



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Clive Betts MP
Chair, Communities and Local Government
Select Committee
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Alok Sharma MP
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Dear Clive,

HOUSING FOR OLDER PEOPLE

I am writing to follow up the question from Helen Hayes at last week's evidence session on housing for older people about the impact of 2015 policy changes on the number of easily adaptable homes being built which fall broadly within the lifetime homes standard.

The Building Regulations' changes in 2015 introduced a new optional requirement for accessible and adaptable homes, broadly equivalent to the lifetime homes standard, which a local authority can apply based on an assessment of local need and viability. This would be done by the local authority setting a planning condition for a new housing development. The Department does not collect data on specific planning conditions set when planning permissions are granted, so we do not have information on the number of homes where the accessible and adaptable homes optional standard was required.

When building work is completed, a completion certificate may be issued if building control is undertaken by a local authority, or a final certificate if building control is undertaken by an approved Inspector. Copies of completion certificates and final certificates are held by local authorities, but the Department does not collect this information centrally. As a result, we do not have records of the number of dwellings completed to the accessible or adaptable standard.

However, the Department's English Housing Survey collects information on the accessibility and adaptability of all homes, including new homes. The most recent report can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2014-to-2015-adaptations-and-accessibility-of-homes-report>.

This assessment predates the introduction of newer accessible and adaptable technical standards and so has not yet picked up on the impact of the 2015 change. It does, however, demonstrate the impact of earlier changes. The report covers households with a person(s) with a long-term limiting illness or disability that required them to have adaptations made to their home, including whether these households had the adaptation they required and the suitability of their home.

It also examines the overall prevalence of accessibility features in the housing stock in 2014, before comparing the prevalence of such features in homes built before 2001 and from 2001 onwards, when new Building Regulations' requirements on access started to have an impact. In line with changes to Building Regulations, homes built from 2001 onwards were more likely to provide accessibility features. For example, the provision of level access was five times more likely to exist in homes built from 2001 onwards (68%) compared with those built before 2001 (13%).

I hope that this information is helpful.

Kind regards,



ALOK SHARMA MP

I would be most grateful if you would share this response with Helen Hayes.