribution of working age and retired wheelchair users in the case of the Scottish Borders. Whereas the majority of older wheelchair users live in the owner-occupied sector, most of those of working age live in the social rented sector. This tenure profile is consistent with the relatively low incomes and weak position of working age wheelchair users in the labour market. This suggests future housing plans will need to give careful attention to the distinctive needs and desired housing outcomes of working age households that contain a wheelchair user.

Data limitations make it difficult to fully assess unmet housing need but available evidence suggests that whilst most wheelchair users live in home with adaptations, many still experience difficulties moving around their home and carrying out daily activities such as getting in and out of bed and cooking.

Although the true figures may be higher, we estimate that at least 220 wheelchair user households currently live in a house that is wholly unsuitable for their needs and a further 450 such households require additional housing adaptations to ensure their current home is suitable for changing needs.

The relatively high proportion of wheelchair user households that are unsuitably housed is a reflection of the very limited stock of housing accessible to wheelchair users and other individuals with ~~substantial~~substantial mobility issues. The numbers of private sector homes built to the Scottish Government's preferred definition of wheelchair accessible housing appears to be negligible. In the social rented sector, there are up to 164 homes that comply with the Scottish Government's preferred definition. This includes the 37 extra care home apartments in Dovecot Court in Peebles which are only allocated to older people nominated by the Council following a full social care assessment. Setting aside relets within Dovecot Court, it would take around 10 years to clear the current backlog of expressed need for wheelchair accessible housing recorded on the housing register of local RSLs.

The diverse views that wheelchair users expressed through the e-survey and the programme of interviews are not easy to summarise but some common themes are apparent. Wheelchair users are far more likely to be dissatisfied with their home than non-disabled households. Wheelchair users tend to have only a limited awareness of the housing information and advice services that are available, especially older wheelchair users. Wheelchair users do not always feel they are listened to and can feel they lack a sense of choice and control over the services they receive. Wheelchair users that experience difficulties navigating the housing adaptations system or the allocation policies of social landlords often feel frustrated; for some it can result in a sense of hopelessness. In spite of these difficulties, few wheelchair users want to move home. Instead, most would prefer to see their current home further modified or adapted to meet their needs and that of other family members.

Looking over the decade to 2028, scenario modelling suggests that anywhere from 24-30 wheelchair accessible homes could be required to be delivered throughout the Scottish Borders across all tenures. This range reflects assumptions made about the numbers of 'additional' wheelchair user households that are likely to emerge in the coming decade and what proportions of these would prefer and might be assisted to have their home adapted to make it suitable for their needs.

The next phase of this study will explore potential policy responses. However, in developing plans to respond to the unmet needs of wheelchair users in a more effective and person-centred way, the

research findings suggest that in addition to looking at how to boost the construction of new wheelchair accessible homes, the Scottish Borders Council and its partners will wish to explore how best to:

- Secure better data capture and sharing between housing, health and social work as part of a wider move to develop a collaborative approach to the strategic commissioning of a range of accessible and adaptable dwelling sizes and types in different locations for wheelchair users and their families across all tenures.
- Ensure the process for allocating accessible and adaptable social rented homes do not unintentionally create additional barriers for wheelchair user households seeking accessible social housing in suitable areas in reasonable proximity to their social network and services.
- Improve the promotion and visibility of housing information and advice for wheelchair users and their families and ensure that both disability organisations and housing providers are well placed to deliver these services.

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report brings together evidence on the provision of housing suitable for households that contain someone that has a permanent and substantial mobility disability, and more especially wheelchair users, and the housing related needs and challenges that such households face. This report is part of a wider study that has two main aims:
- To deepen understanding of the current and possible future requirement for affordable and market orientated wheelchair accessible housing across SBC and to provide a better evidence base around which policy analysis and discussions can be framed.
 - To work with SBC, its strategic partners and people that use wheelchairs to agree a practical plan of action and associated monitoring arrangements to address the housing related needs of people who use wheelchairs, particularly in terms of affordable housing provision.
- 1.2 This report is focused on the first of these two aims. So far as data permits, it seeks to:
- Provide a clear picture of the likely number of households that contain a wheelchair user that require accessible housing and explore their housing related needs and circumstances.
 - Estimate the current supply of housing suitable for households that contain someone who uses a wheelchair or has substantial mobility disabilities across tenures with a particular (but not sole) emphasis on social rented and other affordable provision.
 - Identify the main imbalances in the provision of housing and housing related services for wheelchair users and the factors that have contributed to this situation.
 - Produce a small range of estimates in terms of the likely current and, if feasible, potential future shortfall in the provision of wheelchair accessible homes, with particular reference to affordable housing provision.
- 1.3 The analysis in this report is primarily focused on households that contain one or more persons that use a wheelchair. However, it also takes account of households that contain someone that has substantial mobility issues and has to use mobility aids such as a walking frame. For ease of reference we have used the term wheelchair user households to refer to the former and the term mobility limited households to refer to the latter.

Study approach and report structure

- 1.4 The findings documented in this report are derived from a combination of a rapid literature review, secondary analysis of national and local data, qualitative insights from an on-line survey that was completed by 48 participants and follow up interviews with 13 wheelchair users and their families. The findings also build on dialogue and consultations with housing providers and other locally based agencies.
- 1.5 Following this introduction, section 2 provides an overview of the policy context, starting with the Scottish Government's long-term ambitions that cut across all areas of public policy and service-delivery to build a more prosperous resilient and fairer society and to reduce entrenched forms of disadvantage, including those experienced by households that contain a wheelchair user in securing a suitable home. It then looks at local priorities for improving the independence and wellbeing of people living with a severe mobility disability and the provision of accessible housing and housing adaptations for wheelchair users etc across all tenures.

- 1.6 Section 3 moves on to look at the key statistical evidence about the number of potential wheelchair users that live in the Scottish Borders area, the potential current need for accessible homes among the population of wheelchair users etc. It then moves on to consider the types of housing assistance available for wheelchair users, including a stock take of the current supply of both accessible housing and wheelchair accessible housing. As far as data permitted, this section looks to match data on needs and supply to get some feel for unmet need and the scale of provision that might be needed to address the situation.
- 1.7 Section 4 explores the housing needs and experiences of wheelchair users and draws on the on-line survey and follow up interview programme. Section 5 considers the issues and challenges that emerged from our review of available evidence and more specifically our discussions with a range of stakeholders, including housing and other service providers. Finally, section 6 summarise our key findings and conclusions. Further details about the study approach and more detailed findings from the online survey and other research outputs can be found in the appendices.
- 1.8 It is important to stress here at the outset that efforts to collect data on the profile of the housing stock across all tenures, but especially in the private sector, and the housing related needs of wheelchair users and their families have been hindered by the limited availability of hard data and the fact that what partial information there is, is spread across a number of different bodies and professions. This is an important finding in itself but it means that some of our analysis lacks the level of detail originally hoped for.

2. THE POLICY CONTEXT

Introduction

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the national and local policy context surrounding the provision of accessible homes for people with disabilities and those that have other substantial mobility issues including wheelchair users. This is set out in a raft of strategy documents, legislation, guidance, standards and grant funding advice.

National overarching policy agenda for people with disabilities

- 2.2 The social model of disability is based on the principle that disability arises from the interaction between a person's circumstances and the way society is structured. For example, the physical and social characteristics of housing often add to the disabling environment that people with disabilities experience. This implies that policy should aim to remove the environmental, attitudinal and organisational barriers that prevent disabled people from participating in society on an equal basis. This model underpins the United Nations (2006) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to which the UK is a signatory. It confirms that people with disability have the right to accessible, affordable and suitable housing (Article 28) and the right to independent living and full inclusion and participation in the community (Article 19).
- 2.3 Building on this UN Convention, 'A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Delivery Plan 2016-21' sets out the Scottish Government's strategy to enable people with a disability to be treated with dignity and respect and to participate fully in the economic and community life. Together with the recent 'Fairer Scotland Duty'¹ it is a central plank of the Scottish Government's overarching agenda to secure sustainable and inclusive economic growth, enhance wellbeing and reduce socio-economic disadvantage and poverty.

National housing and planning policy and the provision of accessible homes

- 2.4 The Delivery Plan re-affirmed that the provision of accessible and affordable homes is central to independent living and maximising the health, wellbeing and potential of people with a disability. In response to this, national planning and housing policy has entered a period of reform.

Housing policy and people with disabilities

- 2.5 In 2011 the Scottish Government set out its 10-year housing strategy "Homes Fit for the 21st Century" to secure a well-functioning housing system that delivers high quality sustainable homes and communities to meet the diverse needs of the population. Shortly afterward it published "Age, Home and Community" to promote the role of housing and housing related services to support independent living for older people.
- 2.6 In support of these two strategies, the Scottish Government has made over £3 billion available to support the delivery of some 50,000 affordable homes in the 5 years to March 2021. It has continued to require grant funded new social homes to meet the accessibility standards set out in part 1 of the "Housing for Varying Needs Design Guidance". It has also continued to provide grant

¹ The Fairer Scotland Duty can into force in 2018 and requires Local Authorities, NHS Boards, Integration Joint Boards and other public bodies to demonstrate how they have sought to reduce socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions such as the provision and siting of new homes.

funding to support the adaptation of existing RSL properties to make them more suitable for older or disabled occupants, although the adequacy of this budget remains a matter of dispute².

2.7 More recently, and in line with commitments made in the Delivery Plan, the Scottish Government has sought to bolster the delivery of wheelchair accessible housing or other forms of specialist provision. Most significantly the Scottish Government has:

- Made a commitment to ensure grant subsidy arrangements for affordable housing will not prevent the building of specialist housing, including wheelchair accessible homes.
- Issued guidance in March 2019 for local authorities and RSLs that requires ‘all-tenure’ LHS targets for the delivery of wheelchair accessible homes to be set by the end of 2019. In the first instance the targets, plans for their delivery and annual progress towards the targets are to be reported through the SHIP process, distinguishing between ‘market’ and ‘affordable’ housing.
- Clarified that whilst there is no universally agreed definition of wheelchair accessible housing, the definition adopted by local authorities should be consistent with part 2 of the Housing for Varying Needs Standard (basic and up to desirable design standard for wheelchair accessibility) to ensure the home is suitable for a wheelchair user to live in.
- Confirmed that the development of wheelchair accessible targets and plans for their delivery should involve housing, planning, health and social care agencies, disabled people and other interests to ensure a holistic and equalities-based approach to this activity.
- Given a commitment to the Scottish Parliament to review the Housing for Varying Needs Standard and to issue revised guidance on arrangements and timescales for adapting homes.

“the housing for varying needs standards is a bit old now—they are nearly 20 years old. I commit to reviewing those standards in the near future, so that we will continue to build and deliver housing that is fit for purpose not only for folk with special needs today, but also for tomorrow”.

Meeting of the Scottish Parliament 27 March 2019: Accessible Housing

2.8 On the other hand, the Scottish Government has said little about how it’s ambitions to increase the supply of wheelchair accessible homes will be met or funded, especially in respect of market provision. It has remained silent on the possibility of enhancing the range of policy mechanisms and levers available to local authorities to facilitate the provision of wheelchair accessible housing, whether through new provision or the adaptation of existing homes. It has also not discussed how-to skill up the house builders (or other professions such as architects) who often have little experience of constructing wheelchair accessible housing. The Delivery Plan has, however, committed the Scottish Government to look at revising the accessibility standards contained in the building regulations and to explore the potential to create “tailor-made wheelchair accessible homes from mass-market new homes”.

2.9 Thus, for now, it has still been left largely to local authorities and their strategic partners in consultation with stakeholder representatives of older and disabled people to:

- Set out in their LHS priorities, targets and plans for improving the supply of good quality, affordable and accessible homes across all tenures to meet the housing requirements of the local community, including wheelchair users and others that might require specialist housing.

² For instance, the SFHA has noted that funding for RSL housing adaptations has been frozen for the past seven years.

- Estimate the 'need' for wheelchair and other specialist homes as part of the HNDA process to inform the LHS, even although, as the HNDA guidance concedes, robust data and methods to generate such estimates were lacking.

2.10 Work on a vision for the Scottish housing system to 2040 is now underway. At this stage it is not clear how this might shape the trajectory of housing policy including the translation of national commitments to boost the supply of accessible housing into practical measures to support the construction of new wheelchair accessible homes and the delivery of housing adaptations across all tenures. These measures may well depend on how the National Planning Policy Framework evolves in the coming months and the extent to which planning authorities will be required to champion policies to meet the housing needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility.

Spatial planning and the provision of accessible homes

2.11 The 2014 National Planning Framework for Scotland (NPF3) and the 2014 Scottish Planning Policy gave scant coverage to disability issues³ but this is set to change in the wake of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, which secured Royal Assent on the 25 July. The Act's provisions will require the planning system to place increasingly greater emphasis on addressing the needs of disabled people for several reasons:

- The NPF, and by extension Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Plans (LDPs), will now be required to articulate how spatial development priorities will contribute to meeting the housing needs of older and disabled people, improve health and wellbeing and increase the population of rural areas.
- Scottish Ministers will be required to regularly report to the Scottish Parliament on how the planning system is operating to help ensure that the housing needs of older and disabled people are met.
- Communities now have the power to produce "Local Place Plans" that can detail housing and other issues that planning authorities will be required to take into account in preparing LDPs.
- Planning authorities will have to report on how they have consulted disabled people and other sections of the community.

2.12 The practicalities of when and how these new duties will be implemented and the evidence that Scottish Government will produce (or will require local authorities to provide) in support of these duties is not yet clear. It will be contingent upon the contents of secondary legislation and whether additional resources can be found, especially to support greater participation of a wider cross-section of the community in the planning process.

Local policy for the delivery of housing and services for people with disabilities

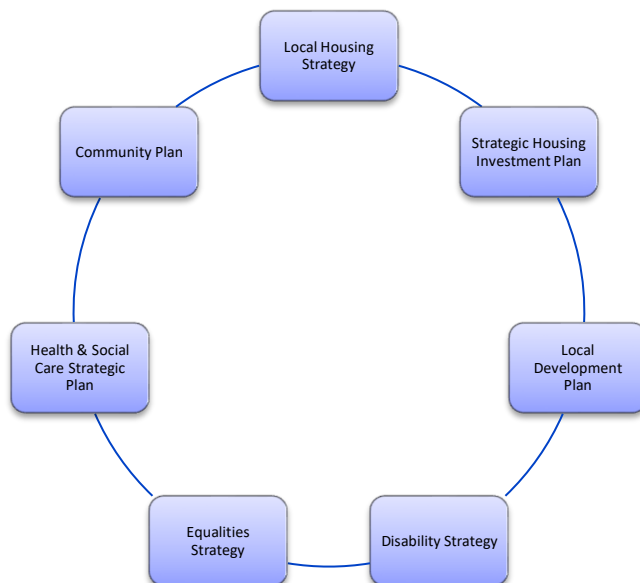
Local housing priorities

2.13 Figure 3 illustrates that there are multiple influences on the planning and delivery of services for people with disabilities and more specifically wheelchair users. From a housing perspective, however, the key strategic driver is the Scottish Border LHS 2017-22, supported by the HNDA, the SHIP and the 2018-21 Housing Contribution Statement. This latter document articulates the role

³ The NPF3 called for innovative approaches to meet affordable housing that was responsive to local needs, including the needs of older people whilst SPP 2014, which contained a modest section on 'Specialist Housing Provision and other Specific Needs' tasked planning authorities with preparing appropriate policies and consider specific site allocations to address any shortfalls identified in the LHS and HNDA in respect of 'specialist housing'.

of the housing sector in supporting the Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Partnership to improve the health and welling of people in the Borders.

Figure 2.1: Local Strategic Influences on Meeting Housing Needs of those with disabilities.



2.14 The LHS 2017-22 has set annual Housing Supply Targets (HSTs) for 128 affordable and 220 market homes, which equates to an annual total of 348 new homes, which exceed the HNDA estimates in terms of affordable and more especially market housing⁴. The ambitiousness of the HST for affordable homes is evident from the fact that it is almost 50% higher than the annual average number of affordable housing completions (87) in the five years to 2017. To support the delivery of the HSTs, the Scottish Borders LDP continues to apply an ‘affordable and special needs housing policy’. This requires 25% of land to support the provision of such housing on sites where the policy applies.

2.15 The LHS also seeks to ensure “more people are supported to live independently in their own homes”. The LHS 2017-22 and supporting documents elaborate that:

- With just over 1,800 homes specifically for older and disabled people, there is serious under-supply of accessible and specialist homes, particularly to address the projected growth in the numbers of older people expected to live alone.
- The Council estimates there will be a requirement to deliver some 353 Extra Care Housing between 2015-2035, of which it is planned to deliver 180 such units by 2022. Some of these units are expected to be built to wheelchair accessible standards.
- In addition to the expansion of Extra Care Housing, there is a requirement to increase the provision of smaller, more accessible and easier to adapt homes across all tenures to help address the needs and demands of older and disabled people.
- There is a desire to achieve a step change in the provision of wheelchair accessible housing and an interim target that 10% of new affordable homes should be wheelchair accessible has

⁴ The Scottish Borders Council is one of the 6 local authorities that make up the Strategic Development Planning Authority for Edinburgh and South East Scotland (SeSPlan) that produce a Strategic Development Plan and the accompanying HNDA, with the most recent published in 2015. It estimated that 374 new homes will be required each year to 2021, of which 54% would be social rented, 11% other affordable, 12% private rented and 23% owner-occupied. Over a longer term (2018-2030) the HNDA assumed the annual requirement would be lower at 278 homes with 59% to be ‘affordable’ and 41% ‘market’ provision.

been set pending further policy analysis. A similar practice has been adopted by many other Scottish local authorities that also lack hard evidence.

- There is a need to for further innovation and investment not only in the design of new homes but in the deployment of assistive technology and the use and upgrading of existing homes to enable people to live independently in suitable homes.
- There is an ongoing requirement to invest in adaptations and Care & Repair and other housing related services, with over 8,000 adaptations and small repairs planned over the decade to 2028 to enable people to stay in their own home.

2.16 The LHS and supporting documents highlight the importance of information and advice. However, it contains limited discussion on the future development of housing information and advice for people with disabilities or the potential to evolve local housing options services to better respond to the needs of households that contain a wheelchair user or someone with substantial mobility issues.

Health and Social Care Integration: the housing contribution

2.17 The Scottish Borders Integrated Strategic Plan for Older People’s Housing, Care and Support 2018-21 highlights that the planned expansion of extra care homes will not only benefit occupants but will improve the capacity of services to enable people to better manage their conditions by acting as a ‘hub and spoke’ approach to delivering home care services for people living in the surrounding community. It also states that aside from planned expansion of Extra Care Housing (ECH), it would like to see 300 new social and private homes suitable for older people delivered in the decade to 2028 and that:

“Scottish Borders Council’s Planning service will encourage private and RSL housing developers to build housing to a standard that is suitable for older people as needs change (Housing for Varying Needs, or an equivalent standard for the private sector). This is so that a greater proportion of new build provision is future proofed for the growing older household population, the majority of whom wish to continue living in owner occupation.”

Integrated Strategic Plan for Older People’s Housing: Executive Summary 2018-2028 (pp7)

2.18 The Integrated Strategic Plan priorities feature significantly in the most recent SHIP programme. As table 2.1 shows, over a fifth (22%) of the affordable homes it is proposed to deliver in the next 5 years is defined as ‘specialist’ housing, primarily ECH.

Table 2.1: Summary of Planned New Affordable Supply Provision in Scottish Borders SHIP 2019-2024

Planned affordable provision	Number	Percent
Total number planned units	1,047	100
Of which:		
Specialist housing provision	234	22
Wheelchair accessible provision	12	1
Source: Scottish Borders (2018) Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2019-24. Notes: 1. Just 1% is designated as ‘wheelchair’ housing but this figure does not allow for wheelchair accessible homes that are included within other provision such as ECH. 2. The SHIP sets out proposals for the coming 5 years and it is important to appreciate that the profile of the approved programme as well as actual out-turn typically differ somewhat.		

2.19 The Scottish Borders Physical Disability Strategy is a partnership document outlining how various agencies (NHS, SBC, third sector etc.) will support people with a physical disability or long-term condition to ‘contribute, live and thrive in the Scottish Border. The strategy identifies 6 ambitions

for people with a physical disability, which are listed in the box below. From a housing perspective the strategy emphasises that important priorities are to:

- Ensure people with a physical disability benefit from the increased availability of affordable and accessible housing to support independent living.
- Engage with RSLs to ensure the needs of people with a physical disability are fully considered.
- Greater and more meaningful involvement of people with a physical disability in designing policies and services.

Scottish Borders Physical Disability Strategy
1. Support services are designed and delivered to support all people with a physical disability to live the life they choose, have control, make informed choices and have support to communicate this when needed at every stage of their lives.
2. People with a physical disability are able to participate fully in education and paid employment enabling their talent and abilities to enrich the Borders. People with a physical disability are supported through transitions in their lives e.g. from school to work.
3. People with a physical disability can live life to the full in their homes and communities across the Borders, with housing and transport and the wider physical and cultural environment designed and adapted to enable people with a physical disability to participate as full and equal citizens.
4. People with a physical disability are confident that their rights will be protected and they will receive fair treatment at all times.
5. People with a physical disability participate as active citizens in all aspects of daily and public life in Scotland. Information and communication are accessible and inclusive; barriers experienced by people with a physical disability including negative attitudes, stigma and discrimination, are understood and addressed and people with a physical disability are involved in shaping their lives and the decisions that impact upon them. Social isolation is reduced for people with a physical disability.
6. Unpaid carers of people with physical disabilities and long-term conditions are acknowledged and supported to recognise their rights as a career.

