



Wheelchair Accessible Housing Consultation

As per the Local Housing Strategy and the Strategic Housing Investment Plan, Midlothian Council are required to set wheelchair accessible housing targets e.g. set a number or percentage of wheelchair accessible homes to be built per annum across all tenures. Alongside this, the Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership is responsible for services that help people live well and get support when they need it. This includes all community health and social care services for adults in Midlothian and some acute hospital-based services.

To help us in developing our wheelchair accessible housing targets we spoke with stakeholders and people with lived experiences about their views on wheelchair accommodation in Midlothian and what could be improved.


We would like to thank the **105 people** who took part in March 2022 with our online questionnaire.

50 people who answered either used a wheelchair themselves or lived with someone who did.


Choice & availability

Key points


Many people said there needed to be more accessible houses

 'There needs to be more choice available' 'There are not enough of these houses in **.' 'nearly not enough' 'Is there any?' 'More are required' 'It is important there should be sufficient appropriate housing' 'Few and far between.' 'It is almost non existing. Nothing available to buy' 'There is not enough accessible housing either council or private' 'There needs to be more. Regularly hear of families in accom that isn't suitable and very much affecting their lives' 'There is not enough of them' 'There is a huge lack of accessible flats for disabled young adults needing to move into their own tenancy with support' 'just that there seems to be very few and far between and it's always a ground floor flat rather than a house specifically modified for wheelchairs' 'I now need a one level house with 2 bedrooms and parking facility as I cannot walk very well or far.'

Some people mentioned houses for elderly people

 'We really need more but we also need more bungalows for the elderly' 'All houses should have wheelchair access because you don't know how your health is going to be as you get older' 'Small (1 bedroom) accessible homes for small households / retired please' 'Definitely not enough being built. Thinking of the older generation. It's growing' 'It's a pity with so many affordable houses being built that when permission was asked for building no one thinking about the ageing population and have purpose built homes for people with issues like wheelchairs and mobility'

People mentioned the need for new build houses

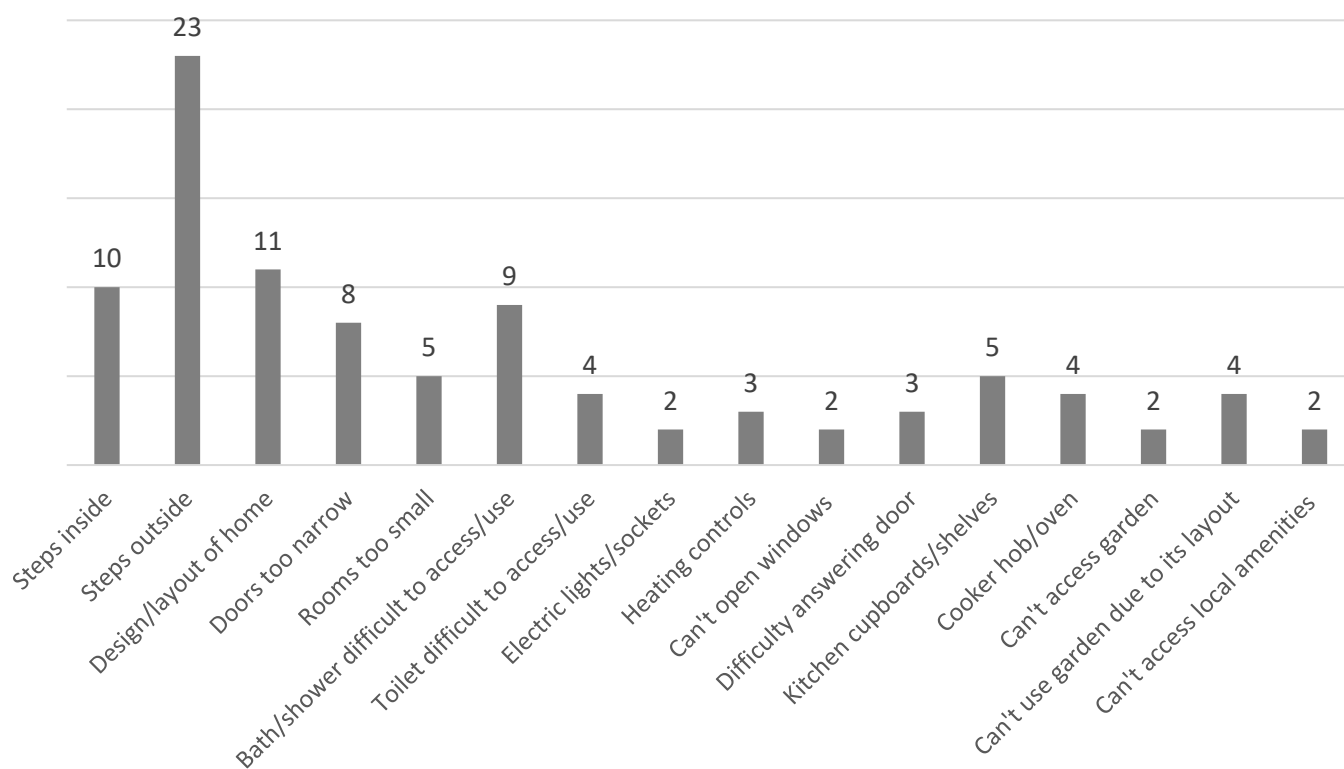
 'Even if you don't use a wheelchair and are disabled you should have access to ground floor flats and bungalows with walk in showers for families that have a disability' 'we ideally need more private contractors to build wheelchair accessible houses as so many in Midlothian build large 4/5 bed homes and there is not a good mix' 'Most new built areas have had very little or no disabled properties available to me, while there is a demand for larger houses I can't move as nowhere is suitable for me.' 'Would like to see new housing by private builders to build more bungalows, like how there is affordable housing. There should be so many bungalows included too.' 'This needs to be built in automatically to all new builds. There is no excuse for wheelchair accessibility not to be part of the infrastructure of all new buildings.' 'It would be good to have more in Bonnyrigg to let me move nearer carer who has no transport.' 'There is not enough / any new build houses on one storey / new bungalows being built. Currently, for the size of bungalow my family need, it is so expensive to buy or the bungalows need a lot of work done to them as they are very dated. Please build some new build bungalows for house owners to buy! I would like wheelchair accessibility to be part of the many new build housing projects that are built across Midlothian so that owner occupiers and private renters can have accessible housing too'

