

# Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 3 December 2024

## Accessible Housing Summit and Council Adaptations Process - response to motion by Councillor Parker

Executive/routine  
Wards

Routine

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee is asked to:
  - 1.1.1 Agree to discharge the Motion and Administration Amendment (Appendix 1) agreed at Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on 27 August 2024; and
  - 1.1.2 Note the draft proposals for the Accessible Housing Summit to be hosted in early 2025 as set out in Appendix 2.

**Gareth Barwell**

Interim Executive Director of Place

Contact: Lisa Mallon, Head of Strategy, Commissioning and Service Improvement

E-mail: [lisa.mallon@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.mallon@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 529 6291

## Accessible Housing Summit and Council Adaptations Process – response to motion by Councillor Parker

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 The report responds to the motion (Appendix 1) approved by Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on 27 August 2024. It includes an update on accessible housing work, joint work with Health and Social Care, the delivery and funding of adaptations and an outline proposal for the Accessible Housing Summit in early 2025.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 The Housing Service commissioned a study on accessible housing in 2021 to provide a greater insight into the need for accessible and adapted homes across the city now and in the future. A [report](#) on the Accessible Housing Study was considered by Committee in December 2022 and an Accessible Housing Sounding Board was set up to identify priority areas of work and resources required to address the study findings.
- 3.2 Regular updates have been provided to Committee through the business bulletin and adaptations statistics are included in all cyclical assurance reports.
- 3.3 On 27 August 2024, Committee approved a motion and amendment on an Accessible Housing Summit and Council Adaptations Process. The approved actions are set out in Appendix 1.

### 4. Main report

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#### Joint work with Health and Social Care

- 4.1 A [report](#) to the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board (IJB) in February 2024 on the 'Health and Social Care contribution to addressing the City's Housing Emergency' outlined the existing contribution of the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership (EHSCP) to homelessness pressures and joint work with Housing. There are other examples of good day-to-day joint work between services including

the work of the Delayed Discharge Matching Group (comprised of Housing, NHS and EHSCP colleagues) that has been in place since 2016 and continues to meet monthly. EdIndex partner landlords continue to support the process, offering suitable properties for patients upon discharge wherever possible.

- 4.2 The hospital discharge pathway for patients leaving the Royal Edinburgh Hospital (REH) has become more embedded over the past year, with several patients being successfully housed. The Home Accessibility Referral Team has an Assessment Officer who is responsible for REH outreach, supporting colleagues and patients by attending the patient flow meetings, and emergency ad hoc arrangements to alleviate the pressure on REH beds.
- 4.3 There is a representative from the Edinburgh Affordable Housing Partnership (between the Council and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners) on the Edinburgh IJB Strategic Planning Group and a session with RSL representatives was held as part of the consultation on the IJB Draft Strategic Plan. Further discussions will take place on the housing links to the Plan as it is finalised.
- 4.4 Work has started on developing a protocol for joint working between housing and health and social care, with a recognition that there is scope to strengthen relationships, particularly as restructuring of teams has been ongoing across both service areas. The work is focused around two main themes:
  - 4.4.1 **Prevention**, including preparing for the Homelessness Prevention Duties and preventing delayed discharge; and
  - 4.4.2 **Housing needs**, including the housing needs of older people and those with multiple and complex needs.
- 4.5 This work will continue to be progressed over the coming year, informed by themed workshops with health and social care partners as part of the Housing Emergency Action Plan work. A workshop on mental health, housing and homelessness took place in October 2024, led by the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership (EHSCP) Service Director for Strategic Planning.
- 4.6 Discussions were focused on how we can work together to ensure individuals at risk of hospital admission due to an acute mental health crisis are in stable and suitable accommodation before they hit crisis point and how we can facilitate discharge back into an existing tenancy more quickly following an acute mental health crisis where an individual is admitted to hospital.
- 4.7 These discussions will continue as part of the wider work as described above, including a focus on ensuring an adequate supply of suitable housing for individuals with complex long-term mental health issues, alongside affordable care and support packages.

## **Adaptations**

- 4.8 The Edinburgh IJB Revised Edinburgh Integration Scheme 2022 outlines the following functions delegated by City of Edinburgh Council to the IJB which relate to major adaptations:
- 4.8.1 Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 section 3 (Assessment by Local authorities of the needs of disabled persons);
  - 4.8.2 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, section 92, only in so far as it relates to an aid or adaptation; and
  - 4.8.3 Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, section 71(1)(b), only in so far as it related to an aid or adaptation.
- 4.9 In practice these functions are delivered jointly by services across EHSCP, Housing and Children's Services.