Concluding remarks

- 2.20 The 18-month Equalities and Human Rights Commission (2018) inquiry into housing found that the housing system throughout Scotland often results in people with disabilities facing unacceptable barriers to independent living. As a result, people with disabilities are often left feeling frustrated, demoralised, isolated and forgotten.
- 2.21 The EHRC findings have heightened awareness that in spite of the fact that newly constructed homes are now more accessible than at any time in the past, there is a very sizable shortfall in accessible housing and a lack of choice in terms of tenure, property type size, type and location for people with disabilities, particularly for households that contain people who use a wheelchair. This also most likely galvanised the Scottish Government to deliver on most of the housing commitments set out in the Delivery Plan in recent months.
- 2.22 National policy and legislative developments in the fields of housing and planning in the last 12 months have reiterated that well-designed housing and neighbourhoods can play a role in reducing the support and care needs of older and disabled people and improve their health and wellbeing. Only time will tell if these strategic aims will be accompanied by funding and practical measures that will overcome public sector austerity and other barriers that have hindered the ability of local authorities to ensure developers build homes suitable for wheelchair users. For now, local authorities have few cost-effective policy mechanisms or levers available to them to encourage appropriate new build responses for wheelchair users seeking homes in the private sector or to ensure homes that have been modified or adapted for wheelchair users can be retained in the market and made available to households seeking this type of housing.

3. THE NEED FOR ACCESSIBLE HOUSING AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT IS MET

Introduction

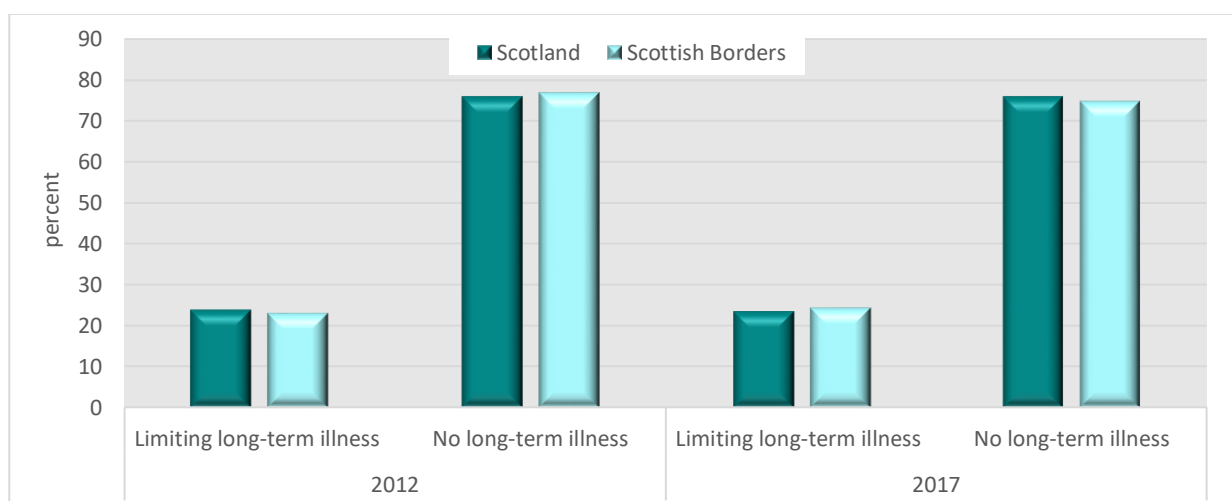
3.1 An understanding of the supply of accessible housing, and more specifically wheelchair accessible housing, and the extent to which it meets the housing needs and demands of people that use wheelchairs and/or other mobility aids is an important backdrop against which to devise policy. This section therefore draws on secondary data and published research evidence to provide a picture of the numbers, living arrangements and circumstances of wheelchair user households and mobility limited households. It then examines the provision of housing suitable for this group before exploring the current and potential gap between need and supply.

Numbers of people living with a disability

3.2 The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a long-term limiting mental or physical health condition that has a substantial negative effect on a person's ability to carry out normal daily activities that has lasted, or is expected to last, more than 12 months. In 2017 there were some 23,500 people in the Scottish Borders living with a disability. As figure 3.1 shows, the proportion of local residents of all ages living with a disability (24%) is in line with the Scottish average⁵. The SHCS also reports that the proportion of local households that contain someone with a disability (43%) is akin to the Scottish average (44%). Around three out of five households that contain someone with a disability are smaller 1-2 person households where at least one resident is aged 65 or older.

3.3 Figure 3.1 shows that the proportion of people living with a disability has remained broadly stable since 2012, both nationally and locally. However, the Family Resources Survey (FRS) indicates that in the last 15 years there has been a perceptible increase in the proportion of residents living with a disability. This is associated with medical and technological advances that have enabled more children with disabilities to survive into adulthood, more adults to survive accidents and diseases and more people to live into advanced old age, but often with long-term impairments.

Figure 3.1: Disability amongst adults aged All adults, 2014-2017 combined



Source: Scottish Surveys Core Questions 2012 and 2017

⁵ The FRS reports a similar proportion (23.7%) whereas the SSCQ 2017 suggests that since 2012 the Scotland wide figure has been rather higher at around 32%. This is understood to be because respondents are more likely to be inclined to identify long-term conditions when asked about them in the context of a specific interview about numerous aspects of their health.

Numbers of wheelchair and other mobility limited households

3.4 A limitation of published statistics is that disability is typically presented as a single category and does not distinguish between different forms of disability and the distinctive issues they face⁶. Definitional issues and major data gaps also make it extremely difficult to produce reliable estimates for wheelchair user households and other mobility limited households, even at the Scotland wide level. For instance, the Census does not ask about wheelchair use. Moreover, what national and local administrative data does exist has either not been shared or is very partial and is based on people in receipt of a specific service. Consequently, we have built on the approach used in the recent Scottish level study on the needs of wheelchair users (North Star, 2018). The following paragraphs therefore report on numbers based on prevalence rates derived from different data sources. These figures are then ‘triangulated’ with DWP disability benefits data.

Alternative estimates of wheelchair user households

3.5 Different surveys report variable estimates of the numbers of wheelchair user households. To allow for this we derived a number of alternative prevalence rates and applied them to the NRS household estimates for the Scottish Borders for 2018. The resulting figures are summarised in table 3.1. Essentially:

- The North Star (2018) approach involved applying wheelchair user household prevalence rates from the English Housing Survey (EHS) to the latest household estimates for the Borders.
- The Family Resources Survey approach employed a method set out by Perry (2014), who essentially estimated that some 10% of people with a disability use a wheelchair. A weighting was then applied to convert population into household estimates.
- The first set of SHS estimates were based on the average percentage of wheelchair user households for each of the years 2015 to 2017 inclusive. These estimates are substantially lower than the others due to the fact that the SHS only identifies cases where a person uses a wheelchair indoors.

Table 3.1: Alternative estimates of households that contain a wheelchair user

	Scottish Borders	Scotland
North Star approach estimates	2,000	89,200
FRS derived	2,300	103,400
SHS derived estimates (indoor only)	600	23,800
SHS revised (indoor and outdoor)	2,200	96,700
Sports England	1,700	74,800
NHS England	1,600	73,000

Sources: North Star (2018), Perry (2014) SHS 2015-17, NRS household estimates for 2018, NHS England wheelchair patient figures and study team’s own calculations

Notes:

1. All figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. All of the estimates are based on the population that live in private households and exclude wheelchair users that live in an institution such as care home.
3. NHS England data was used as the NHS Scotland SMART service had yet to respond to our formal “freedom of information” request at the point when the report was finalised.

- The second set of SHS estimates incorporated an estimate for outdoor wheelchair use, using figures from the EHS that suggest up to 74% of people use a wheelchair outdoors only. The resulting estimates are in reasonable alignment with the other survey-based estimates.

⁶ The SHeS also provides estimates for different disabilities in terms of limiting health conditions such as musculoskeletal system, respiratory system, digestive system, diabetes, skin conditions and so on but these medical labels provide only limited insight into potential housing requirements.

- The fifth set of estimates use prevalence rates published by Sports England. However, it has not been possible to track the original source for these, which casts doubt on their validity.
- The final set of estimates are based on NHS wheelchair service users in England. These figures are lower than the survey-based estimates. The two most likely reasons for this are that patient records may be incomplete and/or that a proportion of wheelchair users do not make use of services managed by NHS clinical commissioning groups. Non users would include people that buy or rent a wheelchair privately or access wheelchairs loaned by charitable organisations. For instance, the Red Cross loaned out 138 wheelchairs to people that required the temporary use of a wheelchair in the Scottish Borders in 2018.

Estimates of other mobility limited households

3.6 The SHS 2015-2017 data can be used to gain some insight to the numbers of mobility limited households. Two alternative estimates were derived. The first was based on households where someone is required to use mobility aids other than a wheelchair to move around their home. The second was based on the proportions of households that contain a disabled person whose movement within the home and their ability to carry out daily activities were restricted by the design or layout of their home. In interpreting these figures, which are reported in table 3.2, it should be borne in mind that the second set of estimates will not necessarily include people using wheelchairs or other mobility aids that are already living in a suitably designed or adapted dwelling.

Table 3.2: Alternative estimates of households that contain someone with substantive mobility issues

	Scottish Borders	Scotland
Households with member(s) that use a mobility aid indoors	2,100	90,100
Household has disabled persons who is restricted by dwelling*	2,000	89,500
Sources: SHS 2015-2017 and study team's own calculations		
Note: * These estimates include people who use mobility aids, including wheelchair, whose daily activities (getting in/out bed; bathing; cooking etc) are restricted by their home environment.		

DWP disability benefits

3.7 DWP data on households in receipt of disability benefits also provides a useful insight into the prevalence of disability and more specifically mobility-related disabilities. As it is a non means tested benefit, Disability Living Allowance (DLA) at the higher mobility rate has traditionally been used to approximate the numbers of people with substantial mobility issues, including those who use wheelchairs. The introduction of Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in 2013 to replace DLA for adults of working age, means it is now necessary to combine figures for both benefits. It is also useful to look at the number of older people in receipt of Attendance Allowance, albeit this does not include a mobility element.

3.8 Overall numbers of people in receipt of each of these three disability benefits are shown in the table 3.3. It indicates that in February 2019:

- Around 620 children under the age of 16 years were in receipt of DLA, which equates to some 3% of the local population under 16 years, close to half of which had learning disabilities.
- Around 80 children that have reached the eligibility age threshold of 3+ years were eligible for the higher DLA mobility rate. In the case of both children and adults, this premium is awarded to people who use a wheelchair, people who have difficulty walking, and people for whom walking poses a serious risk to their health, such as people who are blind, 'severely sight impaired' or 'severely mentally impaired'.
- Around 1,680 older people continue to receive DLA or PIP because they were already in receipt of these benefits when they reached retirement age. Close to two thirds of these older

people are eligible for the higher mobility rate. Older people claiming DLA are proportionately far more likely to receive this premium than those claiming PIP. The higher mobility rate is often swapped for access to the motability car scheme.

- People aged 65+ and newly claiming disability benefits are eligible for Attendance Allowance (AA). Eligibility for AA increases with advanced old age, with upwards of two thirds of claimants being aged 80+ years. Arthritis and dementia are the most common conditions associated with receipt of AA. Over 2,530 people are in receipt of this benefit in the Borders.
- Close to 4,100 adults of working age are in receipt of a disability benefit, most commonly PIP. Conditions are classified differently in DLA and PIP data but there is a high prevalence of learning disabilities, mental health conditions and arthritis amongst working age claimants.
- Some 1,750 adults of working age receive the higher mobility rate, of which 80% claim the PIP enhanced mobility rate. It is based on a stricter mobility test than that employed for DLA and is commonly known as the “20 metre rule”. This controversial test has seen many former DLA claimants lose some or all of their entitlement to mobility support on transferring onto PIP.

Table 3.3: Number of people in Scottish Borders in receipt of different disability benefit, 2019

Age	DLA		PIP		Attendance Allowance	
	all	higher mobility	All	higher mobility	lower rate	higher rate
0-16	619	83	0	0		
16-34	156	38	728	298		
35-64	542	277	2,652	1,132		
65-79	914	645	563	289	316	512
80+	204	155	0	0	748	964
Total	2,435	1,216	3,943	1,719	1,064	1,476
16-64	698	315	3,380	1,430	0	0
65~	1,118	800	563	289	1,064	1,476

Source: Department for Work and Pensions Stat -Xplore

Notes: DWP adjusts or suppresses figure to prevent disclosure where there are small numbers, so exact numbers, especially where less than 100 should be interpreted with caution.

Consideration of evidence

3.9 Evidence from elsewhere in Scotland consistently indicates that, in the case of children, there is a close correlation between receipt of the higher DLA mobility rate and wheelchair use. Most older people in receipt of the higher DLA mobility rate also appear to be a wheelchair user at some point. In contrast, far higher numbers of working age adults are in receipt of the DLA or PIP higher mobility component than the numbers of adults known to NHS England services to use wheelchairs. Based on available evidence, including SHS evidence on receipt of disability benefits, it is reasonable to assume that a third of working age adults in receipt of the DLA higher mobility rate, rising to around 60% of those in receipt of the PIP enhanced mobility rate may require the use of a wheelchair. Likewise, it seems reasonable to assume that some 12% of older adults in receipt of Attendance Allowance are wheelchair users.

3.10 The sum of the resulting estimates for children, older people and working age adults suggests that around 2,200 people may use a wheelchair. As few wheelchair households contain 2 or more wheelchair users (around 4-5%), this range is consistent with survey-based estimates set out in tables 3.1 and 3.2.

3.11 Based on the proceeding analysis, we conclude that:

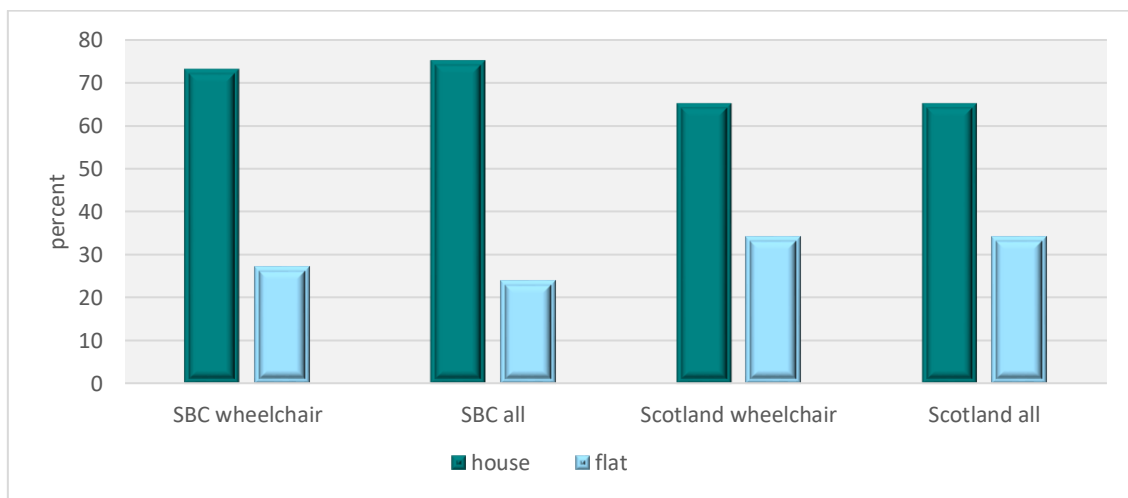
- Somewhere between 1,600 and 2,300 households contain at least one person that has to use a wheelchair, with a central figure of 2,000.
- The above range suggests that as a general rule of thumb around 3.5% of all households in the Scottish Borders contain a wheelchair user. This equates to 8.5% of all households with a disability, which is a denominator routinely published in SHCS tables.
- There is a minimum of 600 wheelchair user households where one or more persons have to use a wheelchair indoors. This sub-group is likely to be in most 'need' of a specifically designed or adapted accommodation to ensure their home is suitable for everyone in the household.
- This group of 600 wheelchair user households most likely includes most, if not all, of the 80 families with children that use wheelchairs. As these households should be known to children's services, it should be possible to identify and pro-actively plan for those families that would benefit from homes built or adapted to wheelchair accessible standards.

3.12 The evidence also suggests there may be between 2,000 to 2,500 further mobility limited households where someone has substantial difficulties moving around the house but does not necessarily use a wheelchair. As far as we have been able to ascertain, most of these households appear to be comprised of older people.

Household composition and living arrangements

3.13 The following paragraphs explore the composition and living arrangements of wheelchair user households. Data permitting, we report on our bespoke analysis of SHS 2015-17 data for the Scottish Borders. However, due to the small sample, even when 3 years' worth of data was combined, we occasionally had to infer patterns from Scotland wide statistics. Where statistically significant local data is available, percentages for the Scottish Borders and Scotland tend to be similar, especially once confidence intervals are allowed for. This approach is therefore unlikely to have a major distorting effect on the local picture set out below.

Figure 3.2: Dwelling type occupied by all and wheelchair user households, 2015-17



Source: SHS 2015-17: study team's own analysis

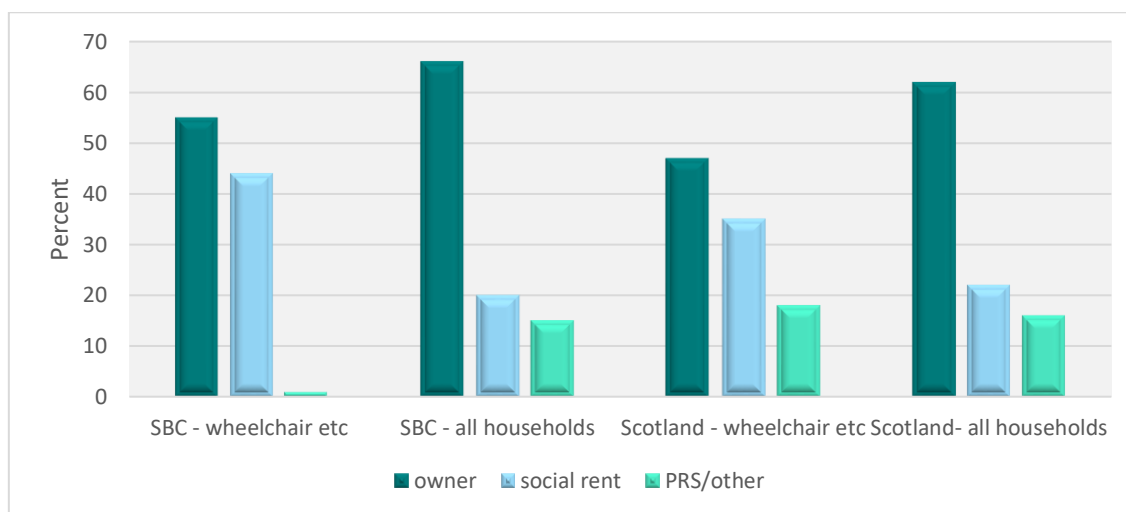
3.14 In terms of the size and composition of wheelchair user households that live in the Scottish Borders, SHS evidence suggests that two fifths live in smaller two adult households, a third live alone and a quarter live in family or large adult households, including around 10% that have dependent children.

3.15 Consistent with the stock profile of the Scottish Borders, close to three quarters of wheelchair user households live in either a house or bungalow and just under a quarter live in a flat or a maisonette (see figure 3.2). It was not possible to identify the proportion of wheelchair user households that live in sheltered accommodation and other forms of supportive housing or housing specifically designed for older or disabled people. Slightly over half of wheelchair users in the Scottish Borders live in a property with 3+ bedrooms, but they are more likely to live in a dwelling with 1-2 bedrooms than other households. This is probably associated with the distinctive tenure profile of wheelchair user households of working age.

3.16 Figure 3.3 compares the tenure profile of wheelchair user households with that for all households. Both national and local data for private renting/other tenure is subject to high margins of errors and is not considered robust. That aside, SHS data suggests that:

- A little over half of wheelchair user households (55%) are owner-occupiers. This is below the rate for all households that reside in the Scottish Borders but is above the rate for wheelchair user households in Scotland as a whole.
- Almost all other wheelchair users in the Scottish Borders live in the social rented sector (44%), which is higher than the rate for other households in the Scottish Borders. Stakeholder discussions suggest this may partly reflect the comparatively older age of social tenants in the Scottish Borders relative to Scotland as a whole.

Figure 3.3: Tenure of all and wheelchair user households etc compared, 2015-17



Source: SHS 2015-17: study team's own analysis

3.17 The UK Life Opportunities Survey indicates that the tenure patterns of older wheelchair user households are similar to those for all older households. On the other hand, there are marked differences between the tenure profile of wheelchair user households of working age and other working age households, with much higher proportions of the former renting their home. It was not possible to 'triangulate' this using SHS data but this distinctive tenure pattern was mirrored in the on-line survey (see section 4). The higher concentration of working age wheelchair user households in the social rented sector reflects the reality that wheelchair users are often disadvantaged in the housing market as a result of their weaker position in the labour market and greater reliance of state benefits.

3.18 On average, wheelchair user households have lower incomes than non-disabled households, with the gap being far more pronounced for working age than retired households. The SHS 2015-17 indicates that wheelchair user households of all ages are highly concentrated in the £15,000 to

£25,000 income band. It also indicates that less than half of wheelchair user households of working age contain someone is in paid employment.