Day to day activities

14% of people said they lived in a house that was not accessible for everyone in their household
(39% said their house was very accessible and 48% said it was partly accessible)

67% of people said that someone using a wheelchair would not be able to visit their home (e.g. be able to access it and move around without difficulty)

Features in the home which limit day to day activities:



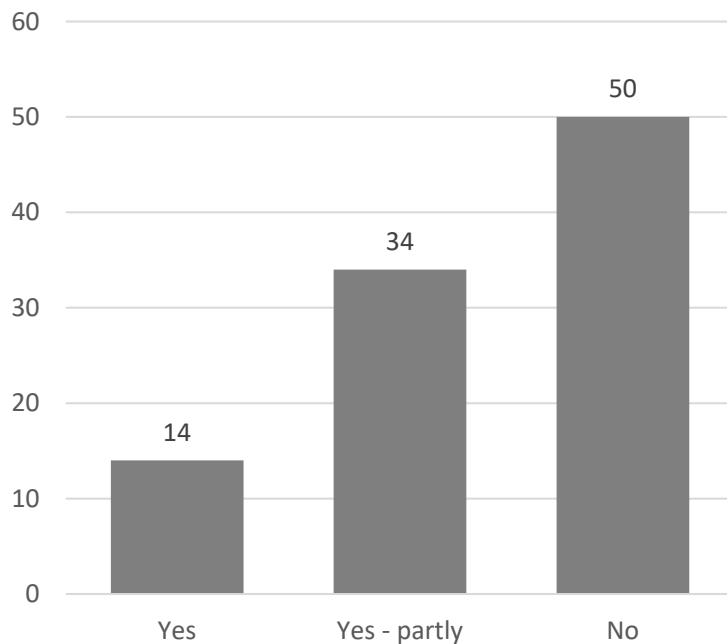
Comments:

'No access directly to front or back door by car', 'Disability parking', 'I have a disabled parking space which needs repainting, the Roads department don't reply to my requests'

'Walk in wardrobes impossible to open/close/ access what's inside'

Adaptations

Has your home been adapted to make it accessible for you/your household?