## **Assessment and Eligibility Criteria**

- 4.10 Adult assessments are completed in line with section 12A of the Social Work (Scotland) Act which requires the local authority to assess any adult who appears to need community care services. This is a two-step process, where the assessor, in the case of adaptations the occupational therapist, will identify the needs of the person and then determine whether those needs call for the provision of services by applying [National Eligibility Criteria](#).
- 4.11 The national eligibility criteria framework considers both the severity of risk and urgency of intervention required and has four bands of risk; Critical, Substantial, Moderate and Low. The EHSCP has a threshold for provision of services set at Critical and Substantial. People who have needs deemed to be of Moderate or Low risk are provided with information, advice and signposting to other universal community support, but will not receive formal support from the local authority.
- 4.12 The National Eligibility Framework considers several aspects of risk of harm or risk to independence including:
- 4.12.1 Risks relating to neglect or physical or mental health;
  - 4.12.2 Risks relating to personal care/domestic routines/home environment;
  - 4.12.3 Risks relating to participation in community life; and
  - 4.12.4 Risks relating to carers.
- 4.13 The assessment of need is tenure neutral. For adults seeking adaptations to their home the assessment is undertaken by an Occupational Therapist working within the EHSCP. For children this assessment is undertaken by the Children's Occupational Therapy Service within the Children's Services team of Children, Education and Justice Services. The Children's Occupational Therapy Service includes young people up to the age of 16, or 18 years if Looked After by the Authority and/or in full-time education.

- 4.14 The same eligibility criteria is applied across services, which is an area of good practice from an equity and consistency point of view. The Service also works to the local authority duties under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children “in need” and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) principles. Although the Children’s Occupational Therapy Service is small in comparison to adults/Edinburgh HSCP, the team are responsible for some complex and costly major adaptations across Edinburgh and have identified funding pathways as an issue.
- 4.15 Although a person’s initial request may have been for an adaptation, the recommended intervention may be the provision of equipment or technology to meet the eligible need. The EHSCP also provides an independent advice service in the form of the Disabled Living Centre based at SMART centre in the grounds of the Astley Ainslie Hospital and the SMART Home based in the Edinburgh Community Rehabilitation and Support Service. Both services can support the person to privately purchase equipment and technology that is not provided by the EHSCP. The Disabled Living Centre can also provide independent advice on how to choose and arrange adaptations such as stairlifts and ramps where a person’s needs do not call for provision by the EHSCP or for those people who wish to supplement the provision of service provided by EHSCP.
- 4.16 If an adaptation is deemed to be the best way to meet the person’s eligible needs the subsequent funding arrangements are related to the tenure of the property. £3 million was spent on adaptations to Council homes, RSL homes and private homes in 2023/24.
- 4.16.1 **Council housing adaptations** are funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Staff in the Housing and Homelessness service lead on procurement of contractors to carry out major adaptation work to Council homes once OT colleagues have passed on details of adaptations required.
- 4.16.2 **Adaptations to RSL homes** are grant funded through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme administered by the Council on behalf of the Scottish Government. RSLs carry out the adaptations for their tenants and then claim grant funding. Spend has been increasing in recent years and the budget for 2024/25 has been maintained at the 2023/24 level despite an overall cut to the Affordable Housing Supply Programme allocation.
- 4.16.3 **Adaptations for homeowners and private tenants’** homes are supported by grant funding provided through the Council’s Capital Budget Strategy funded through the Council’s General Fund. There is a statutory duty to provide grants of 80% or 100% for those living in the private sector, who are assessed as needing adaptations. This budget is increasingly under pressure as demand continues and the cost of materials and labour has increased.
- 4.17 The Edinburgh Adaptations and Equipment Partnership (EAEP) meets each month to discuss adaptations. This is a longstanding group, which was set up to ensure adaptations were dealt with fairly and consistently across tenures. It is currently

attended by Senior Occupational Therapists from each Locality, Children's Services and representative from the Housing and Homelessness Service involved in day-to-day delivery of adaptations to Council homes and administering RSL funding. An update on contractors and delivery programmes is provided and priority cases discussed where required. Discussions on reviewing and improving day-to-day processes and procedures continue to take place through this group.

- 4.18 More complex/costly adaptations (adaptations over £20,000) are referred to the City Panel for approval. The panel is made up of senior Occupational Therapists from all localities and Children Services as well as a Senior Building Surveyor from Housing and Homelessness to ensure consistent decision making.
- 4.19 The EHSCP is undergoing an organisational restructure which aims to improve and strengthen operational, strategic and professional leadership. The Housing and Homelessness Service review will see responsibility for adaptations, in terms of the Building Surveyor role, move to the Head of Area Based Regeneration & Shared Repairs. Therefore, a joint review of the adaptation partnership and governance arrangements will be commenced during the second half of 2025. The Children's Occupational Therapy Team also need to be involved in review discussions.
- 4.20 In Housing to 2040, the Scottish Government made a commitment to '*streamline and accelerate the adaptations system*', acknowledging the need to take action to reduce the time it takes to apply for and receive support and maximise the available resources. The work was to begin with a fundamental review of the adaptations system, followed by recommendations for improvements to deal with the increased demand that an ageing population will drive. There is wider recognition that the funding and delivery of adaptations can be overly complex, as outlined in the CaCHE [report](#), Adapting the adaptations process from 2022.

