

## **Housing in Crisis: A short guide of issues affecting Disabled Richmond residents**

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames is facing a housing crisis, and Deaf and Disabled people are some of the most affected. Skyrocketing rent prices, limited accessible housing options, and a shortage of social housing all contribute to a rise in homelessness and threaten the ability of Deaf and Disabled residents to maintain their independence and wellbeing.

This guide aims to equip you with some of the knowledge you need to understand the housing challenges in Richmond.

### **What the issues are**

#### **Supply of Accessible Housing**

London needs more accessible housing. These homes help Disabled people live on their own and join in with society.

Accessible means it is easy for everyone to use, no matter who they are or what their needs are.

For example, a wheelchair user will need a wet room to be able to take care of themselves independently.

To find out more information:

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/disability-groups-call-more-accessible-housing-private-renters>

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/45020/documents/223326/default/>

<https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Accessible-Housing-Brief-Full-Easy-Read.pdf>

## **The Disabled Facilities Grant**

The Disabled Facilities Grant is money from the local council that helps people adapt their home to make it accessible. They must own the home or rent from a landlord, council, or housing association.

Problems with the Disabled Facilities Grant:

- Private renters have problems with the grant because they need to prove they will live in the home for at least 5 years. Only 1 in 20 grants are given to private renters.
- Disabled people have to wait a long time for adaptations to be completed.
- There are long waiting lists for occupational therapists to do their home visit, this is an essential step to get the grant approved.
- Not all occupational therapists are educated in all disabilities, and when they don't understand a disability, it may often lead to bad assessments.
- The amount of money given is not always enough, the budgets have not changed since 2008.

To find out more information:

<https://www.bigissue.com/opinion/disabled-people-disability-facilities-grant-housing-crisis/>

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/45020/documents/223326/default/>

<https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Reasonable-Adjustments-PDF.pdf>

## **Unaffordable Housing**

An accessible home is an affordable home.

Unaffordable housing is a major problem throughout England, but Richmond is badly affected by it.

Unaffordable housing especially impacts Disabled people as we are more likely to be out of work or to have lower salaries.

To find out more information:

<https://urbanistarchitecture.co.uk/what-is-affordable-housing-and-why-is-it-so-important-to-london/>

<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/supply-of-affordable-housing/>

## **Communication with landlords or housing associations**

An accessible home is one in which tenants have good communication with landlords.

Disabled people often face communication problems and there are no procedures that require landlords to: provide additional time for individuals to understand important paperwork; not enough warning about issues/events happening; easy-read versions are not provided of important documents, no BSL or any other form of interpretation is available.

To find out more information:

[https://www.disabilityjustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Discrimination-guide\\_information\\_06-18.pdf](https://www.disabilityjustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Discrimination-guide_information_06-18.pdf)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-housing-quality-resident-panel-wave-2-reports/disability-support-and-social-housing-wave-2-focus-group-resident-panel-report-accessible-version#experiences-of-accessing-disability-support>

## **Supply of Social Housing**

Many Deaf and Disabled people want to live in social housing because it's secure, affordable and it is more likely to be made accessible.

However, the current supply of social housing is very low. There are long waiting lists, and many people will never get a home.

To find out more information:

[https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/housing-and-disabled-people-britains-hidden-crisis-main-report\\_0.pdf](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/housing-and-disabled-people-britains-hidden-crisis-main-report_0.pdf)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/housing-and-disabled-people-your-rights-social-housing-easy-read.pdf>

[https://england.shelter.org.uk/support\\_us/campaigns/lets\\_build\\_social\\_housing](https://england.shelter.org.uk/support_us/campaigns/lets_build_social_housing)

## **Section 21 “No fault” Evictions**

Private-rented housing can be unaffordable and can have an insecure tenancy agreement.

Evictions are when someone is told they must leave their home. They are told to leave by the landlord.

Section 21 “No fault” Evictions is a rule landlords can use. They can tell tenants to move out within 2 months without giving a reason.

These evictions are a big reason as to why Disabled people end up homeless or in temporary accommodation.

Another problem is that these evictions are sometimes used as revenge by landlords when a tenant has asked for repairs. This makes people afraid to ask for their rights.

To find out more information:

<https://www.gov.uk/evicting-tenants/section-21-and-section-8-notices>

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/eviction/eviction/renting-privately/if-you-get-a-section-21-notice/>

[https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing\\_advice/eviction/section\\_21\\_eviction](https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/eviction/section_21_eviction)

## **Temporary Accommodation**

When a person is made homeless the council is required to provide emergency housing. If they have to give you long term help, you might then move to temporary housing. Temporary housing is somewhere to live while you wait for longer term housing, you could stay there for months or even years. Deaf and Disabled people are more likely to live in temporary accommodation and are more susceptible to having issues:

The council should try to find suitable accommodation in an area of proximity to your needs and responsibilities. However, this often doesn't happen and people are likely to have to move away from their area or even from the borough.

Disabled people often find that the temporary accommodation offered to them is inaccessible.

The accommodation is often in need of repairs, in poor condition or overcrowded.

To find out more information:

[https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing\\_advice/homelessness/temporary\\_housing\\_when\\_homeless](https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/homelessness/temporary_housing_when_homeless)

[https://www.richmond.gov.uk/emergency\\_temporary\\_housing](https://www.richmond.gov.uk/emergency_temporary_housing)

<https://www.housingrights.org.uk/professionals/advice-and-information/homelessness-advice-professionals/temporary-accomodation>

## **Disrepairs**

Disrepair means something in a home isn't working right. This can cause problems for the people living there. It can make the home unsafe or make the person living there unwell.

Disrepairs especially impact Deaf and Disabled people. For example, a broken lift could make the building inaccessible for a wheelchair user or a person with mobility issues.

To find out more information:

<https://www.housingrights.org.uk/housing-advice/repairs-and-bad-housing/repairs-social-tenants#paragraph-1146>

<https://www.housingrights.org.uk/housing-advice/repairs-and-bad-housing/repairs-private-tenants#paragraph-859>

<https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Disrepair-Briefing-FINAL-PDF-Version-1.pdf>