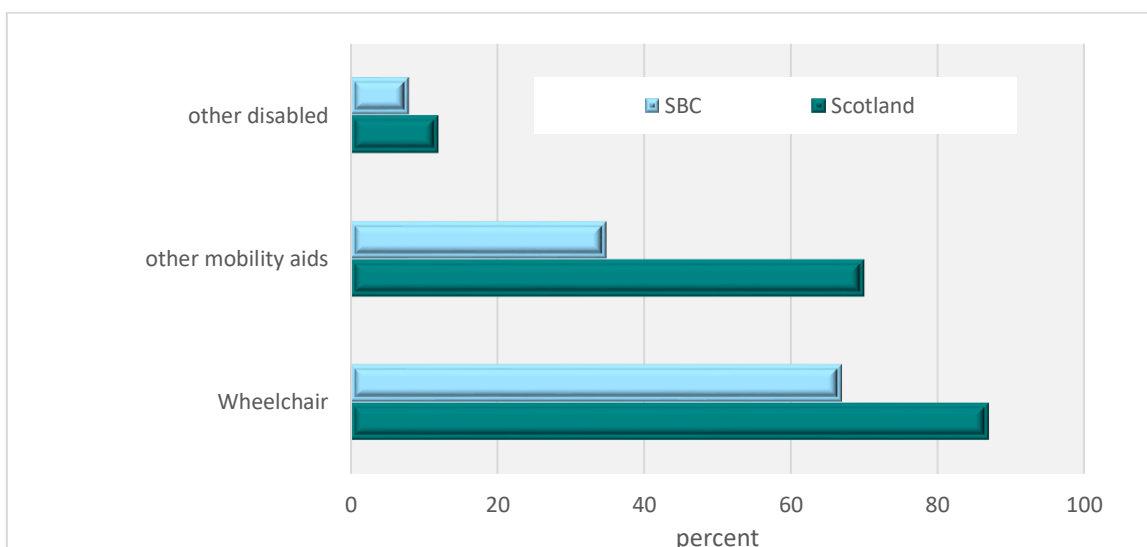
Exploring potential unmet needs

3.19 People who use wheelchairs indoors are more likely to encounter difficulties moving around their home and carrying out daily activities than other disabled households. This is also the case for people who use mobility aids such as walking frames indoors, although the difference is less pronounced. The SHS 2015-17 allows some comparisons to be made between people who have to use a wheelchair indoors and other disabled people that do not use mobility aids indoors. Although small sample sizes mean the data is not fully robust, it serves to illustrate that both nationally and locally:

- The large majority of wheelchair users had at least some difficulty using the bathroom compared to less than half of other disabled persons.
- Most wheelchair users had at least some difficulty cooking, including a third who were unable to cook. In contrast, less than half of other disabled persons reported any difficulty.
- Almost all wheelchairs users had difficulty getting in and out of their home as did people that used mobility aids indoors. For other disabled people this was much less of an issue with under a fifth reporting they had great difficulty getting in and out of the home.
- Getting up and down the stairs was a problem for virtually all people who used wheelchair or mobility aids indoors.

3.20 The SHCS 2015-17 reports that just under a fifth of homes in the Scottish Borders contain adaptations, which is in line with the Scottish average. As expected, households that contained indoor wheelchair users (67%) and indoor mobility aid users (35%) were significantly more likely to report that their home included adaptations than other households. On the other hand, the proportions were lower than the comparable figures for Scotland, even after confidence intervals were taken into consideration (see figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4: Percent of households reporting their home has one or more adaptations



Source: SHS 2015-17: study team's own analysis

3.21 Adaptations most commonly reported to have been made to the home were ramps, handrails and specially designed or adapted bathrooms, with between 50% and 60% of local wheelchair user households reporting that their home included one or more of these. Far fewer wheelchair user

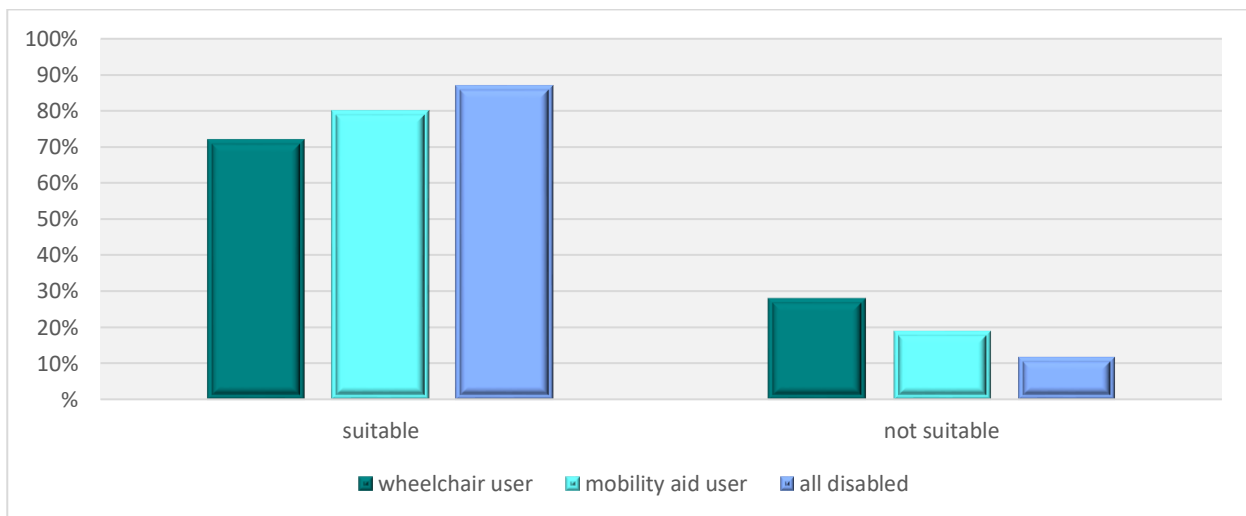
households reported having wheelchair accessible adaptations such as relocated light switches and power points, raised sockets, stair or through lifts and door widening.

3.22 Some 12% of disabled households in Scotland reported that their home lacked adaptations that they required. This proportion increased to 33% for indoor wheelchair users and to 32% for indoor mobility aid users. The corresponding figures for the Scottish Borders, whilst not very statistically robust, were similar in spite of the lower numbers of households reporting the presence of one or more adaptations in their current home.

3.23 Numerically speaking, the majority of those requiring further adaptations were homeowners, but there was little difference in the proportion of wheelchair users' households in each of the main tenures that felt their home required further adaptations, at least at the Scotland level. For the most part, the adaptations required included ramps and the other most commonly supplied adaptations as noted above.

3.24 Disabled households that said that their home required adaptations were also asked if their current home was suitable for their needs. Figure 3.5 shows that at the Scotland wide level almost 9 out of every 10 disabled households said that whilst they required adaptations, their current home was very or fairly suitable. It also shows that wheelchair user households and mobility limited households were less inclined to say their current home was suitable. Overall, only 70% of wheelchairs user households who responded to this question said their current home was suitable, as did some 80% of limited mobility households. Comparable local figures are not robust but show a similar pattern. Wheelchair user households of working age were more likely to say their home was unsuitable than those above retirement age.

Figure 3.5: Disabled households that state their home is suitable or unsuitable, Scotland 2015-17



Source: SHS 2015-17: study team's own analysis

3.25 The results suggest that some 11% of all wheelchair user households in Scotland live in a house they judge to be fairly or wholly unsuitable. This should be considered as a minimum estimate as the SHS survey is framed in a way that is likely to underestimate the numbers of wheelchair users who assess their home to be unsuitable. Wheelchair user households who feel they would not benefit from any further adaptations to their current home would have not been asked this question. Those who believe their current home is not suitable for adaptation may also not have been asked if their current home is suitable for their needs. We would also caution that these estimates take little account of 'conventional' housing need indicators such as the physical condition of their home, overcrowding and fuel poverty or whether the location of their home makes it easy to access local services and amenities.

3.26 Applying the SHS figures reported above to our central estimate of the number of wheelchair user households (2,000), suggests that at a minimum:

- Some 220 currently live in housing that is not suitably designed or adapted to their needs and require alternative accommodation, with the lower and upper range limits being 170 and 270 respectively.
- Some 450 require further modifications to their home to improve its suitability and are unlikely to want to move house, with estimates ranging from 370 to 530.

Overview of the housing stock

3.27 In mid-2018 there were an estimated 58,425 dwellings in the Scottish Borders. Around 80% were in the private sector, of which 60% were owner occupied, 14% were private rented and 6% were vacant. The remaining 20% of dwellings were social rented. According to the SHCS 2015-17, some 73% of properties were houses and 27% were flats, indicating there has been minimal change in the dwelling type profile of the housing stock since the 2011 Census. Changes to national data collection exercises mean it is no longer possible to separately identify bungalows and ground floor flats but Indigo House (2017) have suggested that 10% of flats in the Borders may be located on the ground floor. There will also be some apartment blocks where the accessibility of all flats benefits from lift access.

3.28 The composition of the housing stock differs by tenure and locality (see appendix 3). In 2011 some 74% of owners and 68% of private renters lived in a house or bungalow compared to 46% of social renters, reflecting the fact that 3 out of 5 of all flats in the Scottish Borders are owned by social landlords. The above average proportions of households that live in houses in localities such as Berwickshire is bound up with variations in the tenure composition of each area. Since 2011, the rate of new homes constructed across all tenures for every 1,000 households (5.6) has been below the comparable rate for Scotland (6.7).

Private housing

3.29 The introduction of the Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004 and further accessibility standards in 2007 have enhanced the accessibility, if not the space standards, of newly constructed homes. Essentially, new homes in all tenures are now required to provide 'safe, convenient and unassisted access' such that one level of a residence must allow for unassisted access to an apartment (usually a living room), kitchen, WC and shower/ bathing facilities. Examples of other accessible features in the regulations include minimum door widths and stairs of a sufficient standard to permit a stair lift to be fitted if necessary.

3.30 Stakeholders generally perceive these standards have improved the accessibility of new homes in the private sector, albeit these still fall short of the Housing for Varying Needs Standards (part 1) that have been applied to social housing since 2004. Moreover, whilst both the building regulations and HfVN (part 1) provide a level of accessibility suitable for people with mobility restrictions (potentially including people temporarily confined to a wheelchair) they are not intended to meet requirements of people who use a wheelchair long term.

3.31 No data is available in respect of the accessibility of private homes built prior to the introduction of the new regulations. However, supplementary SHCS 2002 analysis by Communities Scotland (2005) identified only 65,000 potentially 'barrier free homes in the whole of Scotland, virtually all of which were in the social rented sector. Neither the Scottish Government nor the Council hold data on how many new homes have been built to the post 2004 accessibility standards. Likewise, data is not held on housing built to full wheelchair accessible standards. This is in spite of the fact

that the Scottish Government NB1 & 2 statistical returns that local planning authorities are required to complete includes provision for wheelchair housing, sheltered wheelchair housing and other 'specialist' provision to be recorded⁷.

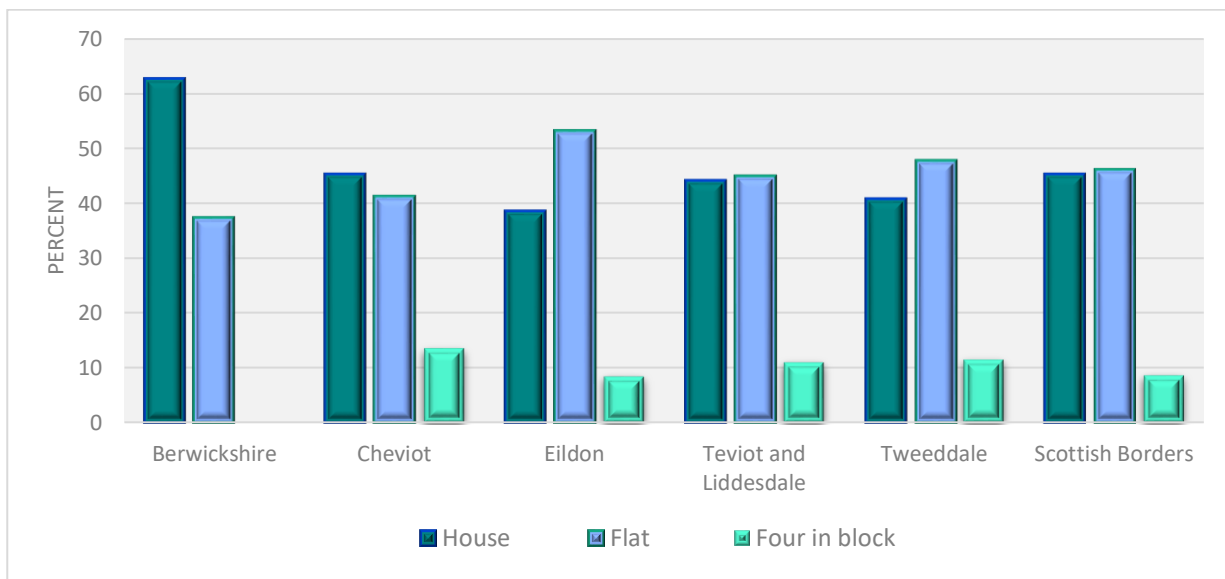
3.32 Discussions suggest that it has only been since 2011 that accessibility standards have been fully reflected in private sector completions, mainly because most private homes built prior to that were based on building warrants secured before the standards came into effect in 2007. This would suggest that at the end of 2018 no more than 1,950 private homes in the Scottish Borders may have been built to comply with current accessibility standards but the precise figure will be lower as some of these dwellings have been sold or transferred to RSLs.

3.33 Stakeholder feedback suggests that the construction of wheelchair accessible housing in the private sector is rare and typically occurs only in exceptional circumstances, such as when a wheelchair user is able to use a compensation payment to fund a self-build home. The Council's 'Scheme of Assistance' allows for the provision of advice and/or grant assistance to enable disabled households who might wish to purchase and modify new, existing or 'off plan' private homes, as permitted under the Housing (Scotland) 2006 Act. However, this is not well publicised.

Social housing stock

3.34 In 2017, RSLs collectively owned some 11,800 social rented homes. Figure 3.6 shows the distribution of the RSL social rented stock across the five H&SCP localities in the Scottish Borders. Slightly over half (55%) of RSL stock is comprised of four-in-a-block and other types of flats. This is higher than the Census 2011 rate, which supports stakeholder perceptions that recent RSL developments plus RTB and other stock disposals have led to a further concentration of flats in the social rented sector. The high proportion of RSL stock that is comprised of flats presents challenges in terms of meeting the needs of people with a disability and in particular the potential to adapt homes to be fully accessible for wheelchair user households.

Figure 3.6: RSL housing stock by locality and dwelling type



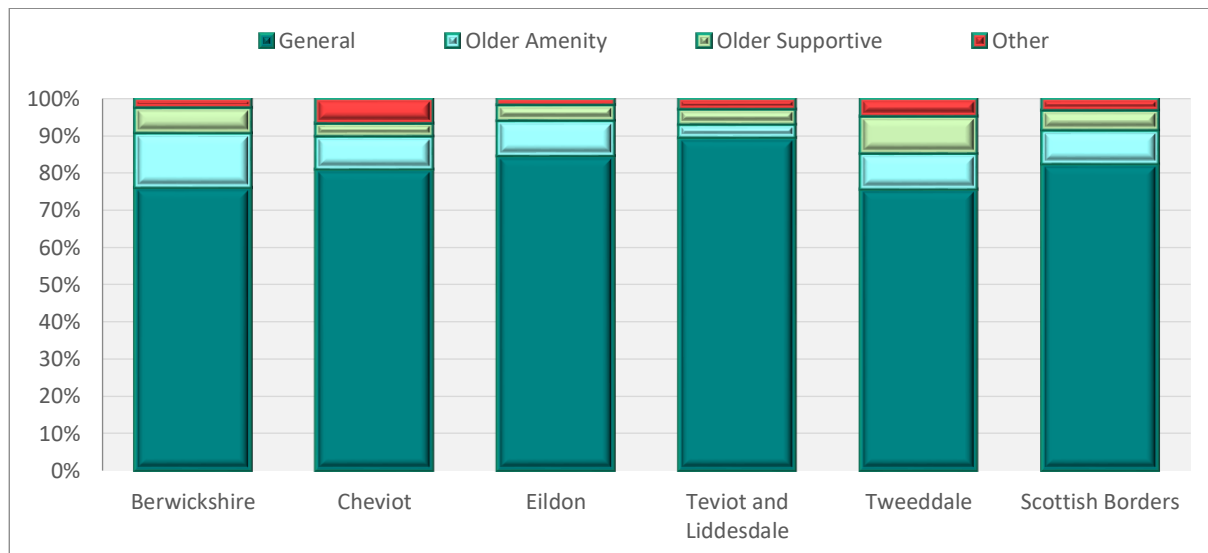
Source: SBC local RSL returns dataset plus supplementary data from RSLs

3.35 Four out of five social rented homes comprise of 1-3 apartments (see appendix 3). Aside from the high share of flats in the sector, this reflects the traditional role that the RSL sector has played in

⁷ Discussions with the Scottish Government indicate that SBC is not alone; most local authorities generally do not report of the composition (provision type or needs category) of homes.

specialist provision, primarily for older people.⁸ RSLs use a diversity of terms referring to specialist provision, figure 3.7 therefore uses a simplified categorisation to illustrate the type of provision available across the Scottish Borders. It shows that 18% of all social rented homes directly managed by RSLs are classed as ‘specialist provision’ with this proportion ranging from 11% in Teviot and Liddesdale to 24% in Tweeddale. It also confirms that most specialist provision is aimed at older people.

Figure 3.7: RSL housing stock by locality and provision type



Source: SBC local RSL returns dataset plus supplementary data from RSLs

Accessibility and wheelchair accessible RSL homes

- 3.36 Not all RSLs could specify which properties conform to the basic HfVN accessibility standard, but it is generally believed that the vast majority of homes constructed since 2004 meet this standard. This assumption would suggest that at least 1,000 RSL homes meet the basic HfVN accessibility standard. We are unable to breakdown this estimate by locality.
- 3.37 We also asked RSLs about their stock of wheelchair accessible housing to supplement the Council’s annual return RSL dataset. Based on this additional evidence, it appears that RSLs collectively own 164 homes that comply with the HfVN wheelchair accessible standard, including all 37 Extra Care homes in Dovecot Court in Peebles. Thus 1.4% of RSL stock is fully wheelchair accessible.
- 3.38 Eildon also have 127 wheelchair ‘friendly’ apartments situated in five sheltered housing schemes that were developed between 1988 and 2002. These units have not been audited to confirm if they are fully compliant with HfVN wheelchair accessible design guidance. Taking these units into account would increase the share of RSL stock accessible to wheelchair users to 2.5%.
- 3.39 The EHRC quoted figures from the Scottish Housing Regulator that suggest that in 2013 just 0.7% of council homes and 1.5% of RSL homes in Scotland were accessible for wheelchair users⁹. This suggests that the EHRC’s conclusion that there is a “severe shortage of accessible homes across all tenures” is equally applicable to the Scottish Borders. This shortfall may be most acute in communities where social housing is more or less confined to homes supplied by Waverley and/or SBHA as both have next to no HFVN compliant wheelchair or other accessible homes. Waverley

⁸ Hanover Scotland also factor 35 privately owned Rose Park Retirement development in Peebles.

⁹ The Scottish Housing Regulator had not been able to provide more up to date figures for Scotland or the Scottish Borders at the point in time when this report was finalised.

told us they have built no new homes since 2004 whilst SBHA confirmed that just 71 of their 5,590 homes (1%) have been built since 2004.

Table 3.4: Number and summary profile of RSL HfVN wheelchair accessible housing by locality

		Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon	Teviot and Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Total	
		%	%	%	%	%	%	No
Dwelling type	House	92	77	95	61	11	61	99
	flat	8	23	5	39	89	39	64
	All	100	100	100	100	100	100	164
Apartment Size	1-2	37	50	57	72	89	62	101
	3	45	36	32	17	9	28	45
	4+	18	14	11	11	2	10	17
	All	100	100	100	100	100	100	164
Total number		51	22	19	18	53	NA	164
As a percent of all RSL stock		2.5%	1.2%	0.5%	0.7%	3.7%	NA	1.4%

Source: SBC local RSL returns dataset plus supplementary data from Eildon, SBHA and Waverly

Notes:

1. Excluding ECH in Dovecot Court, there are 127 HfVN wheelchairs accessible units in the Borders and 16 such units in Tweeddale.
2. There is one unit where the RSL was unable to provide unit level data.
3. This table excludes the 127 Eildon 'wheelchair friendly' sheltered housing units.
4. Cross-checks with RSL supplied data indicates that the Council's RSL return dataset records some 1-bedroom units as 1 apartment units (bedsit). We have therefore merged 1-2 apartment categories.

3.40 Table 3.4 indicates most wheelchair accessible homes comprise of one or two bedrooms (2-3 apartment) dwellings but some larger family style provision is available. These have tended to be built for a family known to local disability organisations, social services or the NHS. Most wheelchair accessible homes are recorded as houses in the Council's dataset, although RSLs report most are bungalows. Likewise, we have been able to verify that most wheelchair accessible flats are situated on the ground floor, although some are in buildings that offer lift access. Table 3.4 also confirms there is some variation in the share of RSL stock that is comprised of wheelchair accessible across the five localities, with particularly low rates of provision in the Eildon locality as well as the Teviot and Liddesdale locality.

Planned affordable housing units

3.41 New build data supplied by the Council indicates that less than 2% of the 521 social rented completions in the 5 years to the end of 2018/19 were built to wheelchair accessibility standards. Looking forward, information produced to support the annual SHIP update indicates that it is proposed to develop substantially higher numbers of wheelchair accessible homes in the coming years than has been achieved in the last five years.

