



Equality Hub

New rules to make rented homes easier for disabled people to enter and leave

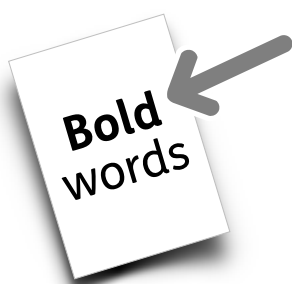
What do you think?



easy
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In this Easy Read document, difficult words are in **bold**. We explain what these words mean in the sentence after they have been used.



Some words are [blue and underlined](#). These are links which will go to another website which has more information.

Introduction



The Government wants some new rules about making rented homes more accessible for disabled people, so they are easier to enter and leave.



The new rules are part of the **Equality Act 2010** and would have to be agreed before they start.

The **Equality Act 2010** is a law that protects people from being treated unfairly because of things like their age, gender, religion or disability.



To help us decide on the new rules, we want to know what you think.



Please read this information and then answer the questions at the end.

We need your answers by **XXXX**



Making rented homes accessible



There are already some rules about making rented homes accessible. But the rules only apply to the parts of the building that the disabled person lives in.



The new rules are about making the **shared areas of a rented home** more accessible.

The **shared areas of a rented home** are the parts that are shared by everyone who lives in the building, like outside areas, halls and stairways.



Making shared areas of rented homes more accessible for disabled people could be things like:

- Making sure the car park has spaces for disabled people to park close to the building.



- Having a ramp or a handrail where the ground is uneven.



- Putting in a stairlift to get up and down the stairs.

Which homes the new rules would apply to



Some people live in a rented home which is owned by a landlord. Other people live in their own home inside a rented building which is owned by a landlord.



The new rules would apply to rented homes and buildings owned by:

- Local councils.



- Housing Associations.



- Private landlords - this could be a person or a company.



Small buildings

The rules would not apply to rented homes in small buildings.



Small buildings include:

- Buildings that are shared with members of the same household.



- Buildings that are not big enough for more than 2 households, or more than 6 people to live in.



- Holiday homes.

What we want the new rules to say

We want the new rules to say:



- A disabled person can ask their landlord to make changes to shared areas of their rented home, if it would make it more accessible.



- The landlord should make any changes to shared areas if:
 - They are asked to by a disabled person who lives in, or is going to live in the building.



- The changes are reasonable.



- The changes don't affect other people who live in the building.

We want the new rules to be clear about:



- How the disabled person should ask their landlord to make changes.



- What the landlord should do if a disabled person asks them to make changes.



- Who will pay for the changes to be made.



- How long the landlord should take to make a decision.



- Writing an agreement between the disabled person and the landlord.



- What happens if the landlord refuses to make changes.

How the disabled person should ask their landlord to make changes



If a disabled person wants to have changes made to the shared areas in the building where they live, they should ask their landlord.



It is best if they write a letter to the landlord to ask them about making changes.



Before they ask the landlord, they should:

- Try and find out how much the changes will cost.



- Speak to other people who live in the building about the changes.

What the landlord should do if a disabled person asks them to make changes



Landlords must be fair to everyone who lives in, or is going to live in their buildings.



If a disabled person asks a landlord to make changes to shared areas of their building, they must deal with it in a way that is fair to:

- The disabled person, and



- The other people who live in the building.



The landlord should let the disabled person know that they have said yes to the changes.

Speak to other people in the building



The landlord will also need to speak to other people in the building to understand how any changes would affect them.



The landlord should give everyone in the building the chance to speak up.



But they don't have to accept every person's opinion if they don't agree with it.

Decide if the changes are reasonable

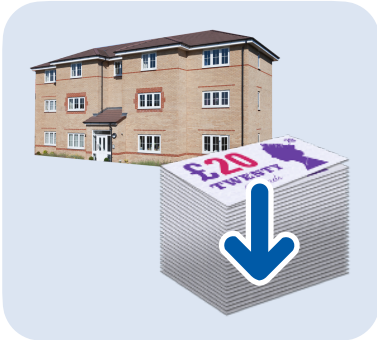


The landlord will need to think about whether the changes that have been asked for are reasonable.