Key points

A number of people mentioned **bathrooms**:

'When my daughter who had a stroke lived with us we had downstairs shower and toilet put in as she could not get in out of bath', 'wet room', 'Shower chair', 'Bathroom has been adapted', 'wet room', 'partial walk in shower', 'wet room', 'walk in shower', 'bathroom only', 'shower', toilet frames and shower stool, perching stool', 'I have requested help due to me having difficulties getting in and out of the bath as the shower is over the bath. No hand rails etc to assist, have to use the stool and lift my legs one at a time into bath or have someone assist me'



Some people mentioned **external adaptations**:

'ramp', 'hand rail outside', 'Partly has one hand rail at front door and one at back door'

Some people mentioned **internal adaptations & help on the stairs**

'Widening of some doorways', 'Internal doors have had the lower fresh hold lowered'
'Ground floor bedroom', 'High sockets.'
'Stair lift', 'Stair lift inside', 'Stair lift', 'Extra railing on the stairs'

Key points

Some people mentioned a **lack of support**.

'Outside graded steps but no good for wheelchair'

'Council refuse to put stairlifts in rented accommodation'

'could do with 2 [rails] at back'

'I had a ramp installed myself and have had to build an extension'



'ALL properties should be wheelchair accessible. But equally important is the adaptations within the home that are provided for the service user. My family have had poor experience with this.'

'I would prefer to stay where I currently live and have the ramp I need for access. It's been a long time now since applying for help with a grant - too long. I haven't been able to leave my home for a fortnight due to my husband's ill health to put the portable ramp down for me. As it is, it isn't even one I could drive my chair down. This needs improving in the length of time it takes to obtain help.'

Some people listed general adaptations needed for accessible houses:

Space:

'Space is needed to store the wheelchair when not in use.', 'Space is needed for other disability adaptations eg: access from wheelchair to sofa; access from chair to bed. Adapted beds are larger than regular beds', 'Most homes presently being built are to minimum standards. I can access these houses but cannot access a room with a 3 piece suite or use the toilets which are too small to accommodate a wheelchair and turn to get out.' 'All homes should have doorways wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair. Floorplans should be logical where movement within the home is with ease.' 'his doorways were narrow, wall mounted kitchen units hard to access, had get Wfs installed, had get level access from street to house carried out-storage issue for mobility scooter that gave independence, uneven paths/hard to access garden', 'If it [mobility scooter] could be taken into the house easily assembled it was hugely improve idea living for my parents. However there is a difficult turn immediately inside the front door. Simply taking away the cupboard inside the front would really help improve access.' 'Accessible housing needs to have ramped access and room to turn a wheelchair' 'The hallways and doors are JUST able to fit a chair so often causes injuries. The style of property we live in is absolutely not adequate my dad is unable to reach cupboards, the front door'



Ground Floor access:

'Downstairs WC/bathroom should be compulsory.' 'New housing that could be adapted to make a bedroom downstairs and a bathroom/wet room downstairs' 'Houses not only require wheelchair accessible but also require bedroom, toilet and shower on ground floor, and wide halls and doors suitable for wheelchair. Something that is very hard to get when looking to purchase.' 'There's needs to be more ground level houses or better access and options to putting on a ground level room/bathroom'

Bathrooms:

'Don't just take out a bath because someone is in a wheelchair. Make the bath accessible and ask them about their needs instead of just assuming' 'Flats need to be accessible by LFT and shower need to have non slip flooring and grab rails.'