3.42 As noted in section 2, the SHIP 2019-24 prepared in October 2018 outlined proposals for 12 new wheelchair accessible homes. By September 2019 these proposals had been updated to include provision for 74 new wheelchair accessible homes, including plans for 41 units situated within two of the planned Extra Care Home (ECH) developments (see table 3.5). It was also anticipated that a yet to be specified proportion of the units in three more ECH developments proposed to be completed between 2022-2025 would include wheelchair accessible homes. Collectively these three ECH developments would provide 113 units. Assuming anywhere from a fifth to a half of all these units were built to wheelchair accessible standards, this would increase the proposed

numbers of wheelchair accessible homes to be built in the affordable sector to 97 and 131 respectively.

Table 3.5: Summary of current ongoing and planned wheelchair accessible homes

	Including ECH	Excluding ECH
2019/20	3	3
2020/21	53	12
2021/22	18	18
2022/23	0	0
Total	74	33
Source: Email correspondence from SBC Housing Strategy Team		
Note: the annual HST equates to 128 affordable homes but RSL starts for the last 2 financial years have been running at an average of around 150 units.		

Proposed wheelchair housing provision relative to interim SBC wheelchair target

- 3.43 Setting aside the ECH developments, the latest proposals allow for 33 new wheelchair accessible homes in the next four years, including three units to be completed during 2019-20. This is close to four times the number built in the past 5 years. On the other hand, the numbers of wheelchair accessible units constructed over the four years to March 2023 would need to:
- Increase to 52 units (13 units per annum) if the Council and its partners wished to convert the interim target that 10% of affordable homes should be wheelchair accessible, using the HST as the denominator, to an agreed target.
 - Increase to 60 units (15 units per annum) if the Council and its partners felt the 10% wheelchair target should be based on recent and planned starts.
 - Increase to 88 units (22 units per annum) if the aim was to resolve the current backlog of wheelchair user households in need (i.e. require a move to alternative accommodation) within 10 years and assuming all required some form of affordable housing provision.
 - Increase to 176 units (44 units per annum) if the aim was to resolve the current backlog of wheelchair user households in need within 5 years and assuming all required an affordable housing solution.
- 3.44 The ECH proposals would potentially enable the Council and its partners to achieve a 10% wheelchair accessible target, however defined. They would also enable the Council to make substantial inroads into tackling current unmet need. On the other hand, the feasibility of the ECH proposals is not clear. Both the construction of ECH and wheelchair accessible homes are more expensive than the construction of housing for general needs, whereas benchmark subsidy levels are based on general needs housing. Although the Scottish Government will consider the need for higher grant subsidy on a site by site basis, there is no guarantee that higher grant levels, if forthcoming, will be sufficient to cover all the additional costs. RSLs are therefore likely to face financial challenges in seeking to simultaneously deliver ECH and wheelchair accessible housing, especially in smaller ‘mainstream’ developments of less than 30 units.
- 3.45 Relying extensively on the ECH programme to achieve a 10% wheelchair accessible target (or an alternatively specified target) may have a limited impact on reducing the expressed demand for wheelchair housing. As discussed below, most RSL applicants seeking wheelchair housing are of working age.
- 3.46 These are issues that will be explored further as part of the policy phase of the study.

Social rented housing applicants and lettings

Wheelchair user households applying for social rented housing

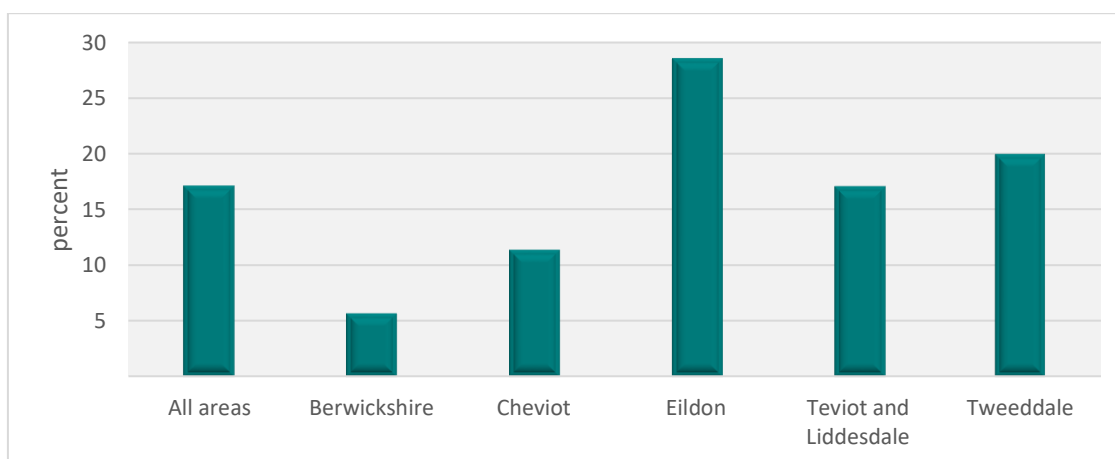
3.47 With the ending of the Common Housing Register (CHR) it is no longer possible to produce a fully comprehensive picture of expressed need for social housing in the Scottish Borders¹⁰. Discussions and summary information provided by locally based RSLs suggest that around 60-65 wheelchair user households have registered for social housing. This may include a small element of double counting of households who have applied to two or more RSLs. It also includes existing social tenants seeking a transfer to a more suitable home. As some RSLs noted, the housing register offers a less than perfect indicator of the potential requirement for wheelchair accessible housing in the social rented sector. As one RSL observed:

“We may have a low number of wheelchair applicants registering with us as they know or have found out that we do not have any wheelchair housing”.

3.48 Eildon HA, which has easily the biggest share of wheelchair user applicants (60%), supplied anonymised data for applicants specifically seeking wheelchair accessible housing. It shows that:

- 75% of applicants are under the retirement age of 65 years, 17% are aged 75+ years and the remainder are aged 65-74 years.
- More or less equal shares of applicants are comprised of single person, two persons and 3+ person households.
- Virtually all wheelchair user household applicants have been assessed to have a ‘medical need’, with two applicants recorded as statutory homeless.
- Half of all applicants had been awarded gold status, a third had silver status and the remainder bronze status under its choice-based allocations system. Very simply, this system allows applicants the chance to choose their own home by “bidding” for an advertised vacant property, with those with the highest rating (gold status) given first refusal.
- Slightly over half (54%) of applicants were existing social tenants, 20% were owners, 14% were private tenants and 11% were living with family or friends. Most applicants that had been awarded bronze status were existing social tenants.

Figure 3.8: Locality area preferences (first choice) of applicants



Source: Eildon HA wheelchair applicants – analysis by study team

¹⁰ The only way to resolve this would be to access personal data from each RSL applicant and carry out a matching and screening exercise to allow for households that have applied to two or more RSLs. This would be a resource intensive exercise and it would be more difficult to secure the necessary data in the wake of the 2018 Data Protection Act.

3.49 The data also illustrates the locality preferences of applicants but the value of this data is very likely to be limited. The findings for Berwickshire are no doubt dampened by the fact people seeking rehousing in much of this locality are likely to have applied to Berwickshire HA rather than to Eildon HA. More importantly, stakeholders report that applicants' choice of area tends to be very specific and localised. Most applicants have a very strong preference to remain in their current settlement. If anything, this pattern is even more pronounced for wheelchair users who often rely greatly on their social support network.

Lettings

3.50 The number of properties that become available for occupation as opposed to the numbers of new homes built each year is typically the key consideration in determining how many households and which households are allocated social rented housing. The Council's RSL annual return dataset records the number of annual lettings made by RSLs to tenants. This can be broken down by a number of 'needs categories' that include wheelchair housing¹¹. It suggests that in the four years to the end of 2017-18, an average of 6 wheelchair accessible homes were let each year, with over four out of every five lettings being made by Eildon. Almost all of the remaining lets were made by Berwickshire HA.

3.51 The actual number of lettings made to wheelchair chair user households is known to be rather higher, although by how much cannot be quantified. This is partly because the 'needs categories' do not generally permit wheelchair accessible housing situated within extra care, sheltered and other 'specialist' developments that is allocated specifically to wheelchair users to be separately identified. Moreover, as RSLs explained, some wheelchair user households will accept a ground floor property if it is in a location they wish to move to and/or has been or could be adapted to make it more suitable. In spite of these limitations, available evidence makes it clear that:

- Turnover of wheelchair housing is low compared to general needs housing, reflecting the fact wheelchair users tend to move house far less frequently than most households. This suggests that all other things being equal, the provision of new homes for wheelchair users has a bigger role to play in addressing their needs than households seeking general housing provision.
- Current numbers of applications and lettings suggest that it would take up to 10 years to clear the current backlog of expressed unmet housing need in respect of wheelchair user applicants¹².

Issues around allocations and referrals

3.52 Discussions with wheelchair users and other stakeholders has reinforced that, as elsewhere in Scotland (EHRC, 2018), wheelchair user households and other disabled households can experience difficulties accessing social rented housing. Local stakeholders referred to the complexities of the social housing allocation process and told us that:

- Wheelchair users do not always apply for social housing because they know that the type of accommodation they require does not exist in the area where they want to live.
- Wheelchair users and their families do not always have a good understanding of the allocations policies of RSLs and can find it hard to actively participate in the choice-based

¹¹ The data does not permit first lets of newly built homes and relets of existing homes to be identified.

¹² These figures exclude reletting of Dovecot Court units, which is only allocated to older people that are nominated by the H&SCP and have been subject to a full social care assessment and would benefit from living in an Extra Care Home setting.

bidding process, especially during periods where they have to contend with ill-health and other personal issues.

- Allocation policies and practice are not always sufficiently sensitive to the needs of wheelchair user households for homes in accessible areas and/or for additional space, including the need for an extra bedroom for overnight carers.
- There can be a tendency to steer wheelchair users to apply (or bid) for an accessible property in settlements where such properties are situated, which can remove them from close proximity to their family support networks. We would also add that any such steers would also constrain the ability to track where 'demand' for wheelchair housing is highest.
- Allocation policies do not seem to give much priority to people that use wheelchairs intermittently whilst existing social tenants can be frustrated at the perception that because they have a social tenancy they are more or less suitably housed.
- Formal referral arrangements with social services are not well developed and RSLs sometimes have to work through disability organisations and groups to find a suitable wheelchair user household to let properties to.
- There is disappointment at the lack of joined-up planning for the housing needs of families with children that use a wheelchair where it is possible to be reasonably certain what their future housing needs would be. Similar points were made in terms of people being discharged from hospital, albeit mainly in relation to adaptations.
- RSLs use a single assessment to classify and record medical need known as the Unified Health Assessment form but as far as we can tell this information is not collated and analysed to inform Council or RSL strategies, or preferably joint strategies.
- There is significant pressure on RSL allocation systems caused by the need to balance appropriate allocations with minimising void times and loss of income. This can lead to wheelchair accessible homes, but much more commonly adapted homes, being allocated to households that do not strictly need them, even where RSLs are striving to do so. The impact of welfare reform on rental income and arrears is adding to these tensions.
- The operation of various choice based letting schemes make it difficult to pinpoint whether wheelchair users that apply direct to RSLs are being suitably housed.
- Signposting between RSLs is variable as not all routinely advise applicants that require wheelchair or other accessible housing to apply to other RSLs with suitable stock in the area.

3.53 Finally, on-line advice and on-line housing applications and bidding are viewed positively by most stakeholders but current Housing Options arrangements appear to fall short on what is required to ensure on-line services work for people. Several pointed to the lack of high quality and easily accessible on-line advice on the Councils website. One stakeholder pointed to the lack of visibility of the Care & Repair Service whilst another said that even basic information such as the ability of households to make separate applications to different RSLs was not clear. However, the most commonly expressed concern was the lack of advisors that could work with wheelchair users and other disabled people in all tenures to enable them to weigh up their options, make informed choices and guide them through the process of applying and bidding for social housing, securing adaptations (and funding) or moving house. Again, these are other issues surrounding the wider allocation system warrant further discussion during the policy phase.

Housing adaptations

3.54 As noted in section 2, an important priority for the Scottish Borders is to continue to meet demand for home adaptations to enable people to live in their own homes and to meet their

needs. The local adaptations service (both major and minor works) is run through the Scottish Borders Care & Repair Service. It administers adaptations for tenants of the four local RSLs as well as private sector residents, although adaptation of privately rented properties remains rare. Funding support for private adaptations is provided by the Scottish Borders H&SCP whilst funding for RSL adaptations is provided by the Scottish Government.

3.55 Care and Repair records reported in table 3.6 show that in the four years to the end of 2018-19:

- Some 800 major adaptations were carried out across all tenures. For the most part, major adaptations are carried out in date order.
- Demand for major adaptations, as measured by the number of outstanding applications at the end of each financial year waiting list has remained broadly stable.
- 363 major adaptations in the private sector were completed, but the number of completions each year has fallen back and the numbers of outstanding applications has steadily grown.
- 435 major adaptations were completed in the RSL sector, with the numbers of completions increasing each year, resulting in a steady decline in outstanding applications.

3.56 The above figures run contrary to the widely held perception that funding for private sector adaptations tends to be better than for RSL adaptations. One possible reason for this is that some RSLs front fund major adaptations or make additional monies available to help minimise delays. Another possible reason is that there has been some increase in more complex and costly private sector adaptations, which has increased the work involved and the time required to secure all the necessary permissions, arrange the necessarily works and put in place the necessary funding package.

Table 3.6: Summary of major adaptations carried out via Care & Repair from 2015-16 to 2018-19

	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Major Adaptations				
Completed private major adaptations	106	83	94	80
Private applications outstanding at year end	30	39	53	63
Completed RSL major adaptations				
	79	106	123	127
RSL applications outstanding at year end	87	83	63	54
No Ramps Completed				
Private	6	2	4	8
RSL	2	3	3	6
No Other Majors Completed				
Private	100	81	90	72
RSL	77	103	120	121
Source: Figures supplied by Borders Care & Repair				

3.57 Care & Repair systems do not specifically record whether clients are wheelchair users but they suggested that ramp installations provide a somewhat useful proxy. The numbers of ramps fitted are therefore reported in table 3.6. Whilst there was a sharp rise in ramp installations in 2018-19, we were advised that there has been no significant change in underlying demand and that annual fluctuations are to be expected due to the small numbers of households involved.

3.58 The Scottish Borders operates a relatively integrated and streamlined housing adaptation system and Care & Repair aims for an 8-10 week turnaround from receipt of works notification to completion for private sector cases. However, delays can still arise. We heard that:

- Staff shortages and cutbacks have adversely affected the capacity of occupational therapists to respond promptly to requests for assistance and there can be long waiting times for assessment (2+ months).
- For more challenging adaptations, securing the necessary permissions from planning or utility companies can elongate timescales, as can the need to conduct detailed structural inspections.
- Homeowners can experience issues raising finance or submitting all the required documents.

3.59 In the case of social housing, lengthy delays can arise if a home requires extensive modification and it is hard to devise a cost-effective solution and/or find a suitable decant property. The most commonly reported source of delay, however, is the insufficiency of funding. We were told that the Scottish Government allocation for RSL stage 3 adaptations account for just 50% of what RSLs require and that the budget is usually spent before the end of the financial year. Consequently, RSL tenants can wait some time for an adaptation, especially if their landlord does not supplement the Stage 3 budget.

3.60 It was outside the scope of this study to appraise the performance of housing adaptations but we heard that:

- Care & Repair is a highly valued service but it does not appear to be widely known outside housing circles in spite of considerable prior efforts to promote the service through GP surgeries, hospitals, dentists and the CAB. Tighter funding has now constrained promotional activities, raising concerns that this may increase the barriers homeowners and private tenants can face in navigating the adaptation and funding system.
- The input of occupational therapists (OTs) is highly valued but there is a perception that assessments are not always very person-centred. Some service users feel that OTs do not always give adequate weight to their views and preferences or the need to create a home environment that is suitable for all members of the family.

3.61 Looking at adaptations from a system wide perspective, different stakeholders observed that:

- By focusing on critical or substantial needs, the opportunity to use adaptations as a preventative measure to reduce the risk of falls and other accidents within the home has been missed. People who use wheelchairs on an intermittent basis are felt to be particularly disadvantaged by the current prioritisation framework.
- There has been no local assessment of the number of people in need of adaptations to their existing home to inform forward planning and resource allocation.
- The capacity of the local building industry to carry out adaptations is quite limited. It can be difficult to find contractors willing to tender for work in more rural areas and there are perceptions that building professionals such as architects are not always fully conversant with accessible and inclusive design matters. One stakeholder also questioned whether alternative procurement arrangements might encourage contractors to submit competitive and/or timely tenders.
- There are limits to what housing adaptations can deliver in terms of improving accessibility. This is partly due to the age and design of much of the existing housing stock and partly due to the local terrain in which homes are situated.

Likely future trends in the requirement for wheelchair accessible housing

3.62 There is no robust or easy way to credibly forecast or project the potential future requirement for wheelchair accessible homes. However, North Star (2018) attempted to provide some insight by

using prevalence rates. They estimated that in the 10 years from 2014-15 to 2024-25 unmet housing need amongst wheelchair user households in Scotland could increase by 61% from 17,200 to 29,424. They also drew on work by the Personal Social Services Research Unit (2015) in relation to health trajectories to produce two alternative scenarios, which ranged from 28,000 to 31,000.

3.63 As with all scenarios, it is possible to question the methods and assumptions used but, in this instance, our main reservations are that:

- All three scenarios are out of kilter with PSSRU's own findings that suggest the potential additional 'specific housing' provision required for older people living in the community plus working age adults with a physical disability in Scotland is likely to be in the region of 31% to 39%, around half the rate North Star suggest.
- Future demand for wheelchair accessible housing will be driven by many complex and varied factors, most of which are inherently unpredictable, such as the likely impact of the expansion of re-enablement services or the influence of unexpected adverse life changes for people.
- Whilst all three scenarios assume rates of disability will increase, as already noted, the Scottish Health Survey indicates rates of disability in Scotland have been stable since 2012.

3.64 In light of the fragility of the national projections, it was concluded that the only practical option was to simply offer some insight into the direction of travel of future trends, largely assuming all things remained constant other than projected household growth. The following scenarios are therefore not intended to provide a robust basis from which housing supply targets can be set. Instead it is intended to serve as a useful backdrop for policy driven discussions around target setting in respect of the provision of wheelchair accessible housing.

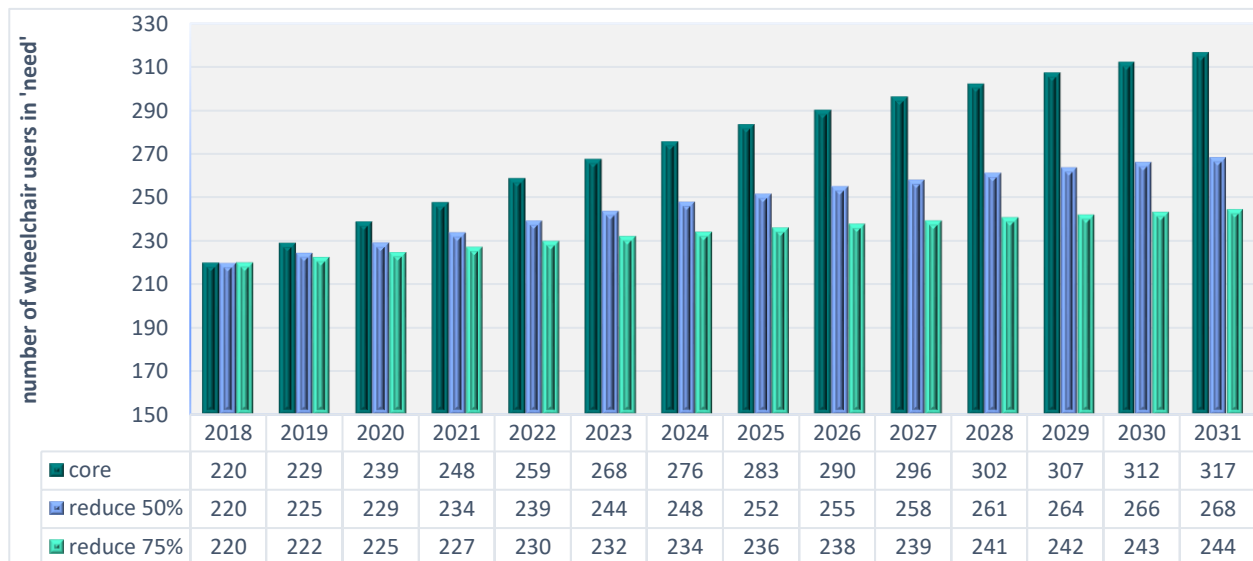
3.65 Assuming that wheelchair user households continue to make up around 3.5% of all households, NRS projections indicate that the total numbers of wheelchair user households could increase from 2,000 in 2018, to 2,082 in 2028 and to 2,100 by 2031. Thus by 2023 there would be around an additional 50 wheelchair user households seeking a suitable home and by 2028 there would be over 80 additional wheelchair user households seeking a suitable home. Building on this simple projection of the potential growth in the numbers of wheelchair user households, figure 3.9 illustrates three different scenarios of how the additional numbers of wheelchair user households might impact on the overall potential 'gross' need for a suitably designed home in the decade to 2028 and beyond. All three scenarios are based on the assumption that there were 220 wheelchair user households in housing need in 2018. This is our core estimate of the numbers of wheelchair user households that are unsuitably housed and require a move to a home designed to HfVN wheelchair accessibility standards (see paragraph 3.26). Figure 3.9 shows that:

- The core scenario assumes that all the additional wheelchair user households likely to emerge in the period to 2028 would require a suitable wheelchair accessible home. Under this scenario, the potential shortfall in HfVN wheelchair standard homes could increase from 220 in 2018 to 266 by 2023 and to 302 by 2030. This would imply that, on average, 30 homes might be required over each of the next 10 years.
- The second scenario assumes that 50% of the 'additional' households would prefer to see their current home modified to suit their needs. Under this scenario, the numbers of HfVN wheelchair accessible homes that might be required would increase to 244 by 2023 and to 261 by 2028. This would imply that some 26 wheelchair accessible homes might be required each year for the next 10 years.