This means thinking about things like:



- How the changes might affect the way they follow other rules, like health and safety laws.



- Whether their building would be worth less money after making the changes.



- How easy it would be to change things back if the disabled person moves out and the shared areas no longer need to be accessible.



- How any work to make changes would affect other people in the building, and other people living and working close by.

Who will pay for the changes to be made



Although the landlord will need to make the changes, they can ask the disabled person to pay for the changes to be made.



The disabled person may be able to ask their local council to help them pay towards the costs.



If the changes will be expensive, the landlord will need to think about whether the disabled person can afford them. This may affect the landlord's decision to agree to the changes.

Disabled Facilities Grant



The Disabled Facilities Grant is money that disabled people and landlords can apply for to help pay for changes that will make shared areas more accessible.



For more information go to:
www.gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants

How long the landlord should take to make a decision



The rules won't say exactly how long a landlord can take to make a decision.



But the landlord should let the disabled person know how long they will take.



The landlord will decide to either:

- Make the changes,



- Make the changes, but only after they have made sure the changes won't cause any other issues, or



- Not make the changes.



The landlord should write a letter to the disabled person to tell them what their decision is.

Writing an agreement between the disabled person and the landlord

If the landlord agrees to make changes to the shared areas of the rented home, they should write an agreement which includes:



- Who will carry out any work to make the changes.



- How much the changes will cost and who will pay.



- What happens if the disabled person moves out of the building, like who will pay if something needs to be changed back.



The agreement should be signed by both the landlord and the disabled person.



Once they have signed the agreement, it is against the law if they do not follow what has been agreed.

What happens if the landlord refuses to make changes



If the landlord refuses to make changes to the shared areas of a rented home, then the disabled person can **appeal**.

An **appeal** is when you disagree with a decision and ask for it to be changed.

The disabled person can ask for help and advice from services like:



- Citizens Advice.



- The Equality Advisory and Support Service.



If the landlord still refuses to make changes, or the disabled person thinks they are being treated unfairly, they could take the landlord to court.



If a case goes to court, a judge will decide who is right and who is wrong.



If the judge says the landlord is right, then the disabled person may have to pay for the cost of going to court.

If the judge says the disabled person is right, they may tell the landlord to:



- Make the changes in the rented home to make it more accessible for the disabled person.



- Pay some money to the disabled person.

About you



Before we ask you any questions about the new rules, we would like to get some information from you to help us understand who is answering the questions.



You don't have to give us this information if you don't want to.



I will be answering the questions as...

- A disabled person who lives in a rented home.
- A disabled person who plans to live in a rented home.
- A landlord.
- Other - please say:



My name, or the name of my organisation is:



My email address:



My phone number:



Would you be happy for us to contact you about your answers? *Please tick.*

Yes

No

What do you think?



Question 1:

We have said that the new rules should not apply to smaller buildings.



Do you think there are any types of rented housing that the new rules should not apply to?

Yes

No

If you ticked 'Yes', please tell us which types of housing:

Question 2:



Do you think the new rules should say how long the landlord can take to ask other people who live in the building about changes to shared areas?

Yes

No

If you ticked 'Yes', please tell us how long you think the landlord should be able to take:



Question 3:

Do you think the new rules should say how the landlord has to ask other people who live in the building about changes to shared areas?

- Yes
- No

If you ticked 'Yes', please tell us how you think landlords should have to ask other people in the building:

Question 4:



Tenancy agreements may affect whether a disabled person can ask for any changes to be made.

A **tenancy agreement** is a document that says what the landlord and person living in the house can and cannot do.



Do you think there may be any issues with tenancy agreements, or other agreements, if we start the new rules?