Key points

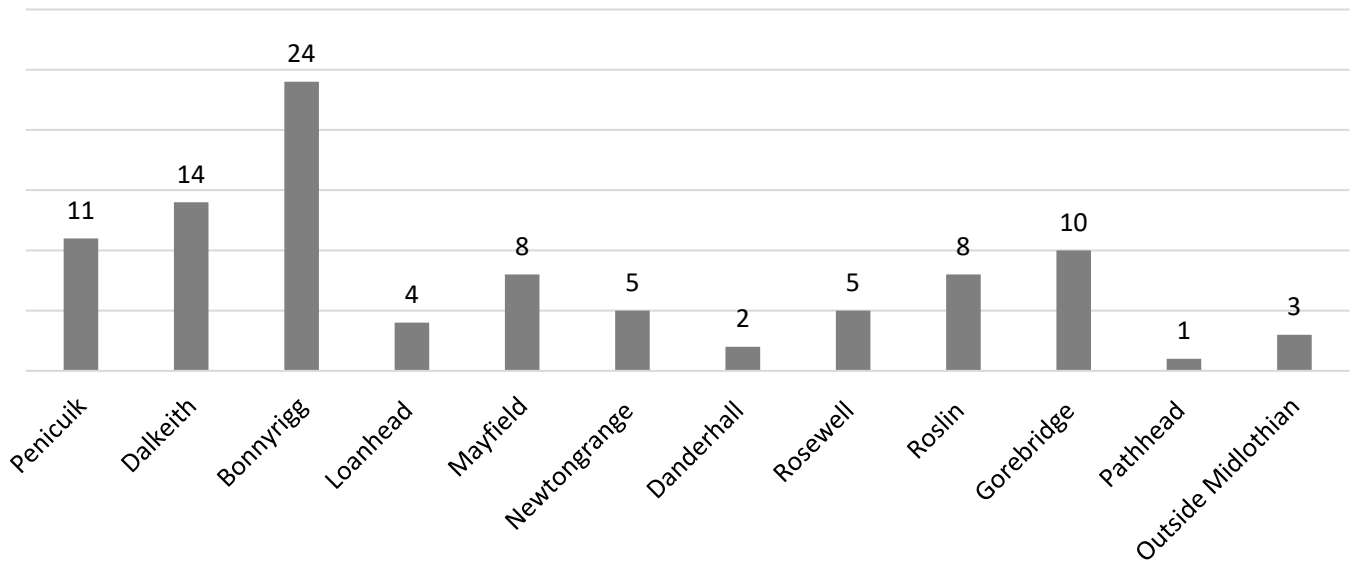
External access:

'unloading wheelchairs near home and at the shops' 'The houses being suited for disabled people ie sockets and switches bathrooms bigger and most of all the pavements surrounding the area of house being suited for wheelchair users' 'Parking availability and public transport are also vital.' 'Penicuik is not well set up for accessibility. The pavements are steep and not well aligned to the road which would jolt wheelchair users and half and half parking by vans especially is definitely not policed as its common place and never frowned up, this is also problematic for buggies. Play parks are not designed for disabled able children. Access over grass and no path and no disabled friendly equipment. Ramps in the area are often too steep as well. It is a area designed for cars but not with disabled access otherwise. This definitely should be addressed not just in housing but in overall infrastructure.' 'Driving is his lifeline. However, despite repeated requests, the Council has failed to repaint the faded lettering for his disabled parking space. As a result, people without blue badges often park there, causing my husband great difficulty, and much pain, in accessing our house. Parking access is vital to any person with a disability, whether a wheelchair user or not.' 'Within my house is great but the path up to my door is so poor you can't use a wheelchair. Also at front door there is a hole which has been reported and nothing done about it' 'I live in ground floor 4in a block but adaptations needed to get wheel chair in and out. More lowered kerbs needed also' 'I think it's worth considering that people can have mobility issues with housing and not necessarily use a wheelchair. I care for 2 elderly parents in a ground floor flat that has 7 steps to get in the front entrance. My parents were given this flat as mum experienced falls and needed a wet room. My parents both now rely on a mobility scooter for anything much further than a walk around a small supermarket. Both parents struggle to get from the car to the house. The back door has flat access with a small step. Part of the drying green could potentially be disabled parking for their mobility car with a ramp and improvements at the back door.' 'if disabled Tennant's had a key phob that automatically opened the back door on approach it would improve independent moving in and out of the home. They could use their scooter to get outside themselves.' 'It's not just wheelchairs that need it. I can't get my mobility scooter out to use it.'