- The third scenario assumes that 75% of the additional households would prefer an in-situ solution, which would lower the potential requirement for HfVN wheelchair standard requirement to around 24 homes each year in the period to 2028.

3.66 The above numbers are only illustrative but they reinforce current realities; namely that the current backlog of outstanding need for HfVN wheelchair accessible housing is so extensive that it requires a step change in the level of provision if the situation is not going to deteriorate further.

Figure 3.9: Possible direction of travel in the potential shortfall in wheelchair accessible housing



Source: NRS 2018 based household projections plus study team own calculations

Concluding remarks

3.67 There is a lack of definitive figures on the numbers of wheelchair user households and the accessibility standards of the current stock of housing across all tenures. This presents many challenges to building up a clear picture of the demand and the supply of wheelchair and other accessible homes. By collating data from a variety of sources we have been able to ascertain that there is a very considerable mismatch between the demand and supply of housing suitable for wheelchair user households as well as others with limited mobility across all tenues. This effectively means that wheelchair user households do not have equal access to suitable housing.

3.68 If this matter is to be rectified, it is vital for housing, planning, health and social care as well as other interests to focus their collective effort on ensuring that a much larger share of newly built homes in all tenures are constructed in such a way that they are easy and cost effective to modify in response to the changing requirements of the households that occupy them. This needs to be accompanied by action to put in place effective, robust arrangements for matching households to dwellings and services as well as ensuring wheelchair users are better informed and supported to navigate the housing system.

3.69 There is a pressing requirement for Scottish Borders Council and its partners to improve local data in respect of the number, living arrangements and needs of wheelchair users and at the same time develop better information sharing arrangements to support strategy and planning. On the other hand, we see no value in seeking to devise a statistical demand model to forecast or project potential 'need' over the longer term. The comparatively small numbers of wheelchair accessible households, the unpredictability of many events that can lead to wheelchair use and the fact that wheelchair use is shaped by environmental conditions inevitably mean that no matter how apparently sophisticated, projections can only provide broad brush trend analysis.

4. PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF WHEELCHAIR USERS

Introduction

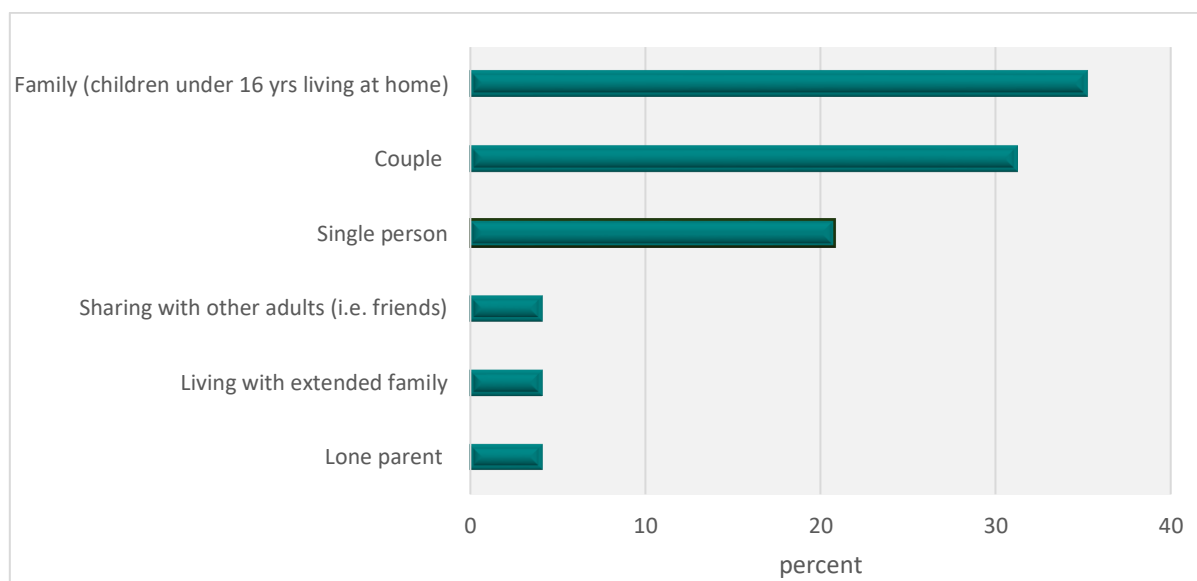
4.1 This section explores the housing related arrangements and experiences of wheelchair user households it draws on information from 48 individuals (or their carers/representatives) that participated in the on-line survey and 13 follow up interviews with survey participants. Whist both exercises relied on self-selection, participants come from a wide range of backgrounds and live in different localities throughout the Scottish Borders. Further details about this aspect of the study are reported in appendix 4.

Profile of participants and their current home

4.2 People that participated in the survey range in age from children to older people but the largest concentrations are in the 65+ age group (31%) the 25-49 age group (31%) and the 50-64 age group (29%). This age profile is not too dissimilar to national survey evidence and confirms that in the case of wheelchair users, the overlap between disability and old age is less pronounced than policy documents can inadvertently imply. Most participants are female, partly reflecting the concentration of female wheelchair users in the 65+ age group and all participants described themselves as Scottish, English or British.

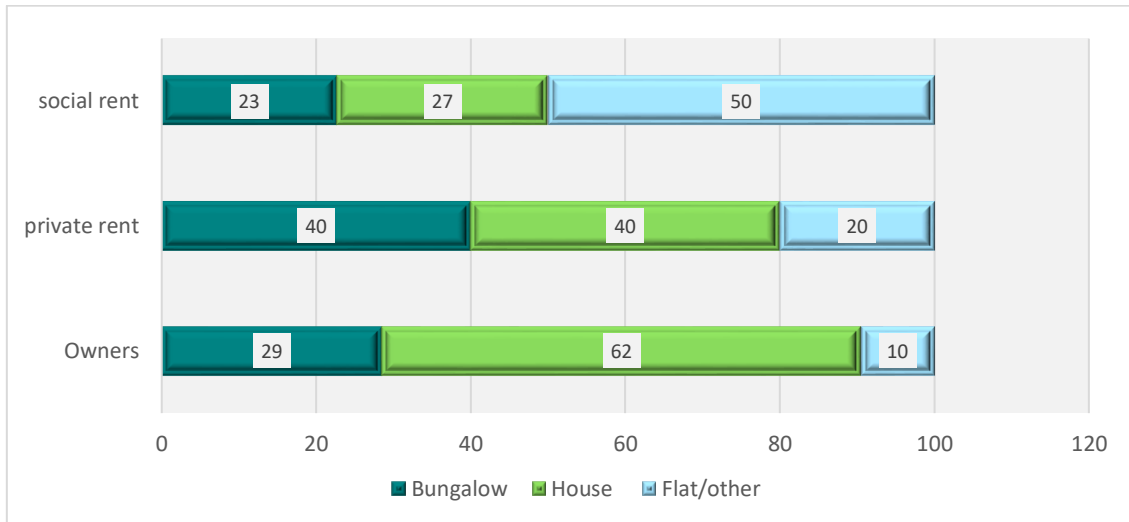
4.3 Figure 4.1 illustrates that three quarters of survey participants, including all wheelchair users under the age of 18 years, live with other people, typically in couples, lone parent and extended family households. Most other wheelchair users live alone, with the numbers more or less evenly split between those under 65 years and those aged 65+ years.

Figure 4. 1: Self-reported household type of survey participants (%)



4.4 Over 70% of participants live in a house or bungalow and 30% live in a flat (see figure 4.2). Interestingly, the proportions in each tenure that live in a bungalow is in line with the tenure distribution of the population as a whole. Most of the 14 participants that live in a flat are social renters, including 4 that live in supported housing. Participants that live in a bungalow or house typically have access to three or more bedrooms whereas those living in a flat mostly have access to one or two bedrooms. Equal proportions of survey participants have lived at their present address for more than and less than five years.

Figure 4. 2: Type of dwelling occupied by survey participants tenure (%)



Tenure, income, work and benefits

4.5 Virtually identical numbers of participants live in the owner-occupied and social rented sectors but the tenure profile of working age and retired households are distinctive (see figure 4.3). Two thirds of those aged 65+ years are homeowners and the remaining third are social renters. In contrast, slightly over half of working age participants are social renters and a third own their home. Participants that live in the private rented sector are all of working age.

Figure 4.3: Tenure of survey participants under and over the age of 65 years



4.6 The different tenure patterns of retired and working age participants is consistent with national survey evidence. The follow up interviews also confirmed that older wheelchair user households generally acquired their disability later in life, long after they had become homeowners. Younger homeowners also say they had been homeowners prior to a deterioration in their health, which in some cases was the result of an adverse life event such as an accident at work or road traffic accident.

4.7 In contrast, working age wheelchair users that rented their home tended to be excluded from the work place and were not in a financial position to buy a home¹³.The need to provide care for children that use wheelchairs also routinely prevents those who care for them from seeking work.

¹³ Around 40% of all survey participants of working age were in paid work, which is only slightly below the UK employment rate amongst people with disabilities of working age (46%).

Interviews with private renters suggest that other than money, difficulties accessing social rented housing and a desire to live close to family and social networks also influence tenure choices.

4.8 The survey provides little background information on the income of wheelchair user households¹⁴ but it broadly corresponds with evidence from national studies in the sense that:

- Wheelchair user households that own their home generally report higher incomes than those that rent their home and are far more likely to have at least one member of the household in work or has recently retired.
- Most social and private renters are in receipt of Housing Benefit, indicating they are lower income households.
- Upwards of 80% of participants claim a disability related benefit such as PIP, DLA or Attendance Allowance.

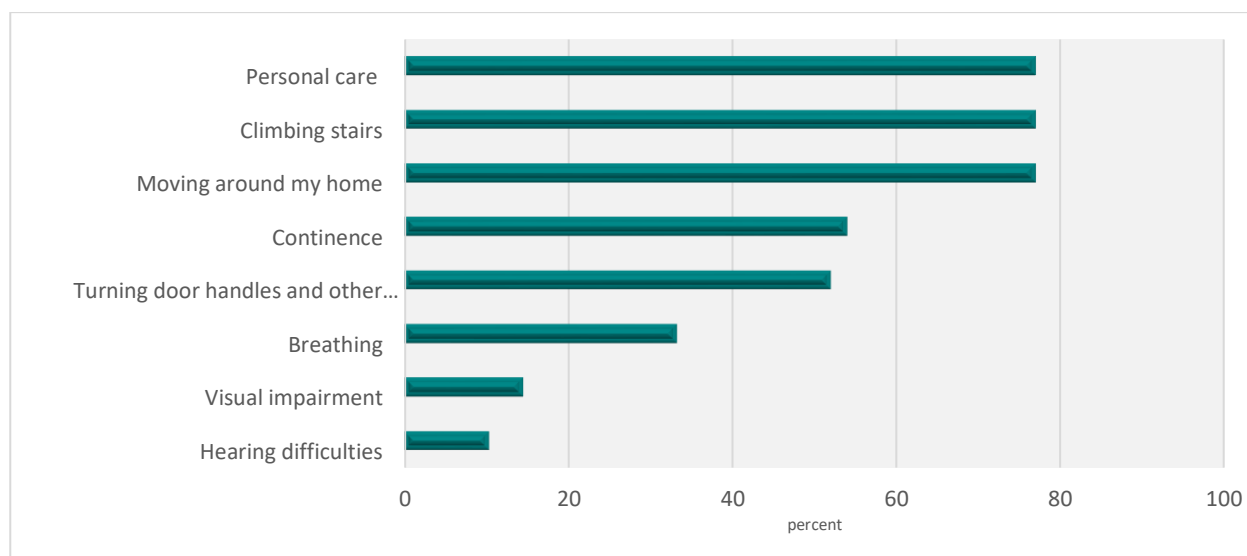
4.9 A fifth of participants said they struggle to pay their housing costs, increasing to a third if outright owners are excluded. Most of those who are struggling are of working age¹⁵

General health, access to support and wheelchair use

4.10 The on-line survey did not examine medical and care needs but it did collect some basic information on the kind of difficulties that individuals face as a result of their disability and housing situation. As figure 4.4. shows, these problems often extend beyond mobility difficulties:

- Over three quarters of participants report having difficulties with moving around their home, with most participants finding it difficult or impossible to climb stairs, access upstairs bedrooms, access bathrooms and reach cupboards. Some participants also told us they have problems with reaching light sockets and using door handles.
- Similar proportions also experience difficulties with personal care such as getting in and out of bed, washing, dressing and eating, whilst around half report problems of incontinence.

Figure 4.4: General health and difficulties

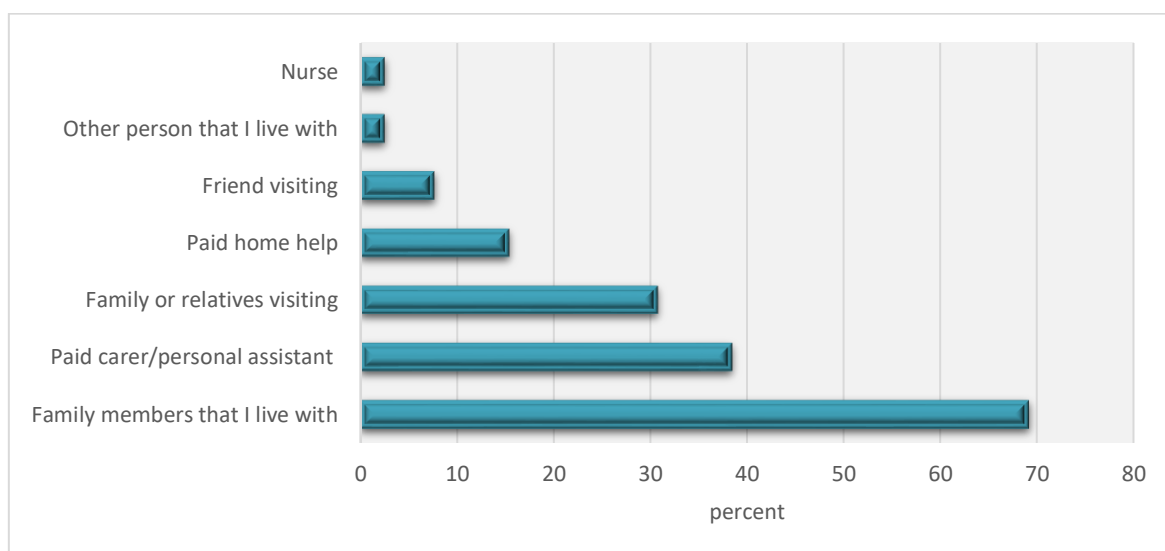


¹⁴ Aside from the small sample size, 16 participants did not answer the income question and it is well documented that survey respondents under-report income, especially Housing Benefit and other state benefits.

¹⁵ Other than age, there were no obvious patterns in terms of tenure, income and so on that might be plausibly associated with difficulties paying housing costs.

- 4.11 Whilst responses suggest mobility related difficulties do not vary significantly by tenure or dwelling type, it does suggest there are differences in terms of age and household composition. As expected, children and older people aged 75+ years typically have more extensive and more complex health conditions and personal care needs. In contrast, wheelchair users that live alone are less likely to report mobility difficulties such as moving around the house or personal care needs. This may be partly because they are less likely to have multiple health conditions and partly because they are more likely to live in property better suited to their mobility needs.
- 4.12 A total of 38 survey participants say they receive regular help with household tasks and/or personal care. Of these, as figure 4.5 illustrates almost all rely on family or relatives, most commonly other members of their household, although those living alone rely on visiting support from their family. Slightly over half also receive formal or paid care, most commonly a paid personal care or assistance.

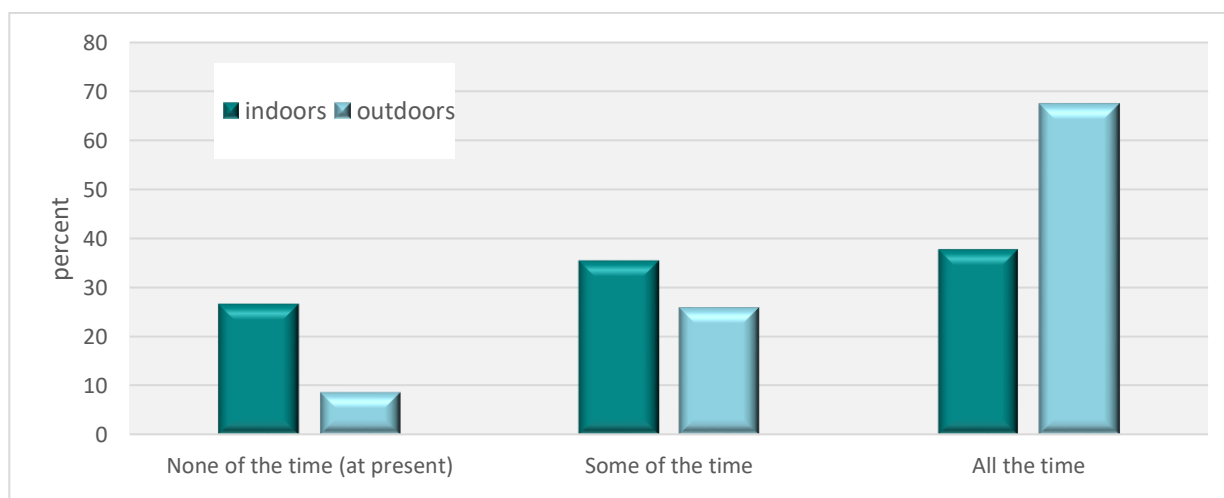
Figure 4.5: Who provides regular assistance with household tasks and/or personal care



Use of wheelchair and other mobility aids and equipment

- 4.13 Three out of five participants have used a wheelchair for 6 years or more and virtually all have used a wheelchair for a year or more. Participants were asked how often they use a wheelchair within and outside the home. Of those who responded, two thirds use a wheelchair ‘all of the time’ when outdoors and a third use a wheelchair ‘all of the time’ when indoors (see figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7: Frequency with which use wheelchair indoors and outdoors



4.14 Participants use a range of other mobility aids and equipment depending on the nature and severity of their disability. When prompted, 10 or more participants say that they use one or more of the items of equipment listed in table 2. Some 17 participants said unprompted that they use other equipment indoors, such as:

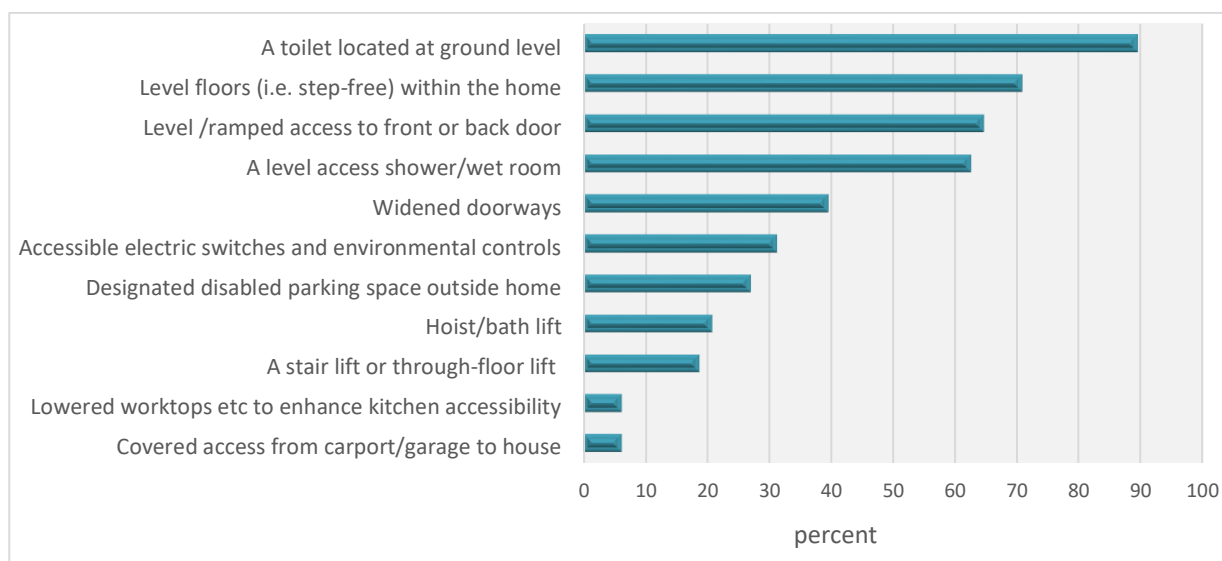
- Hospital or other specialist beds
- Commodes and Closomat toilets
- ‘Sara Stedy’ and other standing aids
- Grabrails and bedrails
- Raised toilet frame and other forms of toilet and shower seats.

Stick	13
A zimmer frame	11
Powered wheelchair	18
Self-powered wheelchair	17
Wheelchair pushed by another	34
Mobility or adapted car	26
Hoist	10
Shower chair	38
Further details about use indoors and outdoors can be found in appendix 4.	

