

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/01795/15

William Powell AM
Assembly Member for Mid & West Wales
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

 November 2015

Dear William Powell AM,

Thank you for your letter of 13 November which shared the latest response from Leonard Cheshire Disability regarding petition P-04-623: Improve the Provision of Disabled Friendly Housing in Wales.

Since my last letter of 1 September officials have begun to review planning policies in adopted and emerging local development plans to identify policies which require Lifetime Homes in new developments. This has revealed varying practice; from those which explicitly require the standard, through those which reference it in design policies, to those who make no mention of them at all.

As stated in my previous letter, I will write to local planning authorities to ascertain the quantum of Lifetime Homes delivered through the planning system in Wales. However, I expect the responses on this to relate to those which have particular planning policies on this very issue. These, in turn, will relate to the findings of a Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) which is prepared to inform all local development plans.

Of course, in negotiating the terms of each planning application both local planning authorities and developers will be mindful of the costs associated with other requirements which may include the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), affordable housing, energy efficiency and sprinkler systems; and their impact on the overall viability of a housing scheme. It is in no ones interests to require so much from new developments to the extent that they are not built at all.

It is ultimately up to each local planning authority to decide on its priorities locally and negotiate the delivery of the right type of housing for their area.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0300 0603300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0300 0604400
Correspondence.Carl.Sargeant@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The 2013 research project on Accessible Housing Registers which was up-dated in 2014 showed that all Local Authorities had a system in place for matching people with disabilities to available adapted social housing. The Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association continue to work with Local Authorities to further develop and improve Accessible Housing Registers. The Code of Guidance on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness encourages all Local Authorities to have an Accessible Housing Register or similar matching system in place. Consideration of the information from the Leonard Cheshire Disability has raised a number of questions. It says only half of Welsh Authorities have an Accessible Housing Register or similar system but this appears to have been based on a 50% response rate from Councils and may therefore not be representative of all of local Government. It does not bear out the findings of our 2013 research on the subject.

Turning now to the delivery of adaptations, it is encouraging the most recent performance indicator for the delivery of disabled facilities grants in 2014-15 has shown continued progress, with waiting times down by seven days. The average waiting time is now 231 days across Wales as a whole. The time taken to deliver a disabled facilities grant is much less than it used to be, for example, in 2005-06, the average was 593 days. We believe further improvement is possible and indeed necessary. The improvement extends beyond the disabled facilities grant process to all adaptations. The Welsh Government is currently working with stakeholders to deliver an enhanced adaptations system and we anticipate an announcement on this in the first quarter of next year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CS', written in a cursive style.

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