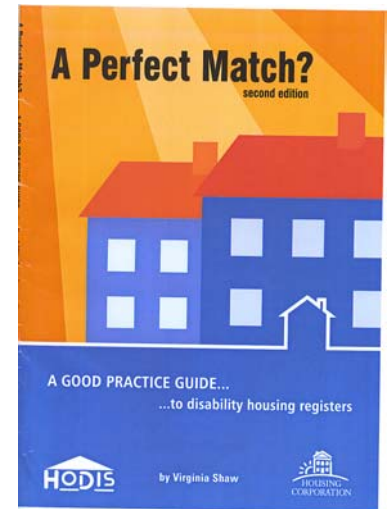


Mainstreaming disability

Tailor made consultancy services

from the author of industry standard good practice guides

Specialist support in carrying out projects that aspire to improve the life chances of disabled people



Advice on how to apply the social model of disability to housing and set up disability/accessible housing registers







Fresh ideas about how better to predict the need for adaptations

Appraisals of lettings and adaptations policy to check compliance with the latest law and guidance on disability discrimination and sound housing practice

Whose needs does Grunden consulting aim to meet?

Disabled people of all ages Social Services
Housing Departments Housing Associations
Voluntary Organisations Health agencies
and anyone else who would like to know more about innovative developments in disability housing

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Disability Capital

London Accessible Housing Register

The London Accessible Housing Register (AHR) Pilot was launched by the Greater London Authority (GLA) in April 2006.

The aims of the London AHR, which incorporates the social model of disability, are

- to deliver high quality housing information, informed choice and mobility across London for disabled people
- to ensure that accessible and adapted housing is used more effectively to meet the needs of disabled people.

The GLA have commissioned **Home Connections** to develop the key elements of the AHR. These include the development of policies, best practice, data specifications and systems/procedures, which will inform the Capital Moves project. The Home Connections team includes experts in choice based lettings (CBL) and mobility, accessible housing registers and the social model of disability. Virginia (Ginnie) Shaw of Grunden consulting is a member of the Home Connections pilot project team.

Key elements of the AHR project are:

- To pilot an approach for social landlords to:
 - identify needs of disabled people
 - develop high quality standardised information about the needs of disabled people that can be used to allocate accessible and adapted housing
- To identify gaps, promote and signpost information, advice, support and advocacy for disabled people in housing need
- To develop ways of advertising and marketing private sector housing options for disabled people

The project will be completed in December 2006. A fundamental part of this project will be to pilot some aspects of the London AHR in current Choice Based Lettings (CBL) schemes at borough and sub-regional level. However, the full operation of the London AHR is dependent on the completion of the overarching ICT system, which will be developed by the Capital Moves project.

Choice based lettings are an approach to the allocation of social rented housing that seeks to replicate the best of the private sector. CBL began in Harborough, followed by a number of pilots including Bradford, Blackburn with Darwen and Camden. There are three CBL schemes in London, Home Connections, Locata and the East London Lettings Company. The Government wishes to see CBL rolled out country-wide by 2010.

Preston adaptations

This was a review of the need for and methods for delivering housing adaptations in Preston and an assessment of the resources available. A range of tasks were completed to produce the report, prepared to reflect the stated aims for the project, detailed in the project brief. A social model approach was specified.

The methodology included

- Desk top research of official figures of health, welfare and housing agencies
- A sample questionnaire survey of disabled people
- Research to identify resources available for the provision of housing adaptations
- Establishment of an embryonic disability housing register (DHR)

Stated principles on which to base an ideal adaptations service

- Equality and fairness for all, irrespective of age, impairment or lifestyle (including housing tenure)



- Balancing the importance of providing for people's needs with the scarcity of resources and the requirement to improve stock condition
- Consistency, clarity and transparency
- Integrity with other key policies affecting disabled and older people such as those for provision of equipment services and re-housing where this is the optimum solution for the household

Initial proposals for reform

Various proposals were suggested that could all have some impact, including:

1. Utilise the potential offered by the disability housing register.
2. Incorporate Lifetime Homes standards in new build and improvement programmes; adopt a target of 10% of new developments to be built to wheelchair standard
3. Adopt a self assessment approach to the provision of minor adaptations, that is treat them as day to day or responsive repairs.
4. Introduce a Partnership Framework approach to the joint funding of major adaptations with housing associations/RSLs.
5. Use the transfer of stock from Preston City Council to the Community Gateway Partnership as an opportunity to review the operation of policy and practice.
6. Carry out an information review

Diagnostic appraisal for Bedford Borough Council June 2005

Bedford Borough Council transferred its stock to Bedfordshire Pilgrims HA from 1 April 1997. There is a service level agreement for the administration and operation of the housing register and allocation scheme that is now in its third issue (1 November 03).

In common with the majority of strategic housing authorities, Bedford has a detailed allocation scheme that reflects local circumstances and is regularly reviewed to keep pace with changes in Government policy as they are implemented. The diagnostic appraisal gave constructive feedback with suggestions on improvements that could be effected to benefit disabled and older applicants. It provided Bedford BC and its partners with a review of lettings and adaptations policy that checked compliance with the latest law and guidance on disability discrimination and sound housing practice. It was not a comprehensive critique of every aspect of adaptations and lettings policy and practice.

TW, Senior Housing Officer (Strategy) at Bedford said: "I have been going through the diagnostic appraisal and am very pleased with the outcomes".

"Ginnie Shaw of Grunden consulting has been involved in a review of adaptations policy for Preston City Council looking to equalise access to adaptations across all housing tenures. An attempt to assess overall demand was a key component of this work. It revealed a considerable funding gap & identified a number of policy options for further consideration" MMcC, Policy & Support Team Leader in the Strategic Housing Services Department of Preston City Council.

GP Housing Research and Strategy Officer for RBC on their diagnostic appraisal, carried out during work for Elevate East Lancashire, a market renewal pathfinder

All the contents are correct, and I am really impressed with some of the recommendations, especially the one for setting up a working group and inviting a local group that represent disabled peoples needs.

**"making a difference
bringing disability and housing together"**