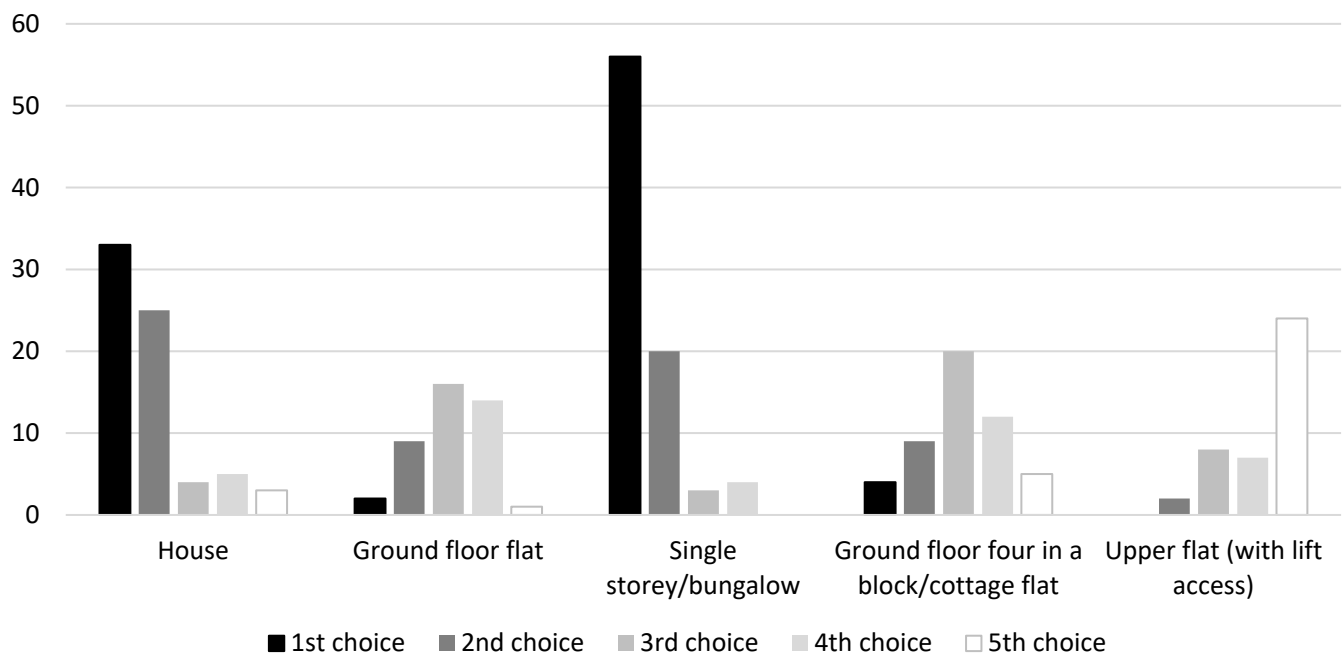
Planning for the future

37 people said they knew of changes to their mobility which will require the use of a wheelchair in the future. This was for reasons including, MS, a progressive condition, arthritis, a degenerative condition that will require a power chair in 10-15 years, a progressive auto immune illness and the fact they currently needed a wheelchair but couldn't use one in their current house.

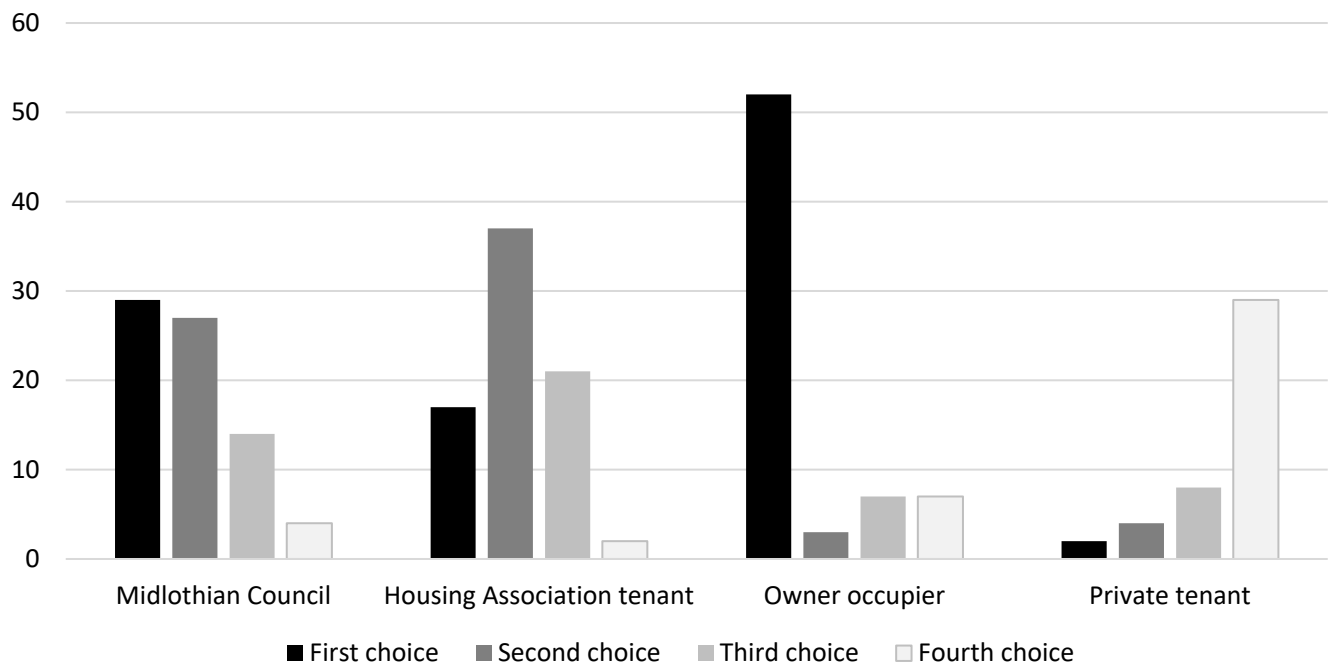
Where people wanted to live (answers include surrounding areas of location)



Type of home people wanted to live in.