Yes

No

If you ticked 'Yes', please tell us about the issues you can think of:

Question 5:



We have said that landlords can ask the disabled person to pay for the changes to make shared areas more accessible.



The landlord may also need to spend time and money on making sure any work is done properly.

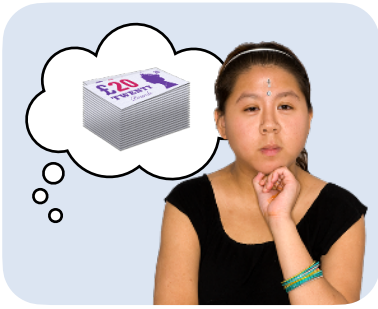


Do you think the landlord should be able to ask the disabled person to pay for all the costs of making changes, including the cost to make sure work is done properly?

Yes

No

Don't know



Question 6:

If changes to make a shared area more accessible are agreed, who do you think should pay for the changes?

- The disabled person.
- The landlord.
- All the people who live in the building.
- The cost should be shared between the disabled person and their landlord.
- The cost should be shared between the landlord and all the people who live in the building.
- It is difficult to say. It might be different in each case.



Question 7:

We have said that the landlord can ask the disabled person to pay for the changes.



The landlord could ask that all the people who live in the building share the cost of the changes.



Other than the Disabled Facilities Grant, what ideas do you have to help people if the landlord asked everyone share the cost?

Question 8:



If the other people in the building can't afford to pay towards the changes, it would be up to the disabled person to pay.



Other than the Disabled Facilities Grant, what do you think we can do to help the disabled person to pay?

Question 9:



Do you think there may be problems if the landlord decides who pays what towards the cost of the changes, including the other people in the building?

Yes

No

If you ticked 'Yes', how do you think we could deal with the problems?



Question 10:

Do you think there may be problems if the landlord decides to pass on the costs of the changes to the other people who live in the building?

Yes

No

If you ticked 'Yes', how do you think we could deal with the problems?

Question 11:



What do you think the rules should say about how the landlord speaks to other people in the building about the changes requested by the disabled person?

Question 12:



Do you think we should have a form that the disabled person and landlord can fill in when they are talking about making changes to shared areas?

Yes

No

If you ticked 'Yes', what do you think should be included on the form?



Question 13:

We have said that the landlord should make any changes to shared areas if they are reasonable.

What does 'reasonable' mean to you?



Question 14:

What else could we do to help landlords decide if something is reasonable?

A large, empty rounded rectangular box intended for a written response to the question above.

Question 15:



We have said that if the landlord agrees to make the changes that have been asked for, they must have a written agreement with the disabled person.



Do you think we should provide a form that the landlord and disabled person have to use for their written agreement?

Yes

No

Question 16:



If you don't think we should provide a form for the written agreement, do you think we should provide some guidance to help the landlord and disabled person write their own agreement?

Yes

No

Question 17:



If you think we should provide a form for the written agreement, or some guidance to help write an agreement, what do you think should be included in it?

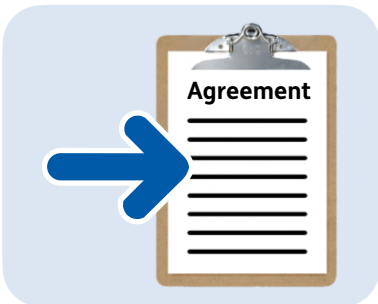
Question 18:



We think the written agreement should say how the landlord will use the disabled person's money, if they are paying for the changes to made.



This includes how the landlord will look after the money in between getting it from the disabled person and paying it to whoever is carrying out the work.



Do you agree that this should be included in the written agreement?

Yes

No

If you ticked 'No', please say why you don't think it should be included:

Thank you



Thank you for your answers.

Please send your answers back to us by:



- Email:
s36consultationresponse@cabinetoffice.gov.uk



- Post:
Common Parts Consultation
Government Equalities Office
3rd Floor, Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

For more information



You can look at our website here:
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/government-equalities-office

If you need more information please contact us by:



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