### **Accessible Housing update**

- 4.21 In terms of data improvements, permanent adaptations made to Council homes are now being recorded on the NEC system. The joint work being taking forward with EHSCP, as outlined above, is also seeking to strengthen our understanding of housing needs for older people (and other groups) and to use this evidence to better inform our new build programmes. Funding pressures on the Affordable Housing Supply Programme and challenges for RSL partners have made the delivery of wheelchair homes more difficult.
- 4.22 One of the outputs from the study was to strengthen engagement with private developers to enhance the contribution to wheelchair and accessible housing supply. The proposed Accessible Housing Summit will provide an opportunity to invite private sector partners to discuss accessible housing. A response to the Scottish Government consultation on [Enhancing the accessibility, adaptability and usability of Scotland's Homes](#) was submitted last December. However, the results of the consultation have not been published yet so it is unclear when changes to the Housing for Varying Needs Guidance and the introduction of a Scottish Accessible Homes Standard for all tenures will be implemented.

4.23 Other areas identified as key areas from the Study were to consider how accessible homes are allocated (and improving support for applicants) and reviewing adaptations (as noted above). A review of the Allocation Policy for Council homes is one of the actions in the Housing Emergency Action Plan, to ensure it continues to enable fair access to housing, including consideration of protected characteristics. This gives an opportunity to review support for applicants who do not have online access or who need additional support to fill in the application form and navigate the allocation process as well as looking at how accessible homes are allocated.

### **Accessible Housing Summit**

- 4.24 An outline agenda and suggested list of organisations/partners to invite to the proposed Accessible Housing Summit is included at Appendix 2 for consideration but this will be refined in due course. It is proposed that this will be a half day event, held in a central and accessible venue, to bring together a range of partners to discuss practical actions that can be taken to improve access to information and advice on accessible housing and planning for new accessible homes in Edinburgh. As outlined below, there is a lot of activity around accessible housing at a national level so it is proposed that the Summit should focus on actions at a local level to avoid too much duplication.
- 4.25 The agenda being proposed is broader than considering an accessible housing register such as Home2Fit, which was proposed in the motion. Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living (GCIL) have advised that the Home2Fit website is no longer in place and that in its final iteration the site was not actually a resource for people to find an accessible home, but it did provide information and advice about different housing providers, benefits, legislation and adaptations. They are looking to provide similar information on the updated GCIL website but don't have resources to manage a register.
- 4.26 As noted, there continues to be activity at a national level to highlight issues and challenges around accessible homes, including the [Housing and Social Care Accessibility Summit](#) held in Dundee on 26 September 2024, attended by an officer from the Housing and Homelessness Service.
- 4.27 This was organised by Horizon Housing and Scottish Housing News, with support from Champion Homes. Outputs from this are being considered by the Accessible Housing Network, which is managed by Horizon Housing, with a view to taking forward actions through collective working. Network members will be useful contacts in terms of providing links to organisations and individuals who could attend or contribute to the proposed Accessible Housing Summit.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 The Accessible Housing Summit will be organised in early 2025.

- 5.2 Further updates will be provided through Business Bulletins and adaptations data will continue to be included in cyclical assurance reports.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 It should be noted that the Accessible Housing Summit will require funding from internal service area budget for venue booking.

## **7. Equality and Poverty Impact**

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- 7.1 This report does not put forward any recommendations for decision or change; therefore, there are no direct Equality and Poverty Impacts arising from this report. However, the ongoing work on accessible housing, including the proposed Accessible Housing Summit, seeks to improve access to and information on accessible housing and services which support independent living, for people of all ages.

## **8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications**

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- 8.1 This report does not put forward any recommendations for decision or change; therefore, there are no direct Climate and Nature Emergency implications arising from this report.

## **9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact**

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- 9.1 The Accessible Housing Summit will pick up on key areas of feedback already gathered from stakeholders and citizens as part of the Accessible Housing Study and Local Housing Strategy consultation to help shape actions going forward.
- 9.2 The Accessible Housing Sounding Board will work on more detailed proposals for the Summit.