Type of tenure people wanted



Key Points

Reasons for wanting their own house:

Already own their house:

'I own my own house currently', 'Homeowner already', , I currently own my home and would like to buy another property when I move, 'Have always in own house', 'Currently own', 'would prefer to stay in our own home if at all possible', 'Because we already own our home', 'Don't see ourselves moving, so will stay in current home as owner occupier', 'I would rather live in my own property', 'Hope to own my own home in the future', 'Because I already own a house', 'Firstly I own my home, and would prefer to own my home', 'Prefer to own', 'We own our house and plan to stay here', 'Prefer to own my own house', 'We already own our house', 'Would rather own my house', 'This is my choice and I do not want to be a tenant anywhere', 'Assume as currently an owner occupier this what would be required- also the quality and aesthetics and environment of privately owned property preferable'



Financial reasons:

'Always have owned own home, see rent as a waste of money', 'Why waste money on rent' 'Prefer to own home, long term investment', 'I like to have my own home and know that I am paying my mortgage in order that I will one day own the property to help support my daughter when she is older', 'No mortgage on house'

Choice and control:

'Ownership you can choose property whereas housing association might not be the area you want to be and other tenants', 'More autonomy over my house', 'Control over my property', ,

Key Points

Maintenance

'Control over repair and maintenance of our home', 'Prefer the choice to alter home if necessary', 'Freedom of choice with regard to adaptations', 'Do more to house', 'I would much prefer to stay in my own home and if need be have things adapted in order I can remain independent', 'It would be easier to adapt house as my needs change', 'Would rather have control over owned house.'

Other:

'I own my own home but when needed accessing housing nothing available'

'Because I am a Midlothian council tenant at present and can't wait to move away from them, poor service from them all round. I would like to eventually own my own small property. in the future if need be to sell current property and move to a house all on ground level with the possibility of owning it'

'I would like to own my own home but am finding it difficult to find somewhere suitable that I can buy/afford that would accommodate my mum who is wheelchair bound to be able to visit/stay.'


'own house but may need to sell to pay care home fees'

'We would love to have the opportunity to buy our home as it is designed for a wheelchair user. However if the wheelchair user passed away I would need to move out. Lack of suitable affordable housing for disabled people means lack of opportunity.'

'I am presently an owner occupier and have partially adapted my house but cannot access the upstairs part of my home. In terms of future needs, I may need a live in personal assistant and have been refused the option to add to my house to accommodate this.'

Reasons for wanting to rent through Housing Association:

Maintenance:

 'I'd rather be a Melville Housing tenant because they do more upgrades than the council', 'No worries about repairs etc. Everything I need is here for me.', 'Housing association do more to the upkeep of the property than Midlothian council also the quality of work they carry out is far superior to the council workmanship.'

Customer relationship:

'I am happy being a tenant with Bield Housing. Main reason feeling safe and secure in my building', 'Have been with housing association for many years and I am very happy with them'

Key Points

Reasons for wanting to rent through the Council

Security of tenure

'I currently am an owner occupier. If for example my relationship broke down I would not be able to afford my own house for me and my daughter, I would prefer council tenure due to security of tenure. I would not ever want to go back to private tenure due to many bad experiences and poor security as a renter.' 'I am happy being a Midlothian Council tenant', 'Security over tenure', 'Safer in Council housing', 'Council tenancy feels more secure rather than a private let, and financially more preferable', 'Will never be owner occupier can't afford it wouldn't feel safe in private let tenancy', 'For security of tenancy. I am terrified my private landlord will sell this property and I will be homeless', 'Council renting provides security. Private letting means being trapped and not offered a house.'

