



## Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee

**Petition Number:** [PE1554](#)

**Main Petitioner:** Jacq Kelly on behalf of Leonard Cheshire Disability

**Subject:** Calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to take action to ensure that all new homes in Scotland are built to fully meet all the Lifetime Homes Standards, with at least 10 per cent of new homes built to full wheelchair accessibility standards.

### Background

**Lifetime Homes Standard:** The Lifetime Homes Standard is a voluntary housing design standard established in the mid-1990's by the Helen Hamlyn Foundation and Habinteg Housing Association working with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The Lifetime Homes Standard sets minimum design criteria for new housing. The Standard aims to ensure that houses are easily accessible to all through features such as step free access, or through passive design measures that allow for easy upgrades, e.g. walls designed to support the later installation of a stair lift

Housing that is designed to the Lifetime Homes Standard should be convenient for most occupants, including most wheelchair users and disabled visitors, without the necessity for substantial alterations.

The Standard is guided by a set of five design principles:

1. **Inclusivity:** The design of a Lifetime Home removes many of the barriers to accessibility present in current houses, allowing people with a wide range of needs to live there with without the need for major upgrades and alterations.
2. **Accessibility:** The Lifetime Home standard focuses on convenient access within the home and at entrances/exits.
3. **Adptability:** Passive design features allow for easy accessibility upgrades, without the need for substantial structural changes.
4. **Sustainability:** Lifetime Homes maintain sustainable communities, allowing people to remain in their homes despite changing circumstances.
5. **Good Value:** The design criteria are intended to have only marginal cost implications.

The Standards cover 16 specific design areas, from car parking to the location of electricity sockets and controls.

**Scottish Building Standards:** Scottish Building Standards 4.1 and 4.2 require all buildings to be constructed in such a way that all building users have safe, convenient and unassisted means of access to the building. A proportion of bedrooms in any dwelling must be wheelchair accessible and a means of unassisted access must be available to, and throughout, at least one level of each dwelling. Chapter 4 of the Scottish Government's building standards [Technical Handbook](#), which sets out how building industry professionals can design properties to meet the requirements set out in Building Standards, states that:

“The guidance in this section, together with the guidance in Section 3, Environment relating to accessibility, has been based around, and developed from, issues that are included in ‘Housing for Varying Needs’ and the Lifetime Homes concept developed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.”

### **Scottish Government Action**

The Scottish Government regularly reviews and updates Building Standards and the associated Technical Handbooks.

### **Scottish Parliament Action**

The Scottish Parliament has not considered the formal incorporation of the Lifetime Homes Standard into the Scottish building standards system.

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