Design features and adaptations

4.15 Less than half of participants say their home has been designed or adapted for wheelchair use or that their home is in the process of being adapted. There is also a lot of variation in the presence of design features that are associated with the HfVN ‘standard’ and ‘wheelchair’ accessibility guidelines within the homes of participants. Figure 4.8 shows that upwards of 3 out of 5 respondents say their home has at least one accessibility feature such as a ground floor toilet, level access or ramp access to the house, step free interiors and a level access shower room. However, less than half say their home have ‘wheelchair accessible’ features such as accessible switches and environmental controls or widened doorways. In addition, less than a fifth say their home has covered access from carports/garages, stair/through lifts or features that affect kitchen accessibility such as lowered or moveable worktops. Responses also indicate that owners are more likely to have a stairlift or through lift within their home than households in other tenures.

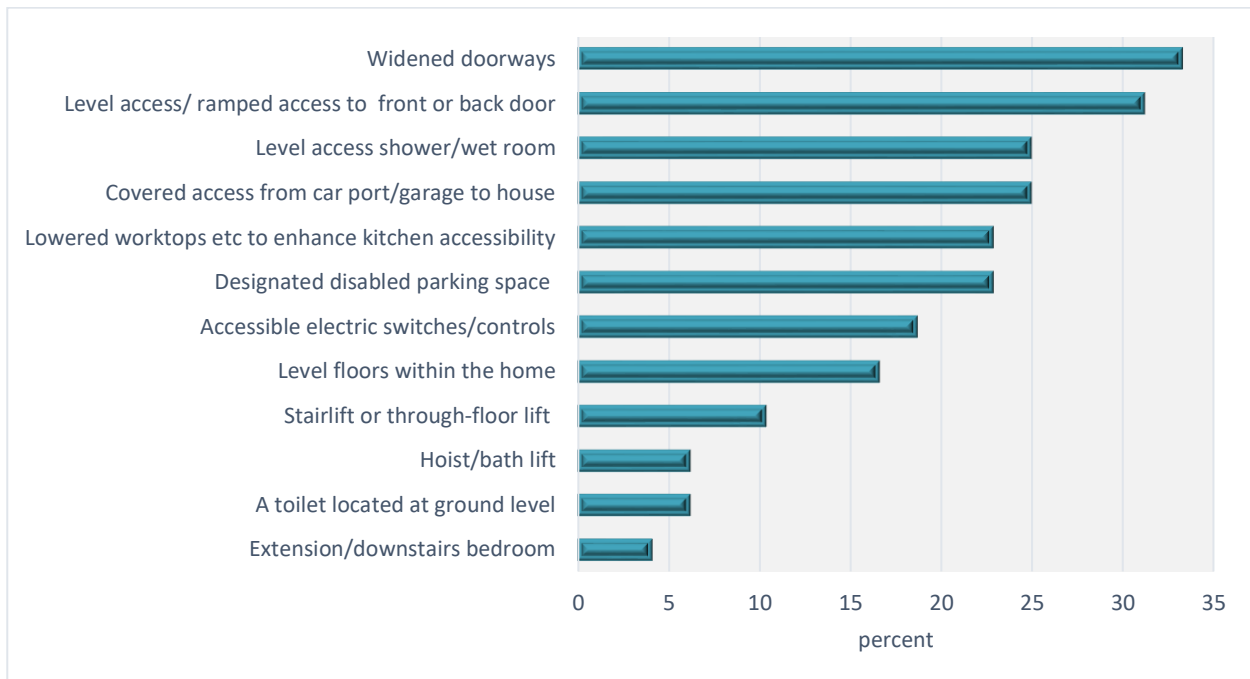
Figure 4.8: Percent of all respondents that state home has design feature (%)



4.16 A list of adaptations and design features was presented to survey participants who were asked to say whether they needed them but do not have. Participants also had the opportunity to identify other adaptations they needed. Both prompted and unprompted responses are summarised in figure 4.9. There is considerable overlap between the SHCS 2015-2107 and the on-line responses as to the most commonly required adaptations which are needed but not available, with upwards of a quarter of participants saying they need but do not have:

- Widened doorways
- Level access and/or ramped access to the front or back door
- Level access shower/wet room
- Covered access from a carport and/or garage to the house.

Figure 4.9: Adaptations respondents state they require but do not have (%)



4.17 As a general rule, single person households are less likely to say they require further adaptations than other types of household. In terms of the two main tenures, there is little apparent difference in the propensity for owners and social renters to have access to ‘standard’ accessibility features such as ramps, downstairs toilets and wet floor showers. On the other hand, social renters are more likely to have access to ‘wheelchair’ accessible features such as accessible switches and environmental controls, hoists and bath lifts but they are also far more likely to say they require additional adaptations. In particular, families and couples of working age that live in the social rented sector (as opposed to older people and single adults) tended to express a need for further adaptations.

Experience of adaptations and equipment

4.18 The programme of interviews shed light on some of the lived experiences wheelchair users have in trying to secure adaptations and the impact of living with or without them made.

4.19 Feedback from homeowners pointed to a keen sense of independence, choice and control and a strong desire for solutions that addressed both their disability and the housing needs of their whole family. All had experience of adaptations services at some point and some believe they receive a good service and are very satisfied with the work undertaken, often pointing to the benefits derived from improvements to the accessibility of their homes, especially the ground floor. This view was summed up by one person who described the ‘Help to Adapt’ service ‘a ‘fabulous scheme’.

4.20 Those with less positive views voiced frustration with the lengthy waiting times and processes involved. OT services and advice are generally well regarded but there is a view that OTs can be overly rigid and fail to recognise the need to create a living environment for the whole family. Owners also talked about the importance of good communication with architects and other

professionals, with suggestions that architects may be less familiar with accessibility standards that with environmental sustainability standards and features. Owners also queried why funding for adaptations was not subject to the arrangements as direct payments for care.

“I have been waiting for a portable ramp to be installed for some time and there has been little contact from ‘social services’ on what stage the process was at”

- 4.21 To gain greater choice and control, some homeowners with the financial capability had opted to organise and pay for adaptations themselves. We also heard from owners that they had taken the decision to commission a bespoke house to secure a home suitable in spite of the fact that the process of acquiring land and planning permission is far from straightforward.
- 4.22 Private renters experience of adaptations was also variable, but for different reasons. One tenant described their landlord as ‘extremely supportive’ and gave examples such as explaining that his landlord had voluntarily funded and fitted a walk-in shower when they realised that “I could not use a bath”. The other said had asked for an assessment 3 months ago but was still waiting.
- 4.23 Social renters, two of whom had a child that used a wheelchair, expressed the strongest and most extreme views. At one end of the spectrum tenants felt their RSL had been responsive and had made all the necessary adaptations. At the other end of the spectrum tenants had been left feeling angry and helpless at RSL decisions to refuse adaptations and queried the rationale for such decisions.

Perceptions about current home

- 4.24 Participants were asked whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the design and layout of their home. Participants were also asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about the design and layout of their home (see table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Survey respondents that agree or disagree with statements about their home

Layout and design questions combined	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither (%)
I can move around (and turn around) the kitchen in my wheelchair	56	29	8
I find it easy to get in and out of my home	52	40	15
I need more storage space for equipment	46	50	35
The design and layout of my home has helped me live more independently	35	52	31
The design of my home meets the needs of everyone who lives here	33	54	29
I can move around (and turn around) the bathroom in my wheelchair	33	38	17
I am not able to access the garden	33	52	19
Design features/adaptations have reduced the care/ assistance I need from others	31	58	31
My home makes it hard for me to do many of the things I want to do	31	63	33
Doors are too narrow to allow me to move around the house in my wheelchair	29	52	19
I need more storage space for medical supplies	27	67	40
I can move and turn around with ease in my wheelchair throughout my home	27	56	23

- 4.25 Just 54%, of survey participants are satisfied with their home. Although national surveys in different parts of the UK consistently report that disabled people are significantly more dissatisfied with their current home than non-disabled people, these figures are still very low. However, we doubt survey bias in the sense that wheelchair users who participated in the study are more frustrated with their housing situation than those who did not participate in the survey is the only factor at play. Looking more closely at the responses to the layout and design of their home summarised in table 6.2, survey responses suggest that:

- Wheelchair users that live in a property designed or adapted for wheelchair use are markedly more satisfied with their home than other survey participants. Only one such participant expressed overall dissatisfaction with their home.
- Most participants that live in a suitably designed or adapted property agree that their home has improved their ability to live independently and increased their freedom of movement within the home and garden. However, views on whether it has reduced the need for care are mixed and some have concerns about the lack of storage space.
- Participants between the ages of 25 to 64 years and live in a household comprised of 2 or more persons are considerably more dissatisfied with their home than single adults of working age or respondents aged 65+ years.

4.26 Discussions with participants reinforced our survey-based perceptions that issues around a lack of space, inadequate toilet and bathing facilities and perceptions that the home is unsuitable for the whole households needs all contribute to their low rates of satisfaction amongst wheelchair users under the age of 65 years, most of whom are renters.

“The housing situation is really difficult and is causing us great stress but we want to stay in the area”

“My daughter has to sleep in the living room as she cannot get upstairs and the two boys need separate rooms. This means that the boys have to go upstairs really early as daughter goes to sleep early evening”.

“The house has a temporary ramp which is unstable and the bathroom is not a wet floor shower which makes washing daughter difficult”

“It was a brand-new home but there are many issues – the wet floor shower room flooded because the shower was installed wrongly; the bedroom is not big enough for the size of bed they require and for the hoist equipment. The kitchen is all adapted but it is not required but there is no fire escape for my son”.

Perceptions about location

4.27 Just under half of participants are satisfied with the location of their home and a third are dissatisfied with the location of their home, again most of whom are renters. Dissatisfaction with location is partly linked to the local terrain, lack of public transport and problems accessing local amenities (see table 6.3).

Table 6.3: Percent respondents that agree or disagree with statements about the location where they live

	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither (%)	Total (%)
I find it difficult to get out of my home	33	38	29	100
The roads or pavements where I live are too steep for me to get about in my wheelchair without help	69	13	19	100
Pavements near my home are difficult to navigate due to obstructions	45	34	21	100
I have difficulty travelling to shops, leisure facilities, health services etc.	50	30	20	100
I need help to go outside to access shops, leisure and other facilities	70	17	13	100
It is difficult for me to access or use public transport	71	16	13	100

4.28 Discussions also highlighted other aspects about their local areas that wheelchairs users were less than positive about. This include older style shops in traditional town centres which were sometime inaccessible and led some preferring to use the larger supermarkets and ‘out of town’

centres. Cambers on pavements and unaligned dropped kerbs also cause problems for wheelchair users.

“The condition of roads make life difficult – bumps, rough surfaces and speed bumps are very painful. Too many shops have steps up to them and the bank staff have to come into the street to attend to any business because cannot get the wheelchair even close to the door”.

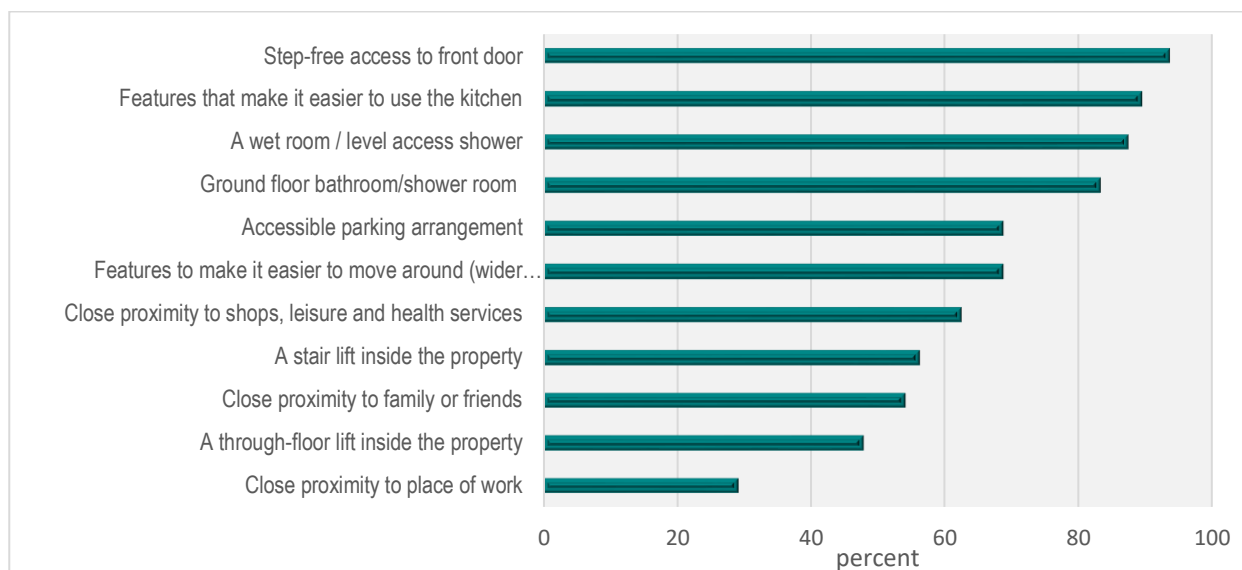
4.29 Curiously, survey participant views about their home and/or location of their home often appear to conflict with their views about their current housing situation. More specifically:

- Most participants that say they are dissatisfied with their home also say they would prefer to remain in their current home, typically with adaptations to enable them to live more independently.
- Over half of those who express dissatisfaction with the location of their current home also say they would prefer to remain in their current home, again with adaptations.
- Just a handful of participants that express dissatisfaction with their home and/or location say they want to move house, usually to a property designed or adapted for wheelchair users.

Moving house and future housing requirements

4.30 Whilst survey participants report that their current property or the location of their home or both are less than suitable, 7 out of 10 participants do not want to move home. Moreover, less than a quarter say they are currently looking to move home or might consider moving home in the next five years. Of these 11 participants, most are under 65 and currently rent their home.

Figure 4.10: Features that would make participants more likely to consider moving property



4.31 Participants were provided with a list of statements and asked which of these factors would make them more or less likely to consider moving to another property. Results are summarised in figure 4.10, which shows that the ability to secure accessibility features was a bigger motivator to consider moving to another property than locational factors. As it was far from clear why this pattern may have emerged the follow-up interviews asked people about these matters.

4.32 Homeowners told us they generally wished to remain in their current home for as long as possible, although one or two were considering a move to modern bungalow type accommodation at some point. Some homeowners that lived in older and more spacious

properties also explained that they had found ways to make their home work for them, albeit in more than one instance this had meant effectively abandoning the upper storey of their home.

4.33 For the majority of people that we spoke to across all tenures, remaining in the same settlement and in close proximity to family and friends were over-riding factors. We repeatedly heard that people were fearful that due to a lack of suitable and /or affordable homes they could find themselves in a position of having to move elsewhere. Based on what our discussions it appears that people already tend to live near their support networks so moving to be near them is not a primary issue. Moreover, while wheelchair users appear to be prepared to move to an accessible property it is doubtful that many would be prepared to move to another settlement to achieve this.

“The area is nice and there are some nice parks. Mum lives next door and other relatives nearby so the network support is great. I couldn’t manage without that”.

“We both love the area they are in and do not want to have to move out of their area in order to try and secure a more suitable long-term home”

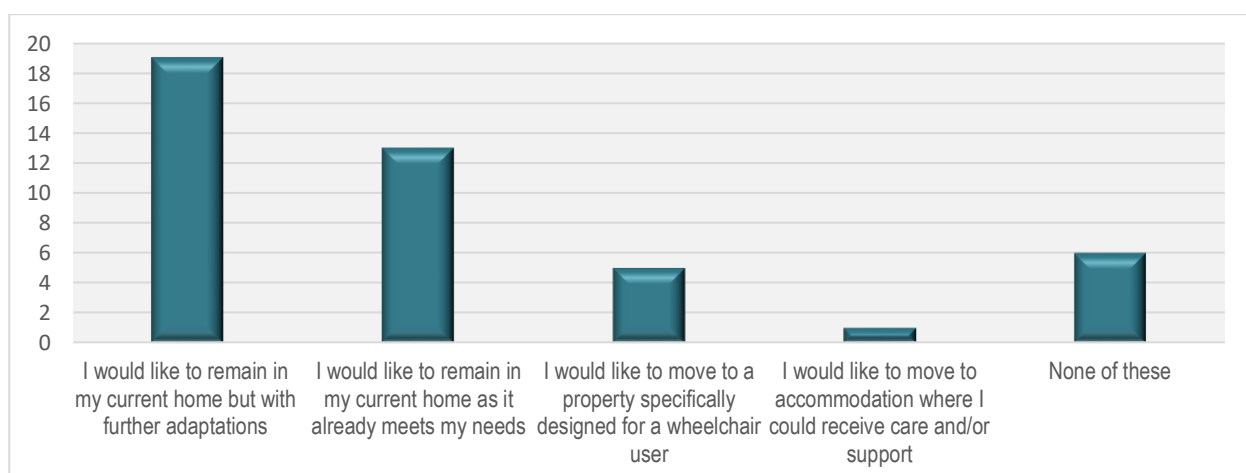
4.34 Irrespective of the future movement intentions, survey participants were asked what their tenure preference would be if they were to move to another property. More or less equal numbers of participants say their preference would be the owner-occupied sector or the social rented sector. Not surprisingly existing renters generally would prefer a social rented tenancy whilst homeowners almost exclusively would prefer to remain in their current tenure.

4.35 Survey participants were asked what barriers might prevent them from moving and although not all answered this question (their feedback was reinforced through the follow up interviews:

- I couldn't afford a suitable home
- There are no suitable homes available that can meet my needs
- I would have to move away from friends and/or family
- I couldn't face the upheaval of moving.
- I need to be close to services and facilities (e.g. GP, Council, shops, leisure)

4.36 Looked at in the round, participant views on moving to another property, the factors that might encourage them to move house and the barriers to moving house help to explain why two thirds of participants, when asked about the feelings about their current housing situation, express a clear preference to stay put (see figure 4.11).

Figure 4.11: Number of participants that concur which various statements about their current housing situation



Information and advice

- 4.37 Participants were asked if they know where to go to obtain housing advice or general advice on issues such as employment, financial matters and welfare benefits. They were also asked a more specific question on who they would contact if their needs changed in order to obtain advice on making their house more suitable or to explore other housing options. Responses to these questions suggest that knowledge of where to secure information and advice is limited:
- Only 20 participants say they agree that know where to go to find general advice.
 - Only 16 say they agree they know where to go to find housing advice.
 - 15 participants say they know who they would contact if their needs were to change but only 10 named one or more organisations they would contact if their needs changed.
 - The Council (including Adult Services and OT Services) and RSLs were the main sources of advice mentioned. Care and Repair was the only other source of advice mentioned.
- 4.38 Homeowners, especially those who are outright owners, seem to struggle to know where to turn to obtain information and advice on housing issues. Only one owner that took part in the survey referred specifically to Care and Repair. None mentioned Housing Options Scotland or the Council's Housing Option's Service.

Concluding Remarks

- 4.39 To sum up, the on-line survey and follow up interviews point to a lack of accessible housing, difficulties securing housing adaptations, potentially problematic allocation systems, barriers to accessing information, and problems navigating services and accessing appropriate support. They also suggest there is potential hidden demand for bungalows and other forms of accessible housing in the private housing market that mass built housing developers are not yet catering for. These and other challenges are examined further in the following section.

5. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Introduction

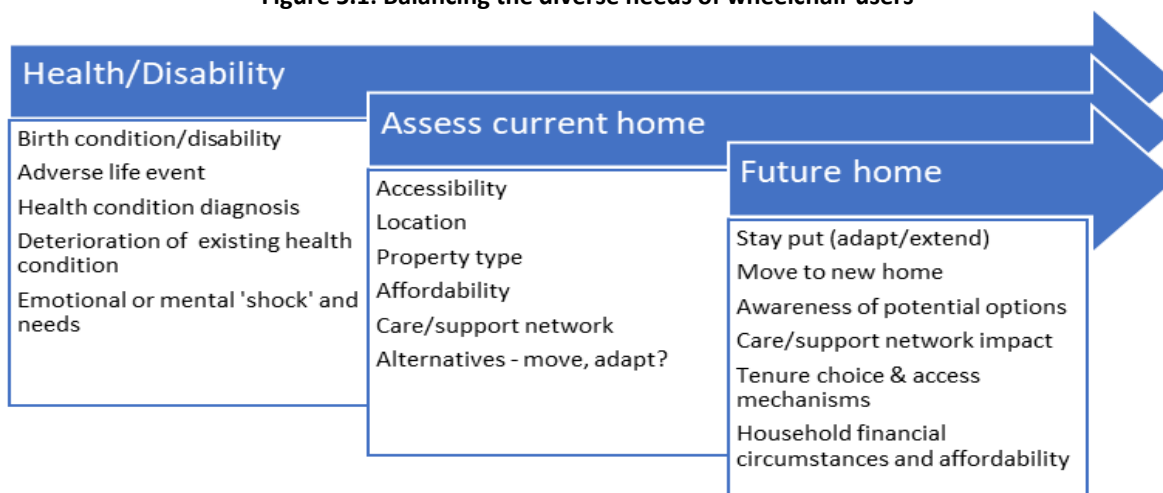
5.1 Our research uncovered several issues and challenges that the Council and its partners will wish to consider in deciding on the most appropriate course of action to improve the responsiveness of the housing system to the needs and demands of wheelchair user households and others that contain someone with substantial mobility issues. These issues will be explored with local partners during the policy phase of this study. For now, we discuss our impressions under the following themes:

- The ability to listen to, learn from and incorporate the experience and voices of wheelchair users into the process of developing local strategy, policy and practice.
- Strategies, policies and evidence surrounding wheelchair accessible housing provision.
- The supply and availability of accessible homes and the provision of services to meet in-situ needs (i.e. adaptations, care, support).
- The availability and quality of information and advice on housing options for people who use wheelchairs or have other disabilities.

