

Accommodation Strategy

Better Homes: Greater Choice



Learning Disability Home Design Principles

(March 2014)

KCC will not be commissioning any new residential care homes for those with a learning disability and would strongly discourage any provider from opening a new care home in Kent. However, in instances where residential care is required for someone with a learning disability, this document outlines the design principles that should be taken into account.

KCC appreciates the opportunity to engage with any developer of residential care for those with a learning disability at an early stage.

Design and spacing requirements

The design of the accommodation, selection of equipment, signage, internal colour and finishes and landscaping should enable the independence of people who have mobility problems, may be physically frail, or who may have a visual, hearing or cognitive impairment.

It is recommended to use contrasting doorframes and against paintwork and contrasting doors as this would be useful to consider for assisting visual skills. Flooring should avoid swirly carpeting/highly patterned flooring and should not be the same colour as the walls or doors

Good practice states that all balconies should be a minimum of 1.6 metres in height, with no step up access to gain height at the perimeter of the balcony. Consideration of the placing of any fixed furniture in relation to the balcony should be a part of a risk assessment for the individual resident.

Ceilings need to be strong enough to hold an overhead hoist. The layout of the room also needs to accommodate the use of a hoist e.g. a direct line from the bed to the bathroom.

Consideration should be given to adequate sound proofing of walls and ceilings to account for challenging behaviour within the home.

Consideration should be given to the provision of wet rooms/floor level shower access.

The building design should maximise natural light and lighting in communal rooms should be domestic in character, sufficiently bright and positioned to facilitate reading and other activities.

The physical environment must be “care ready” and ‘enabling’ in terms of the likely progression of impairments and long term conditions residents will experience with increasing age and frailty.

Developments should provide vibrant community facilities and encourage intergenerational activity in a secure part of the building whilst maintaining progressive privacy concepts.

The design should provide for a comfortable and homely environment that can be easily maintained and decorated. Avoidable hazards should be removed as is consistent with a domestic setting. Risk reduction should however not lead to an ‘institutional’ feel. This will be assisted by allowing residents to bring personal items of furniture and effects into the home. Consideration to the range of furniture available in lounge spaces should be made, the choice and style of furniture should take into account that people need to be able to place their feet on the ground when sitting down in order to stand and mobilise successfully.

Aids, hoists and assisted toilets and baths are installed which are capable of meeting the assessed needs of service users. Consideration about the height of toilets within this setting is also required, to enable all clients to use the facilities with ease, opting for high level or raised toilets in all cases is not beneficial to all clients.

Access should be provided to safe outdoor environments where residents can relax or take part in outdoor activities.

Access to all areas of the home including outdoor environments should be fully wheelchair accessible and designed to meet the needs of all service users, including those with physical, sensory and cognitive impairments. Lift access should be provided to all floors.

Doorways into communal areas, service users’ rooms, bathing and toilet facilities and other spaces to which service users who require wheelchairs and assisted walking have access must have a clear opening width of 800 mm.

The design should incorporate a range of comfortable and fully accessible shared spaces, including a space for receiving visitors in private, dining facilities and sitting areas.

The building should be enabled for both telecare and telehealth equipment both in terms of hardwiring and Wifi enabled environments to accommodate future ICT developments.

Fire and emergency evacuation should be considered in any design and comply with the requirements of Kent Fire and Rescue Service.

Consideration should be given to the location of transport links when siting any new home.

CQC Essential Standards of Quality and Safety

All registered care homes will need to comply with the CQC Minimum Standards in relation to Outcome 10: Safety and Suitability of Premises. A copy of the Essential Standards of quality and safety can be accessed at [http://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/documents/gac -
dec 2011 update.pdf](http://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/documents/gac-_dec_2011_update.pdf)