

Core Strategy (as amended 2019) Policy H4 – Accessible Housing Standards

Accessible housing

- 5.2.40.8 Changes to national planning policy and the Building Regulations in 2015 enable Local Authorities to require the provision of accessible dwellings as part of new residential developments to meet the needs of residents. In Leeds there is an evidenced need for housing which is suitable for disabled people, older people and families with young children. The provision of dwellings which meet the optional accessible housing standards provided in Part M volume 1 of the Building Regulations can help meet this need.
- 5.2.40.9 The optional accessible housing standard M4(2) ‘accessible and adaptable dwellings’ contained within Part M volume 1 of the Building Regulations provides a higher level of accessibility and adaptability than standard dwellings (‘standard dwellings’ are those which meet the requirements of M4(1) of Part M volume 1 of the Building Regulations). The optional accessible housing standard M4(3) ‘wheelchair user dwellings’ provides a standard for dwellings which are accessible for wheelchair users or can easily be adapted to be suitable for wheelchair users.
- 5.2.40.10 15.8% of households in Leeds contain 1 or 2 members with a disability, 23.2% contain a member aged 65 years or over and 11.8% contain a child aged 4 years or younger, 3.3% of households contain a wheelchair user who requires adaptations to their home to ensure it is more accessible for them now or anticipate they will need adaptations in the next 5 years (SHMA Household Survey 2017). All of these residents could benefit from the design features of M4(2) accessible and adaptable dwellings, or M4(3) wheelchair user dwellings.
- 5.2.40.11 Under the Building Regulations the housing standards contained within Part M volume 1 only apply generally to new-build dwellings. The Building Regulations define student accommodation as hotel accommodation in relation to Part M, with accessible hotel accommodation, and therefore student accommodation, is covered by Part M volume 2 of the Building Regulations. For this reason, planning policy requirements for accessible housing do not apply to purpose built student accommodation.
- 5.2.40.12 M4(3) of Part M volume 1 of the Building Regulations ‘wheelchair user dwellings’ provides 2 standards:
- wheelchair adaptable dwellings,
 - wheelchair accessible dwellings.

Wheelchair adaptable dwellings are homes that are designed to be easily adapted to meet the needs of wheelchair users. Wheelchair accessible dwellings are homes which are readily usable by wheelchair users at the point of completion, and provide all the necessary fixtures and fittings specified by the standard. National policy states that planning policy requirements for wheelchair accessible homes should only be applied to those dwellings where the local authority is responsible for allocating or nominating a person to live in that dwelling. Unless the Local Authority has this responsibility, wheelchair user dwellings required by this policy should be M4(3) wheelchair adaptable

dwellings. In most cases it is expected that market housing for sale and specific affordable dwellings provided through planning requirements will be wheelchair adaptable. Only where Leeds City Council is nominating a wheelchair user as an occupier will wheelchair accessible dwellings be required.

5.2.40.13 Where M4(2) and M4(3) dwellings are to be provided within the same block or share the same approach route, the approach route and block communal arrangements from the highest category of dwelling served should be provided.

5.2.40.14 Where the size of development means that the percentage requirements for M4(2) or M4(3) dwellings generate less than 1 dwelling, if the figure generated is 0.5 of a dwelling or more this should be rounded up to 1 dwelling, if it is below 0.5 then the dwelling does not need to be provided.

5.2.40.15 To provide choice for people who require accessible housing, the breakdown of size, type and tenure of M4(2) and M4(3) dwellings should reflect the breakdown of housing proposed overall as closely as possible, unless there is evidenced need for additional accessible housing in one particular tenure.

5.2.40.16 Whilst dwellings in accordance with the optional accessible housing standards should be agreed in terms of their size and form on submitted drawings, the provision of accessible housing should be secured via planning condition. This allows the building control body to check dwellings compliance against the provisions of the applicable optional building regulations standards (M4(2) or M4(3)).

5.2.40.17 Planning conditions should specify:

- Which and how many dwellings within the development are required to satisfy M4(2)* accessible and adaptable dwellings standards
- Which and how many dwellings within the development are required to satisfy M4(3)* wheelchair adaptable dwellings standards
- Which and how many dwellings within the development are required to satisfy M4(3)* wheelchair accessible dwellings standards

*contained within Part M volume 1 of the Building Regulations

5.2.40.18 Applicants may choose to demonstrate via individual viability appraisals that there are exceptional site circumstances which mean the accessible housing requirements cannot be met on specific schemes. In such cases, where evidence in accordance with the National Planning Guidance principles for carrying out a viability assessment is submitted, a departure from Policy H10 may be justified.

POLICY H10: ACCESSIBLE HOUSING STANDARDS

New build residential developments should include the following proportions of accessible dwellings:

- 30% of dwellings meet the requirements of M4(2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings' of Part M Volume 1 of the Building Regulations.
- 2% of dwellings meet the requirement of M4(3) 'wheelchair user dwellings' of Part M volume 1 of the Building Regulations. Wheelchair user dwellings should meet the M4(3) wheelchair adaptable dwelling standard unless Leeds City Council is responsible for nominating a person to live in the dwelling.

Where the scale of development would generate more than one accessible dwelling, the mix of sizes, types and tenures of M4(2) and M4(3) dwellings should reflect the mix of sizes, types and tenures of the development as a whole as closely as possible (unless the applicant can demonstrate an evidenced need locally to provide accessible housing in dwellings of a particular size, type and / or tenure. Locally will normally mean the Designated Neighbourhood Area, or where this is not defined, will mean relevant settlement, or ward if the site lies within the main urban area).

The required number, mix and location of accessible dwellings should be clearly illustrated on drawings and via planning condition.

Departures from this policy should be justified by evidence of viability considerations.