

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol
Minister for Natural Resources



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-623
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/00337/15

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

12/1
March 2015

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your letter to Lesley Griffiths AM Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty dated 23 February, regarding the petition from Leonard Cheshire Disability to improve the provision of disabled friendly housing in Wales. As my portfolio includes Planning and Building Regulations I am responding accordingly.

Our national planning policy statement, Planning Policy Wales (PPW), encourages local planning authorities to facilitate sustainable residential environments by promoting 'barrier free' housing developments and refers to the Lifetime Homes standards as an example of this (paragraph 9.1.2 refers). Our Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design also highlights the importance of meeting existing and future needs of house occupants and uses lifetime homes to illustrate the importance of foresight and flexibility in design. PPW states that policies in Local Development Plans (LDPs) should cover the physical scale and design of new buildings, access, density, and off-street parking taking account of particular residential areas and of changing needs. This local need should be clearly articulated in the evidence base created as part of the formulation of an LDP.

I am aware that some local planning authorities in Wales reference the Lifetime Home standards in their Local Development Plan policies or Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on design. I consider this flexible approach, which is based on locally identified need, enables local planning authorities to determine the right provision for their areas.

The Building Regulations through the requirements of Part M take into consideration the design considerations for access to and use of a dwelling from the external boundary to the internal areas of circulation. This ensures that both horizontal and vertical movement is provided for, including with provision for accessible ground floor WC facilities.

In relation to social housing all schemes funded through Welsh Government have for a number of years been required to meet Lifetime Homes standards.

In my view our current planning policy and guidance provides Local Planning Authorities with the flexibility to respond to identified need and I would need to be convinced as to how the quota system for wheelchair dwellings the petition calls for would match provision with demand.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, sweeping loop followed by a vertical line.

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
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