Letter to editor – HoME Campaign

Dear Sir,

As the country enters a second nationwide lockdown, we are again going to be spending the vast majority of our time inside our homes. But for many people their homes limit what they can do and who they can see, and in some cases are even a danger to their health.

Currently, [91% of homes in the UK do not provide even the lowest level of accessibility](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/898205/2018-19_EHS_Adaptations_and_Accessability_Fact_Sheet.pdf), meaning fewer than one in ten homes are suitable for older or disabled people to visit, never mind live in. The government is currently consulting on plans to update to a new higher accessibility standard for all new homes being built in England.

As we get older, most of us want to stay in our communities and live in homes that support us to remain active and independent. For the vast majority of us, this means living in ordinary mainstream housing, not specialist housing or care homes. There are cost savings too for the health and care system from avoiding expensive admissions to hospital following falls or costly residential care fees.

With an ageing population, and thousands of disabled people already struggling to get suitable housing, it’s high time we update housing standards in order to future-proof our housing stock. To do this, the government must make the ‘accessible and adaptable’ M4(2) design standard the mandatory baseline for all new homes, as proposed in their consultation as soon as possible. Any further delay in raising standards will mean more costs to individuals, families and the taxpayer.

[As housing organisations and charities advocating for older and disabled people we have come together as the Housing Made for Everyone (HoME) coalition](https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/news/housing-made-everyone-home-new-coalition-formed-tackle-lack-suitable-housing) to urge the government to seize this opportunity to build the homes which it’s now clearer than ever, we desperately need.

Signed:

Anna Dixon, Chief Executive of Centre for Ageing Better  
Sheron Carter, Chief Executive of Habinteg Housing  
Steph Harland, Chief Executive of Age UK  
Sue Adams, Chief Executive of Care & Repair England  
Terrie Alafat, Chief Executive of Chartered Institute of Housing  
Kamran Mallick, Chief Executive of Disability Rights UK  
Jeremy Porteus, Chief Executive of Housing Learning & Improvement Network  
Kate Henderson, Chief Executive of National Housing Federation  
Alan Vallance, Chief Executive of Royal Institute of British Architects  
Fiona Howie, Chief Executive of Town and Country Planning Association

The Housing made for Everyone is urging individuals and organisations to have their say by responding to the consultation before the 1st December deadline.