

Summary

Match me – what works for adapted social housing lettings?

About the DRILL Programme

DRILL (Disability Research on Independent Living and Learning) was an innovative 5 year, UK wide programme led by disabled people, for disabled people and funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

Launched in 2015, the programme was managed by a partnership of Disability Action Northern Ireland, Disability Rights UK, Disability Wales and Inclusion Scotland.

The aim of the programme was to build better evidence about approaches which enable disabled people to achieve independent living. The findings from the projects it funded can be used to inform future provision across a wide range of policy areas, and give a greater voice to disabled people in decisions which affect them.

This is one of a series of summaries of the project supported by DRILL. Final reports, toolkits and summaries of all the projects are available from the DRILL website at www.drilluk.org.uk.

Overview of the project

This project looked at the national policy of letting adapted social housing in Scotland.

It looked at what works for disabled housing applicants, and what needs to change to make the process more efficient.

Approach

The project used qualitative research methods, conducting contextual research on local lettings policy and practice.

Semi-structured interviews were used, tracking the experiences of a number of disabled house seekers or new tenants.

Focus groups in three local authority areas were set up to discuss observations of letting practices. Feedback sessions were then held in these areas to assess findings from disabled participants and housing providers.

Findings

None of the local authorities consulted with requested medical practitioners to assess health-related housing needs. This demonstrated a shift towards the adoption of the social model of housing needs assessment.

There was widespread recognition that not all properties which were vacant for re-let were able to be adapted to meet the needs of disabled applicants.

There is conflict between minimising rent lost on vacant properties and acknowledging the extra time needed to successfully match vacant properties to disabled applicants.

Disabled applicants who remain without an offer of suitable accessible or adapted social housing, over a significant period of time, may experience negative and adverse emotional and mental distress.

The assessment of the suitability of an adapted, and accessible, property should consider the access and internal features. It should also assess the accessibility of the external environment and the opportunities for the applicant to maintain local support networks.

Disabled tenants faced difficulties such as needing more precise adaptations when trying to sustain their tenancies.

Findings (continued)

Good practice was identified, such as the involvement of disabled people and housing professionals in local adapted housing practices, enhancing service user feedback mechanisms and developing strategic approaches to making housing accessible.

Newly built accessible and adaptable properties provided significantly greater scope to meet individual housing needs, compared to adaptation of older housing stock.

Recommendations

The project outlined many recommendations, some of which are listed here. All recommendations are included in the full report which is linked below.

- Improved understanding of the physical and mental harm of inappropriate housing will come from hearing the voices of disabled people through co-production approaches
- Better use of technology must be made to improve the quality of data held on adaptable/accessible housing and on the specific needs of applicants
- Disabled people and their families should have equal housing opportunities and the right to an accessible home in the community that ensures and protects their human rights
- Scottish local authorities should establish co-production groups involving disabled people to inform decisions on housing
- They must also review organisational policies that require tenants to revert a property back to its original state upon leaving
- The Scottish Government should improve accessibility standards for new build social housing so that it is more economical and easier to adapt in the future
- The Scottish Housing Regulator must recognise that accessible/adapted housing may require additional time between tenants to allocate and carry out the necessary adaptations.

Final report

[Match me – what works for adapted social housing lettings?](#)

Please click on report name to read the full report.

Project partners

Horizon Housing



Housing Options
Scotland



University of
Stirling