## **10. Background reading/external references**

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- 10.1 [Accessible Housing Study Report - Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee 3 December 2022](#)
- 10.2 [Health and Social Care contribution to addressing the City's Housing Emergency – Edinburgh IJB report 9 February 2024](#)
- 10.3 [Edinburgh Integration Joint Board Revised Edinburgh Integration Scheme 2022 \(Body Corporate\) Effective 15th May 2023](#)
- 10.4 [National Standard Eligibility Criteria and Waiting Times for the Personal and Nursing Care of Older People - Guidance](#)



- 10.5 [Enhancing the accessibility, adaptability and usability of Scotland's Homes](#) - Scottish Government consultation
- 10.6 [Adapting the adaptations process – CaCHE report \(2022\)](#)

## **11. Appendices**

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- Appendix 1 Motion by Councillor Parker from Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee 27 August 2024 and Administration Amendment
- Appendix 2 Accessible Housing Summit proposals

## **Appendix 1 – Adjusted Motion by Councillor Parker - Accessible Housing Summit and Council Adaptations Process**

On 27 August 2024, Committee approved the following [adjusted motion](#) by Councillor Parker:

1. To note commitment in the Council's Housing Emergency Action Plan to strengthen partnership working between health and social care partners and housing and homelessness services, as well as commitments to "review the suitability and accessibility of housing for households with multiple disabilities."
2. Additionally, to note work to review the Council's allocation processes, including reviewing what support was available to disabled people to access suitable housing.
3. To recognise that the success of 1) and 2) depended on accurate data being kept against housing stock, and strong partnership working between health and social care partners and the housing and homelessness service in order to explore how homes could be adapted to be made suitable for prospective tenants.
4. To note that there was currently a lack of accurate information about the accessibility of housing stock across the city, as described in the findings of the Council's Accessible Housing Study published in 2022.
5. To note that the Scottish Government had consulted on Part 1 of the Housing for Varying Needs Design Guide and introduction of a Scottish Accessible Homes Standard which related to new build homes, which could help identify existing homes that were accessible, and appropriate design guidance for adapting existing homes.
6. To note that Home 2 Fit was an online register of accessible homes created by Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living to advertise accessible properties, cross-tenure (including ownership), across Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen, and regrets that the planned wider roll-out of the website across Scotland had been stalled.
7. To note that in response to Written Questions submitted to the Full Council meeting on 27th June 2024, it was stated that the Council's adaptations process had not been reviewed "for a number of years" and that "the Accessible Housing Sounding Board identified [the adaptations process] as a key area of work that would benefit from a review."
8. To request a report in 2 cycles to outline what work was taking place to strengthen partnership working between health and social care partners and the housing and homelessness service, with a particular focus on the adaptations process, agreeing that the report should cover:
  - a. The governance processes for adaptations, and how these could be strengthened and improved.
  - b. What consideration was given to completing preventative adaptations (as opposed to reactive adaptations), and how this could be strengthened and improved,

including information about what factors were considered when determining “accessibility.”

- c. The funding arrangements for adaptations work, and whether these were fair and appropriate.
9. To further agree that the report should cover:
    - a. Progress against actions from the Accessible Housing Study in 2022, for example work to improve data around Council housing stock, as well as information about any barriers to delivery of these actions, for example resourcing and/or budget constraints, and how these could be circumvented.
  10. To agree to host an Accessible Housing Summit in the new year, inviting organisations across the city to discuss how a similar register to Home 2 Fit could be developed for Edinburgh, including representation from Edindex partners, Health and Social Care partners, representatives from the private rented sector, letting agencies / estate agents, Disabled People’s Organisations, relevant Council officers, committee members and any other relevant bodies. Report referred to in sections 8), 9) would include a proposal for an agenda and attendance at the summit to be discussed at Committee.
  11. To agree that a summary of these discussions and any agreed next steps would be included in the report at 8), as well as details of indicative funding requirements to take forward such a project.

## **Appendix 2 – Proposals for Accessible Housing Summit**

### **Agenda**

It is proposed that the summit brings together colleagues, partners and stakeholders to help identify actions that could improve information on accessible housing and to explore the challenges in delivering new accessible homes across tenures, with an Edinburgh focus. There could be an introductory session on the priority areas of work identified in the accessible housing study, building on the consultation feedback from stakeholders and residents and from more recent engagement on the Local Housing Strategy.

Interactive workshops would then focus on specific areas e.g. advice and information and building new accessible homes (affordable and private).

### **Attendees**

- Registered Social Landlord partners
- Health and Social Care colleagues
- Private housing sector representatives
- Planning colleagues
- Officers from relevant Housing and Homelessness Service teams
- Elected Members
- Disabled People's Organisations
- Tenant representatives
- Contacts from Accessible Housing Network