The experience of wheelchair user and mobility limited households

5.2 Evidence emerging from this study points to a large gap between the lived experiences and aspirations of wheelchair user and mobility limited households and the current supply of housing across all tenures throughout the Borders. This is compounded by the constrained availability and reach of publicly funded services (NHS, Local Authority, and Third Sector) and the perception from many disabled people that these services are all too often characterised by minimal and rigid levels of provision.

Figure 5.1: Balancing the diverse needs of wheelchair users



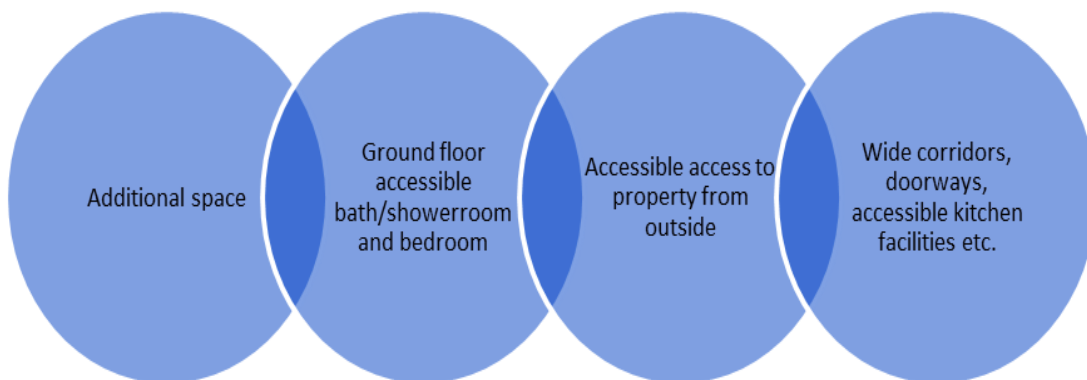
5.3 For most wheelchair user households their lived experience is shaped by their specific health and other personal circumstances, their housing situation and the way in which services engage, or are perceived, to engage with them. This is illustrated in diagram 5.1 which gives a sense of the sometimes-competing factors that wheelchair users have to weigh up in thinking about their housing needs, aspirations and future housing plans.

5.4 One of the benefits of this study has been the opportunity provided for wheelchair users to directly express their views on their housing situation and future plans. One overriding theme of

this dialogue has been how the design, layout and space available within the home directly impacts on their quality of life and that of their families. Another has been that the experience of wheelchair user households does not necessarily fit neatly into pre-designed service responses.

- 5.5 The housing experiences of wheelchair user households, like other households, are shaped by their household composition, their financial position and the extent to which they could afford a market solution to their housing related needs. Strong and deeply rooted connections with an area also was also a strong factor for many, as was the desire to remain in their current tenure. Above and beyond this though, their experience was shaped by the degree of choice and control they could exercise over their housing and care situation. Their ability to access appropriate services, be listened to by professionals and have their needs and aspirations respected are all key ingredients for independent living.
- 5.6 Many, but by no means all wheelchair user households, have highly specific and particular needs in terms of the design and layout of their homes. However, discussions routinely returned to a number of core essentials in terms of what wheelchair users wanted from a home, with the requirement for additional space in order live and move around in comfort and/or to allow for overnight carers often being the key consideration. Other design components that were mentioned typically included items in the HfVN wheelchair accessibility standard or the more recent Home2Fit guide such as accessible kitchen sink and counters, stairlifts, accessible and covered car parking provision and so on (see figure 5.2).

Figure 5. 2 – Housing Needs of Wheelchair Users: Common Requirements



- 5.7 Individuals we talked tended to indicate these core requirements remain out of striking distance. We routinely heard that:
- Individuals and their families often lack a sense of choice and control, feel their views are ignored and that proposed solutions do not always meet their expectations.
 - Wheelchair user households generally emphasise the dynamic and changing nature of their health and evolving personal and family circumstances but are not always persuaded that current systems and services are well placed to respond to this.
 - Wheelchair users in all tenures have experienced situations where their interaction with housing and other services has led to them feeling frustrated, angry, stressed and anxious or could engender a sense of hopelessness.
 - Difficulties navigating social housing allocation systems, accessing adaptation and equipment services and long waiting periods for both could make wheelchair user households feel they had lost control of their housing destiny.
- 5.8 When talking about their living environment, wheelchair user households' invariably fanned out to talk about broader matters. One such matter was the accessibility of the local area where they lived and how this impacted on their ability to get out and about and take part in everyday

activities such as shopping, leisure and visiting family and friends. Another consideration was access to a car (and the Blue Badge Scheme) and how this was important for many wheelchair users to allow them to move about alongside appropriate parking facilities. A further issue was the importance of family and social support networks, the provision of informal and formal care and how the level of support and the ability of carers to manage are all shaped by the suitability (or otherwise) of the home.

- 5.9 The above discussion suggests that in working out how best to try and shape the housing system to better meet the housing related needs of both wheelchair user and mobility limited households, the Scottish Borders Council and its partners should pay close attention to the role housing can exert in promoting social inclusion and facilitating accessibility in the wider sense.

Strategies, policies and evidence

- 5.10 As discussed in section 2, there is a growing focus at the national policy level on the housing related need of people with disabilities in general and wheelchair users in particular. This has been engendered by the wider equalities agenda and reinforced in the two most recent LHS guidance notes, both of which require local authorities to set targets for the delivery of wheelchair accessible housing. The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 also signals a clear desire to strengthen the planning system's contribution to the delivery of new homes that are accessible for wheelchair users and other people in local communities.
- 5.11 The Council and its partners face substantial challenges in responding to this agenda. Current national planning policy and building regulations place far greater emphasis on sustainability issues than on accessibility issues in terms of future proofing the provision of new homes. Policy coherence between the Scottish Government's ambitions to improve the accessibility and adaptability of the housing stock across all tenures and the policy mechanisms and levers available to local authorities to drive this agenda forward is also lacking.
- 5.12 The LHS and associated SHIP process enables local authorities to influence priorities for the delivery of new affordable housing. In contrast, tools to promote market provision of wheelchair accessible housing are limited. Mindful of the fact that the majority of older and disabled people already own their own homes, a few local authorities such as Moray, Highland and Edinburgh have sought to stimulate the provision of wheelchair accessible homes by private developers, typically through the adoption of local planning policies or guidance.
- 5.13 The use of these and other planning tools has been reiterated in the LHS guidance on setting wheelchair housing targets. It has pointed to the possible use of design briefs, planning guidance or specific planning measures. It is not known if such tools have actually boosted private sector provision of wheelchair accessible homes. What is known is that the use of such tools would require effective collaboration between the Council (housing, planning social work and building regulations) and the Borders H&SCP alongside engagement with wheelchair users and other stakeholders.
- 5.14 Stakeholder interests in wheelchair accessible housing at policy and delivery level are wide ranging. Outside of the public sector, stakeholders include RSLs, private developers, third sector bodies (e.g. Care & Repair, Access Panels, disability organisations and carers organisations) and building professions (e.g. architects, quantity surveyors, building engineers and building contractors). This diverse mix of stakeholders poses challenges in terms establishing an appropriate course of action to reduce the barriers to achieving a shift in the accessibility of both new and existing homes. In terms of external engagement, this points to a need to find ways to:
- Sustain and improve engagement with wheelchair user households, disability organisations and access panels in the strategic housing process.

- Bring together RSLs, developers, building professionals wheelchair users and other interested parties to share their knowledge and deepen understanding of the types of design, layout and locational factors that are central to securing successful housing outcomes for wheelchair users and their families.

- 5.15 In addition, there are reservations about the ability of public services to provide care and support to people in more remote, rural areas. This points to a need for the Housing Strategy Team to look at how it could forge closer collaboration with H&SCP and RSLs around the siting of new wheelchair accessible homes and other forms of specialist housing going forward.
- 5.16 In common with other local authorities, The Scottish Borders has limited data available to support the ongoing planning and monitoring of the provision of wheelchair accessible housing. Neither the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA) nor the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) provide much evidence that could help to inform LHS or LDP policies in respect of wheelchair accessible housing requirements. In particular, there is little local evidence on the geographic spread of wheelchair user households, the supply of wheelchair and other accessible homes and variations in patterns of need and demand across the 5 localities in the Borders and the settlements and rural areas within them.
- 5.17 The lack of evidence has not prevented some other local authorities from taking steps to boost the supply of wheelchair accessible housing, especially in the affordable sector. Nonetheless, we would contend that better data resources are required if the Council is to build up a good appreciation and understanding of the problems wheelchair users and others face. Without this understanding it is difficult to see how it could effectively tackle the problem or establish the level of accessible homes required across the different locality areas within the Borders.
- 5.18 Our study has drawn extensively on local knowledge and in particular the views and experience and views of wheelchairs and their families/carers. This participation has been invaluable but looking forward, more work will be needed to strengthen the statistical evidence base. One possibility would be for the Council and the H&SCP to jointly review their internal systems and data sharing protocols, including arrangements for accessing data on wheelchair patients maintained by the NHS SMART service. The Council could renew its RSL annual return to collect better data on the accessibility of the existing stock of RSL homes. It could also look to better document the wheelchair accessibility status of new dwellings. This would require the definitions for different levels of 'accessibility' to be developed in collaboration with RSLs and planners to ensure the accessibility of existing RSL stock and newly built dwellings in all tenures are consistently recorded.

Housing supply and access issues

- 5.19 In the absence of local data, we have drawn on a number of national data sources to estimate that there are some 2,000 wheelchair user households in the Borders, of which some 220 currently have unmet housing need that cannot be addressed by an in-situ solution. This figure will continue to rise unless there is a step change in new wheelchair accessible housing provision.
- 5.20 The annual SHIP update was in preparation at the point this research was concluded. However, information supplied by the Council confirms that a substantial increase in wheelchair provision in the social sector is proposed. On the other hand, funding uncertainties after March 2021, issues around securing planning consent or other delays in the delivery of new affordable housing developments could have negative knock-on impacts on future build out rates. There are also, as noted in section 3, question marks about whether there is undue reliance on future ECH developments to deliver wheelchair accessible housing. Both these issues will need further

discussion with RSL and H&SCP representatives prior to agreeing an appropriate wheelchair accessible target for the Borders.

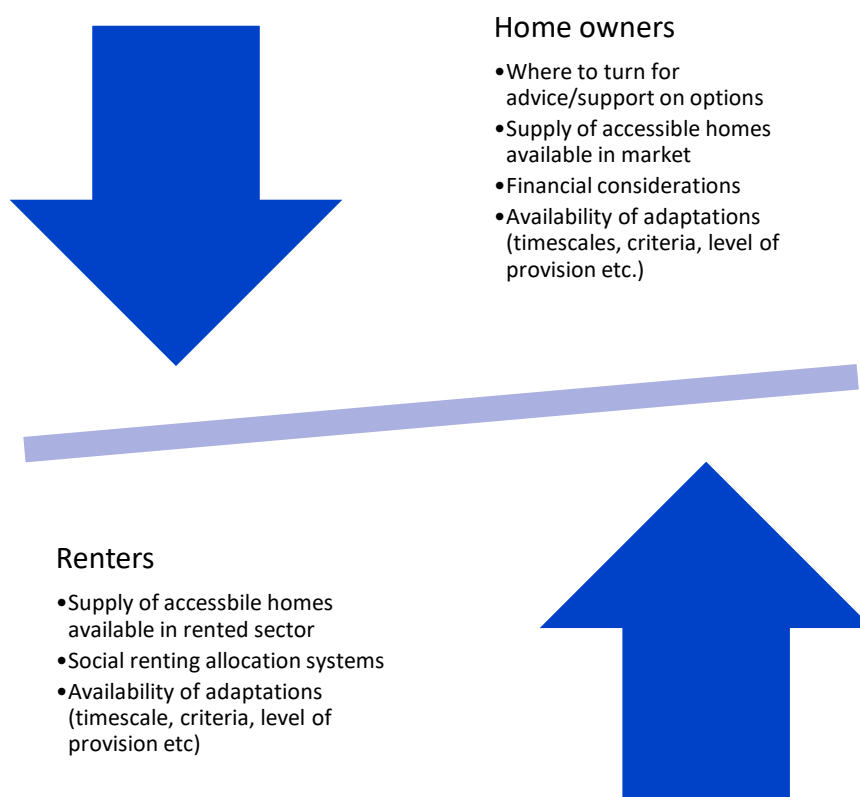
- 5.21 Even under the most optimistic scenario, it will take several years to reduce the current backlog of need for wheelchair accessible housing. This suggests that additional measures to meet need aside from new build will be required. In the case of the social rented sector this may involve a combined approach that brings together more efficient use of existing social sector stock (especially ground floor flats and adapted properties), better targeting of social allocations and the more focussed use of RSL adaptation funding.
- 5.22 National bodies such as EHRC, Independent Living in Scotland and CIH have all criticised the over-emphasis on the role of social rented housing in meeting the needs of households that contain a wheelchair user or other disabilities and pointed to the growing demand for accessible homes in the private sector. On the other hand, as made clear at different points in this report, it is much more difficult to offer a possible way forward in respect of market orientated housing, not helped by the lack of any information of the accessibility of private homes other than properties that Care & Repair has helped to adapt in recent years. One possibility may be to devise a local programme to raise the profile and understanding of accessibility and inclusive living within the local building industry. Another may be to review whether more could be done with available resources to assist wheelchair user households to secure or build a suitable home in the private sector.
- 5.23 Wheelchair user households that have highly individualised health, care and housing needs often need a high specific custom built property. Ideally, such cases should be identified as early on in the planning and development stage as possible. This would help to ensure specific design and layout customisations benefit from the input of wheelchair users, their families and OTs and to ensure the additional costs are fully taken into consideration in dialogue around grant levels prior to going on-site.
- 5.24 Social allocation policies do not always seem to recognise wheelchair user needs for extra living space (e.g. larger living space and an extra bedroom) or the need to remain in close proximity to their family in order to receive the support they need to remain independent. There are also reservations about Choice Based Lettings and whether these are having a positive or negative impact on the ability to secure wheelchair accessible housing. These concerns centre around the capability of wheelchair users to express their needs in detail and the limited advice and support available to enable people to participate effectively in the bidding process. We also heard that wheelchair users (even with a gold pass in the CBL system) are still competing with other households for a very small pool of suitable lets. Although this topic is beyond the scope of this study, it does suggest the Council and RSLs need to develop a clearer shared understanding of the routes into social housing for wheelchair users and mobility limited households.
- 5.25 Housing adaptations are of vital importance for wheelchair users in all tenures. Our study found little evidence of tenure differentials in in service delivery but there are some divergences in professional and wheelchair users' views on what they require and desired outcomes¹⁶. That said, there is widespread recognition that the financial pressures and insufficient capacity to deliver adaptations services are factors that have constrained the ability to meet demand.
- 5.26 Another barrier to meeting in-situ needs raised by several stakeholders is the lack of clear arrangements to better match wheelchair user and other disabled applicants to previously adapted properties, including the lack of a local housing register of such properties.

¹⁶ For instance, we hear that criteria which excludes property extensions is seen to be too restrictive in rural areas where alternative housing options are limited.

Advice and support

- 5.27 The provision of high quality and timely information, advice and advocacy were repeatedly identified as pivotal to enabling wheelchair users to navigate the housing system. However, the provision of such services in the Borders is not rated highly and the experiences of wheelchair users point to the need for a more co-ordinated approach to housing and related advice for wheelchair users and others with a disability-related housing need.
- 5.28 Wheelchair user awareness of housing information and advice services was generally poor. This included people that required specific advice following the onset or deterioration of their condition, especially if such changes were sudden or unexpected. Some participants were familiar with Care & Repair but knowledge of Housing Options Services provided by the Council or RSLs was scant. The few that were aware of the Council's Housing Options Service viewed it as a more of a 'crisis' service associated with homelessness. Social housing tenants with in-situ needs tended to approach their landlord for assistance whereas owners were more likely to turn to health (GPs) and social care services (OTs). However, owners often exercised a large degree of self-help whether by purchasing a new home, extending their existing home or arranging adaptations or equipment.

Figure 5.113 – Should I Stay or Could I Go: Key Housing System Barriers for Wheelchair Users in Scottish Borders



6. CONCLUSIONS

Overview

- 6.1 Few things are more fundamental than having somewhere suitable and affordable to live. For wheelchair users and other mobility limited households, accessible and adaptable housing plays a pivotal role in giving them an equal opportunity to live independently and to exercise choice and control over their lives. Without accessible and adaptable housing, wheelchair users and other people with limited mobility risk facing disadvantage and discrimination in the housing system and exclusion from participation in society.
- 6.2 Subsequent to the publication of 'A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Delivery Plan 2016-21' and the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (2018) inquiry into housing for disabled people, the Scottish Government has looked to bolster the delivery of wheelchair accessible housing. As part of this agenda local authorities and RSLs have been asked to develop 'all-tenure' LHS targets for the delivery of wheelchair accessible homes to be set by the end of 2019.
- 6.3 This research has therefore been carried out to help inform the local HST for wheelchair users in the Scottish Borders by improving understanding of the current and possible future requirement for affordable and market orientated wheelchair accessible housing in the SBC.

Key findings

- 6.4 To date, very few studies have been undertaken specifically on housing related needs of wheelchair users and their families anywhere in the UK. Instead the focus of policy and research for much of the last two decades has been on the housing related need of older people. One unintended consequence of this is that national and local data is not well placed to report the numbers of wheelchair users or their current housing circumstance's and unmet housing needs.
- 6.5 To compensate for the lack of definitive national or local figures on the numbers of wheelchair user households, this study used several different sources of prevalence rates and then cross checked the numbers against DWP disability benefit data. Through this exercise it has been estimated that there are currently around 2,000 wheelchair user households living in the Scottish Borders, with alternative estimates ranging from 1,600 and 2,300 households.
- 6.6 We also estimate there are a further 2,000 -2,500 mobility limited households, mainly older person households, where someone has substantial difficulties moving around the house but does not necessarily use a wheelchair.
- 6.7 Just over half of all wheelchair user households are owner-occupiers with most others renting their home from a social landlord. There are marked differences in the tenure of older and younger households. Two thirds of those aged 65+ are owner occupiers compared to a third of those under retirement age. The net result is that there is a high concentration of children and working age adults that make use of a wheelchair or other mobility aids in social housing.
- 6.8 SHS analysis confirms that many wheelchair users struggle to carry out daily activities such as bathing in spite of the fact that their home many have been designed or adapted to make them more accessible. Building in the proportions of wheelchair user households that say their home requires further adaptations to meet their needs and the proportions who say their home is unsuitable, we estimate that 220 households have unmet housing need. Alternative estimates range from 170 to 270. A further 450 mobility limited households may also require adaptations to their home to make them suitable, but the number could range from 370 to 530.

- 6.9 RSLs currently own 164 dwellings that appear to comply with the HfVN wheelchair accessible design guidance. This equates to some 1.4% of the RSL stock. Comparisons between the numbers of RSL wheelchair user applicants and the number of wheelchair accessible homes that have fallen vacant in each of the last 4 years suggests it could take up to a decade to accommodate all applicants.
- 6.10 Illustrative scenarios suggest that the size of the current backlog will continue to rise upwards unless actions is taken to boost supply. The core scenario suggests that in the decade to 2028 up to 300 new wheelchair accessible homes (30 pa) across all tenures would be required to resolve unmet need. If greater priority was given to resourcing the preventative role of adaptations and other in-situ solutions, the required numbers of new wheelchair accessible housing might potentially be rather lower, at somewhere between 240 to 260 homes over the decade.
- 6.11 The views and experiences of wheelchair users point to considerable mismatches between the space, layout and design standards of the home they occupy and the home their family requires. These mismatches often persist even where their home has been adapted, especially in the social rented sector. They also highlight difficulties wheelchair users and their families face in securing housing adaptations, potentially problematic allocation systems, barriers to accessing information and advice and problems navigating services and accessing appropriate support.

Emerging implications

- 6.12 Developing a reasonably clear picture of the demand and supply of wheelchair and other accessible homes is very challenging but by collating data from a variety of sources we have been able to demonstrate that there is a clear and very considerable mismatch between the demand and supply of housing suitable for wheelchair user households as well limited mobility households across all tenues. This effectively means that such households do not have equal access to suitable housing.
- 6.13 The Scottish Government guidance acknowledges that addressing the shortfall in wheelchair accessible housing will require responses from both the private and social housing sectors. In spite of this, it remains difficult to see how the latter can be achieved in practice. At present, there are many barriers but very few incentives to encourage the private sector to build wheelchair accessible homes but there are signals this may begin to change in the not too distant future. The 2019 Spending Review confirmed that the UK Government is to consult on mandatory accessible building standards for housing. This review will only apply to England but this announcement could encourage the Scottish Government to bring forward their commitments to review the Scottish Building Regulations and the Housing for Varying Needs Guide.
- 6.14 Swift action to align accessibility standards for affordable and private housing provision could go some way to ease the particular difficulties wheelchair user households face in the private sector.
- 6.15 In reality, however, it will be the existing stock of housing across all tenures rather the new homes that will take up most of the strain of the projected growth in older and disabled people, including wheelchair users, in the coming decade. This means that more will have to be done to:
- Improve the provision of housing adaptations that support independent living and further reduce the delays often experienced by people in receipt of adaptations funded in part or whole from the public purse.
 - Tackle the difficulties wheelchair users and other people with disabilities face in accessing information and advice in relation to various housing related matters.

- Ensure the nomination, referral and allocation processes for accessible and adaptable homes in the social rented are pro-active, efficient and more fully reflect the overall needs of the household, including the need to access social networks and local services.
- Work towards better integration of strategic commissioning and investment in housing, health and social care to meet needs and identify the appropriate local balance between new homes required, adaptations and effective social housing allocations.
- Build on the HfVN guidance to agree a standardised framework for classifying the accessibility of properties and use this to identify which existing social rented homes have been built or adapted to different levels of accessible standards or have the potential to be adapted to inform future planning and policy monitoring.

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Appendix 2: Acronyms, abbreviations and glossary

Annex 1: Acronyms and abbreviations

C&R	Care and Repair
CHR	Common housing Register
EHRC	Equalities and Human Rights Commission
HCS	Housing Contribution Statements
HfVN	Housing for Varying Needs
HNDA	Housing Needs and Demand Assessment
HSTs	Housing Supply Targets
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
LA	Local authority
LDPs	Local Development Plans
LHS	Local Housing Strategy
RRTP	Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
SBC	Scottish Borders Council
SCP	Strategic Commissioning Plan
SeSPlan	Strategic Development Planning Authority for Edinburgh and South East Scotland
SHIP	Strategic Housing Investment Plan
WHO	World Health Organisation

Annex 2: Glossary

Adaptations	Works such as actions to fit hand and grip rails, install ramps, covert bathrooms to wet floor shower rooms and in some instances ground floor expansions to make an existing home more suitable for people with wheelchair users and other people with disabilities.
Affordable housing	A generic term used to refer to social rented, mid-market rent, shared ownership and other forms housing that are provided at below market cost to households whose needs are not met by the market. It is typically provided by local authorities and RSLs.
Allocation system	<p>This refers to the framework that determine the allocation of social rented homes and the way in which individual households applying for social housing are prioritised. It therefore includes nomination and referral arrangements as well as the content and operation of RSL allocation policies.</p> <p>Allocation policies of social landlords are shaped by legal duties, including the need to ensure reasonable preference is given to groups set out in the 2014 Act, which include social housing tenants who are under occupying their home; homeless persons and persons who are living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.</p> <p>Some social landlords have adopted Choice Based Lettings as the main vehicle for allocating their homes. Once registered, this allows applicants to ‘bid’ for properties that are advertised, typically online rather than waiting to be offered a house. Applicants are usually grouped in different levels of priority need and if more than one ‘bid’ is made on a vacancy, the applicant with higher priority is offered the property.</p>
Care and Repair	Care and Repair are services that offer independent advice and assistance to assist individuals repair, improve or adapt their homes so that they can live in comfort and safety in their own community. Services are primarily aimed at older and/or disabled homeowners.
Common Housing Register	This is a register of all applicants for social housing used by two or more social landlords within an area, typically a local authority area. The former CHR in the Scottish Borders is no longer in operation.
Disability	Consistent with Equalities legislation, the ONS defines disability as ‘any limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for 12 months or more and limits everyday activities such as walking, bathing and cooking. The term therefore includes a wide range of conditions other than the use of wheelchair and other mobility aids. Examples include sight loss, hearing loss, to diabetes, to difficulties dressing due to arthritis, to advanced dementia requiring constant help and supervision’ (ABS 2004).
Housing assistance	Terms refers to a range of programmes and services, including Care and Repair, adaptation funding and housing options advice, that are intended to assist people who are having difficulties accessing housing that is suitable for the family at a price they can afford.
Housing for Varying Needs	<p>Housing for varying needs: a design guide produced by Scottish Homes in 1998 and sets out basic accessibility standards and wheelchair specific accessibility standards.</p> <p>Social housing providers are generally expected to construct homes that comply with Part 1 of the HfVN, which covers the basic accessible design of self-contained homes to suit people's different and changing needs over their lifetime.</p> <p>The wheelchair specific accessibility standards often referred to as Part 2 of the HfVN, provide for a step-free environment, space for a wheelchair to circulate and access all rooms, a kitchen and bathroom that suits the occupant’s particular needs and fittings and services that are within reach and easy to use.</p>
Housing Contribution Statements	Health and Social Care Partnerships are expected to work with their housing partners to produce a HCS as part of their SCP. This document is intended to demonstrate how the priorities set out of the SCP and LHS are aligned and to articulate how housing representatives are engaged in the needs’ assessment, strategic planning and locality planning work of the H&SCP.
Housing Need and Demand Assessment	The Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) is an exercise conducted by local authorities, primarily to estimate the number of additional homes required to meet existing and future housing need and demand. HNDAs also explore the operation of the

	<p>housing system, including the price, quality and condition of the existing housing stock across all tenures and how well this is aligned to the needs and aspirations of households.</p> <p>Currently, the Scottish Borders is part of a planning region, South East Scotland Strategic Development Planning Authority and as such the Council works with seven other local authorities to produce the HNDA.</p>
Housing Options	<p>This is a housing advice process that involves individuals contacting a housing expert to discuss the range of options to meet their housing and support needs, and where necessary the expert can signpost, make referrals and provide guidance that will empower the individual to make informed choices about their preferred housing solutions.</p>
Housing Supply Targets	<p>The Housing Supply Targets are set out in the Local Housing Strategy and summarise the number of homes the Council and its partners would like to see constructed over a 5 to 10-year period, with a broad split between social, affordable and market housing. Whilst informed by the HNDA, the target is expected to take into consideration other factors such as local infrastructure, funding availability and the capacity of the construction to deliver new homes.</p>
Joint Strategic needs Assessment	<p>The JSNA is intended to examine the current and future health and wellbeing needs of the local population, the causes of health inequalities and the extent to which the pattern of health, care and other services that can enhance wellbeing are aligned to the needs of local people and communities. The purpose of this document is to support and inform Health and Social Care Partnership decisions in terms of priorities and deliver services to addressing local needs.</p>
Lifetime Homes	<p>Lifetime Homes is a set of 16 design and adaptability principles intended to promote the construction of general needs homes that are accessible for a cross section of the population, including households with young children, older people, and individuals with a physical or sensory impairment. However, this degree of accessibility does not match the enhanced accessibility provided through the wheelchair accessible design standard.</p> <p>Lifetime Homes design principles are embedded in the 2007 Building Standards and supporting guidance. The main principles not covered by building regulations (that feature in Lifetime Homes) are the potential for future fitting of:  through-floor vertical lift; and  a support track and hoist.</p>
Local Development Plans	<p>Local Development Plans (LDPs) provide the vision for how local communities across the local authority area will develop in the future and set out where residential and other forms of development should (or should not) take place in the coming 5 to 10 years and the supporting infrastructure required to support growth. The LDP is required to allocate a 'generous' supply of land for housing sufficient for the first five years of the Plan, which in the case of residential development is known as the Housing Land Requirement.</p>
Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans	<p>Introduced in 2017, these 5-year transition plans (2019-20 to 2023-24) set out how LAs and their partners, including Health and Social Care Partnerships and RSLs, will work in partnership to bring about a step change in addressing homelessness. In particular, the plans are intended to be centred on achieving a significant reduction in homelessness and the time people are required to spend in temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Following submissions of the first round of plans in 2018-19, RRTP have now become an integral component of the SHIP and are therefore subject to annual review.</p>
Social inclusion	<p>Social inclusion is a concept used to describe the ability of individuals to participate in the structures and institutions of the wider society and to enjoy the benefits of the goods and services offered by society. People experiencing social exclusion are often subject to discrimination and can feel or be disenfranchised by political, economic or legal structures.</p>
Social model of disability	<p>This model lies at the heart of current national and local policy and is based on the principle that disability is a social phenomenon and the lived experience of disability varies is shaped by the interactions between individuals and their physical and social environment, including the extent to which these environments promote accessibility and social inclusion.</p>
Specialist housing	<p>The Scottish Government use the generic term 'specialist housing' to refer to anything not considered to be housing for general needs. The term therefore encompasses adapted</p>

	housing, wheelchair housing, sheltered housing, extra care housing, supported accommodation and care homes.
Strategic Commissioning Plans	The SCP is produced every three years by each Local Health and Social Care Partnership. It provides the context for how each of the health and local authority functions delegated to the partnership will be commissioned and how resources will be allocated to support the delivery of national and local health and wellbeing outcomes.
Strategic Housing Investment Plans	<p>The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) is an annually update plan that sets out the Council and its partners investment priorities for social and affordable housing over a five-year period and explains how these will contribute to the outcomes set out in their LHS. SHIPs are usually submitted to the Scottish Government in October each year, who then use it to decide which affordable housing projects will be funded through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme.</p> <p>As a general rule, the Scottish Government issues three-year Resource Planning Assumption (RPA) for each local authority to use as a basis for preparing their SHIP.</p>
Wheelchair accessible housing	Wheelchair accessible housing is primarily designed to meet greater space and design standards for fixtures and fittings to enable people with mobility disabilities, especially those who also need a wheelchair for day to day mobility, to have access to every room and facility inside and outside of their home. The dwelling can usually be adjusted to suit the more specific needs of particular persons.

Appendix 3: Additional tables in support of section 3

Table A3.1: Scottish Borders Household Survey: Summary of Disability Responses/Findings

Survey responses to key questions	Percent of all respondents	Page reference
Consider themselves to have a disability	15%	p12
Experience some form of discrimination (mainly race but also disability and gender)	8%	p29
Self -report that they are in very good or good health	72%	p46
Self-report in bad or very bad health	5%	p46
Respondents state they have problem accessing public transport due to a disability	4%	p49
Respondents who state they have problem accessing work due to a disability	3%	p50
Respondents who state they have problem accessing education due to a disability	1%	p50
Respondents state they have problem accessing health services due to a disability	2%	P50

Table A3.2 : Percent of households by dwelling type and tenure

	Owned	Social rented	Private rented	Total
All households:	61.5%	21.81%	16.66%	100%
Detached	83.4%	1.54%	15.02%	100%
Semi-detached	62.5%	21.85%	15.68%	100%
Terraced (including end-terrace):	60.9%	22.78%	16.32%	100%
Flat, maisonette or apartment	35.6%	44.65%	19.73%	100%
Source: NRS Scotland's Census 2011				

Table A3.4 Percent of dwellings (all tenures) in each SBC locality

Locality	Houses	Flats
Berwickshire	87	13
Cheviot	79	21
Eildon	69	31
Teviot & Liddesdale	61	39
Tweeddale	75	25
Scottish Borders	74	26
Source: NRS Scotland's Census 2011		

Table A3.4: RSL stock: apartment size by locality

	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon	Teviot and Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Scottish Borders
1-2	792	657	1,671	857	767	4,744
3	815	840	1,490	1,047	507	4,699
4	483	318	654	481	164	2,100
5+	25	67	78	79	12	261
Total	2,115	1,882	3,893	2,464	1,450	11,804
PERCENT						
1-2	37	35	43	35	53	40
3	39	45	38	42	35	40
4	23	17	17	20	11	18
5+	1	4	2	3	1	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Total SG funding provided to RSLs in Scotland for adaptations from 2007-08 to 2015-16.

Year	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Spend (£m)	13.172	11.154	12.144	10.318	12.124	10.916	12.961	13.065	13.221
Scottish Government May 2019 FOI response: Grants to facilitate housing adaptations for disabled people									

Appendix 4: Details on the qualitative research carried out

This appendix provides further information about the on-line survey of wheelchair users and/or their representatives, which ran for some 4 weeks until Friday 19th of July. The questionnaire was administered by the Council through Citizen Space, its consultation and survey hub.

Respondents were asked an initial screening question to ensure the respondent or someone else in their household was a wheelchair user or had substantial mobility issues or they were filling it out on behalf of a wheelchair user. Two responses were removed from the final sample due to being duplicate responses. Other cases were excluded as the respondent lived outside of the Scottish Borders, did not use a wheelchair and were not completing the survey on behalf of a wheelchair users. After duplicate and/or erroneous cases were discounted the achieved sample was 48 responses.

The survey was designed to give wheelchair users an opportunity to share their opinions and provide descriptive account rather than a statistically valid measure of the views of wheelchair users rather than provide fully robust statistics. The figures reported should therefore be considered illustrative. Three out of five surveys were completed by individuals that use a wheelchair or have substantive mobility issues. The rest were completed by someone on behalf of a wheelchair user (see table below).

Who completed survey?

	Frequency	Percent
Wheelchair user (1)	26	54
Completed on behalf of wheelchair user	20	42
Other (2)	2	4
1 Includes respondents that said 'I do not currently use a wheelchair' but their other responses confirmed that they did use one, even if only occasionally.		
2 Includes people with substantial mobility issues that expect may need to use a wheelchair in the future		

To allow for the risk that representatives may have inadvertently recorded information about themselves, the results for all 48 responses were cross-checked with those for the 28 individuals with a disability that participated in the survey.

There was a broad spatial spread of responses, with a minimum of 8 responses in each of the Community Planning Locality Areas (see table below). The small numbers of responses preclude locality level analysis. Most survey participants live in one of the main settlements, which also precludes any exploration of potential differences in urban and rural perspectives.

Location of respondent/wheelchair user

Community Planning Locality	Number	Percent
Tweeddale	11	23
Eildon	9	19
Teviot	7	15
Cheviot	9	19
Berwickshire	10	21
Don't know (DK) or no response	2	4
All	48	100.0

Are you male or female?

	Frequency	Percent
Female	36	75
Male	12	25
Total	48	100

What age band are you in?

	Frequency	Percent
Under 16 years	2	4
16 - 24 years	2	4
25 - 49 years	15	31
50 - 64 years	14	29
65 - 75 years	10	21
Over 75 years	5	10
Total	48	100

Time in current home

	Frequency	Percent
Less than a year	3	6
1 - 5 years	22	46
6 - 10 years	8	17
More than 10 years	15	31
Total	48	100

Dwelling type

	Frequency	Percent
Bungalow	13	27
Detached house	8	17
Semi-detached house	7	15
Terraced house	5	10
Flat or apartment	14	29
Park Home	1	2
Total	48	100

Size of property (number of bedrooms)

	Frequency	Percent
1 bedroom	8	17
2 bedrooms	15	31
3 bedrooms	17	35
4 or more bedrooms	8	17
Total	48	100

Current employment status (combined)

	Frequency	Percent
work or self employed	12	25
School or further/higher education	4	8
Retired	14	29
Permanently sick and disabled	15	31
Other	3	6
Total	48	100

Estimated total monthly household income before tax and other deductions

	Frequency	Percent
Less than £1000 per month	14	21
£1001 - £1500 per month	12	25
£1501 - £2000 per month	2	4
£2001 or more	4	2
Don't know	6	13
Prefer not to say	10	21
Total	48	100

How easy or difficult it is to manage your housing costs?

	Frequency	Percent
I don't pay a mortgage or rent	20	42
I can afford to pay my mortgage or rent	17	35
I struggle to pay my mortgage or rent	9	19
Don't know	2	4
Total	48	100

Do you receive regular help with household tasks?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	34	71
No	14	29
Total	48	100

Do you receive any regular help with personal care?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	36	75
No	11	23
Total	38	100
One respondent did not answer/said DK		

Do you have any friends/relatives nearby who you can call on for help?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes, sometimes	20	42
Yes, at any time	13	27
No	14	29
Don't know	1	2
Total	48	100

Use of mobility aids indoors and outside the home (numbers)

	Indoors	Outdoors	Both	NA	Total
Stick	3	6	4	23	36
Crutches	1	3	5	25	34
A zimmer frame	9		2	21	32
Powered wheelchair	1	10	7	19	37
Self-powered wheelchair	3	6	8	18	35
Wheelchair pushed by another	2	19	13	5	39
Powered scooter	-	5	-	27	32
Mobility or adapted car	-	26	-	17	43
Hoist	8	1	1	23	33
Shower chair	34	3	1	4	42
Other equipment	16	-	1	16	33

Has your home been designed/adapted for wheelchair use?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	17	36
In the process of being adapted	4	8
No	27	56
Total	48	100

Which of these design features or adaptations does your home currently contain?

Adaptations	Yes (no)	Adaptations (%)			
		Yes	No	DK	Total
Level access (no steps) or ramped access to your front or back door	31	65	35	-	100
Covered access from car port or garage to house	3	6	90	4	100
Designated disabled parking space outside home	13	27	67	6	100
Accessible electric switches & environmental controls	15	31	67	2	100
Widened doorways	19	40	56	4	100
Level floors (i.e. step-free) within the home	34	71	29	-	100
A stair lift or through-floor lift inside the property	9	19	75	6	100
A toilet located at ground level	43	90	10	-	100
Lowered worktops or other features to make it easier to use the kitchen	3	6	92	2	100
A level access shower/wet room	30	63	35	2	100
Hoist/bath lift	10	21	71	2	100

Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the design and layout of your home?

	Frequency	Percent
Very satisfied/fairly satisfied	26	54
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8	17
Fairly dissatisfied	14	29
Total	48	100

Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the location of where you live?

	Frequency	Percent
Very satisfied/fairly satisfied	22	46
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	11	23
Very dissatisfied/fairly dissatisfied	15	32
Total	48	100

Are you currently thinking about moving house? - moving home

	Frequency	Percent
I do not want to move home	33	69
I am actively looking to move home now	3	6
I am thinking about moving home in the next 1-2 years	6	13
In over 5 years I might think about moving to a new home	2	4
Don't know	4	8
Total	48	100

If you were to move to another home would your preference be to?

	Frequency	Percent
Own it outright (i.e. without a mortgage)	17	35
Own it with a mortgage	3	6
Rent if from a social landlord (i.e. housing association)	19	40
Don't know	8	17
No response	1	2
Total	48	100

Which best reflects how you feel about your current housing situation?

	Frequency	Percent
I would like to remain in my current home as it already meets my needs	13	27
I would like to remain in my current home but with further adaptations being made to help me live more independently	19	40
I would like to move to accommodation where I could receive more specialist care and/or support	1	2
I would like to move to a different property specifically designed for a wheelchair user	5	10
None of these	6	13
Don't know	3	6
No response	1	2
Total	48	100

Appendix 5: Summary of survey data sources used in section 3

Introduction

This report draws on a number of secondary data sources, which includes evidence derived from a number of Scotland wide, GB wide or UK wide surveys. The following paragraphs provide a concise overview of each of these surveys.

Scottish Household and House Condition Survey

The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) is a multi-purpose continuous survey carried out on behalf of the Scottish Government by a consortium led by Ipsos MORI. by MORI-IPSOS. It is designed to provide information on the composition, characteristics, attitudes and behaviour of private households and individuals, both nationally and at a sub-national level, on a range of topics from individuals and household representatives. It is based on a sample of the general population in private residences in Scotland and as a result does not sample people living in institutions, such as a care home or prison.

From 2012 onwards, the survey was substantially redesigned to include elements of the Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS), including the physical survey component. The samples equate to some 10,400 households and (9,600 adults.

Scottish Surveys Core Questions 2017

The Scottish Surveys Core Questions (SSCQ) is an annual official statistics publication that collates survey responses from identical indicator questions from the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, the Scottish Health Survey and the Scottish Household Survey into one output. This includes common questions on self-assessed general health, disability and limiting long-term conditions, unpaid caring, perception of crime in local area. The pooling of data from the different surveys results in an annual sample of around 20,000 respondents, allowing for a more detailed analysis of sub-national geographies than source surveys allow.

The Scottish Health Survey

The Scottish Health Survey is carried out on behalf of the Scottish Government. It was first established in 1995 but has only been carried out annually since 2008. It is designed primarily to provide data at the Scotland wide level about the health of the private population (i.e. it excludes those living in institutions) and the lifestyle factors associated with health. The survey consists of a set of core questions and measurements plus specific modules on health conditions.

The main core sample typically is typically comprised of an annual sample of 4,006 adults for Scotland and a minimum Health Board sample size of 125 adults, with the latter stratified by local authority area. By combining data for a number of years, typically 4 years, it is possible to report on local authority level and health board level findings for variables, including the prevalence of disability amongst adults. aged 16 and over. However, to ensure the robustness of published findings, results were not included where the sample size was below 500 participants.

The Life Opportunities Survey

The Life Opportunities Survey (LOS) was a longitudinal survey of disability in Great Britain that was carried out in a succession of 3 waves between 2009 and 2014 and was managed by the Office for Disability Issues (part of the DWP) and by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The survey explored disability in terms of the social barriers to participation that people experience compared to non-

disabled people and how the wider environment (including their housing and transport) and the attitudes of the community influences whether or not their impairments become disabilities.

The LOS was based on face-to-face interviews of individuals with at least one impairment on up to three separate occasions during the lifespan of the survey. The LOS sample includes responses from over 6,470 participating household representatives and over 10,000 adults, including members of the non-impaired control group. Some 9% of all working age (16-64 years) and 10% of retired (65+ years) respondents resided in Scotland. As with the SHS, the LOS is based on people living in private households. People that subsequently moved to an institution or no longer resided in GB were excluded from subsequent survey waves as were people that no longer reported an impairment. To allow for this and the fact that people could acquire a disability during the study period, a number of “new” interviewees were added in waves 2 and 3.

The Family Resources Survey

The Family Resources Survey (FRS) is a continuous cross-sectional survey of around 25,000 households each year and is commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The survey began in October 1992 and is designed to collect a detailed set of socio-economic characteristics of the private population throughout and from 2002 throughout the UK. At that time the area of Scotland north of the Caledonian Canal and Northern Ireland were included in the survey. In addition, the FRS was extended to include a 100 per cent boost of the Scottish sample. The FRS defines disability as “any physical or mental health condition that lasts or is expected to last 12 months or more, and which limits their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.”