Financial

'More affordable rent prices. Currently receiving housing benefit'
'Money or lack of it', 'More affordable rent', 'cost', 'Financial', 'More affordable', 'can't afford to buy', 'Finances', 'Financial', 'Cannot afford to buy'
'We can't get a Mortgage based on me getting benefits'
'In case I ever get a job so I can afford the rent'

Choice



'Council have more disabled bungalows in ** .where my carer lives', 'Midlothian council are adapting and building houses with access for people who currently require and may require in the future more access to their property or move within the property'
'The house would be for severely disabled daughter, I have been advised this is the best option for her'
'To get a house that is adapted for my needs'

Customer relationship

'Midlothian council do try their best' 'Happy to be council tenant.'

Maintenance:

'It's good to have the house improved and maintenance done.'
'Repairs and you make the houses water and wind protection'
'security though ongoing repair and maintenance is an issue - care and repair service in Midlothian would be a help'
'I'm not fit to take care of any adjustments needed for my house'

Location:

'I chose that because Midlothian council only covers certain areas'
'My daughter has a disability and needs a wheelchair from time to time, she is in a private let and only went for the house she's in because she could access the shower on her own, not for the house or the area'
'As that's the housing for this area'

Key Points

Some people mentioned difficulties accessing a house through the council

'Not a single person helped when I contacted the council and social services and they kept putting the blame on the other one telling me to phone them instead. This resulted in me being in debt to buy ramps to access my house which aren't ideal to say the least. Also no help with parking a disabled car. The woman on the phone at Midlothian Council was very rude and made me feel even more worthless than I already feel. The staff clearly need trained on how to deal with these situations and have all proper telephone numbers at hand to be able to direct people to the correct place. Kindness costs nothing.'

'I have been on the council list for over 4 years and still not been offered a house as most on offer have stairs....you really need to look into this as I suffer daily and have to rely on my mum to help me' 'The is no priority giving when medical points have been granted I have been waiting 5 years to be re housed' 'Would like to see quicker response to applications for wheelchair access' 'we have to move because my sons wheelchair (next size of chair due to growing) isn't going to get through interior doors, the hall isn't wide enough either to do a wheelchair turn... we also require a larger wet room because of same reason, equipment too big for one we have... What we have been offered isn't where we want to live for many reasons, ..., but it's now to be ready November 2022, so too late... we are also told to hopefully wait and see if anything in older wheelchair properties ... become available, that could be weeks? Months? Years? Too late...I told the council back in March 2021 when we were assessed that I estimated another year to 1.5 years max in this house then he'd have outgrown it and that's now because he requires an assessment done for a new bigger wheelchair and I'm trying not too because when he gets it there is a high chance it won't get through doorways in our house 😞 😞'

'I would like him to have a fully adapted house to his taste with working equipment and be able to repair everything he needs immediately the current state of his property is completely disgusting due to Midlothian council so don't have a lot of faith'

'The house is too small and we have waited for 7 year for a 4 bed. House'

General Comments

Key Points

I live in a 3 story town house. There is no way anyone in a wheelchair would buy my house but I'm still held accountable to planning rules for accessibility. I think planning needs to take a look at exceptions. Rules have stopped me making valid changes which would benefit my family over a fictional need.

Every wheelchair user has own needs. It is not one size fits all.

All new buildings should be considered as a property that could be used as accessible housing appreciate that individuals have different, rather than building specific properties although I levels of accessibility needs

This survey seems to only be about wheelchair accessible housing. Only a minority of people with disabilities are wheelchair users, their needs must be addressed as well

All new housing should meet current Building Regulations with regards to accessibility. And where existing housing can be easily and more importantly cheaply upgraded the benefits of same should be assessed. But there is no point in all existing housing being upgraded as not everyone is wheelchair bound. Money needs to be spent wisely.

I THINK IT IS SOMETHING THAT REALLY NEEDS LOOKING INTO AND INSURANCES MADE THAT ALL PROPERTIES ARE FULLY ACCESSIBLE

As a support worker it's very difficult with clients in wheelchairs as not everywhere is wheelchair accessible.

being disabled and owning home - spent £25,000 to convert for wheelchair. Makes you think about people who couldn't afford to do this and how restricting life in a wheelchair is

I've not actually been in any so would be interesting to see how I can get about in a adapted house.

Property has to be access by wheelchair person than an able bodied person before handing over to client

The time taken to obtain financial help for adaptations needs reducing.

I'm sure Midlothian Council have ensured that all new builds are wheelchair friendly and where possible would adapt an older, existing building to suit the tenant

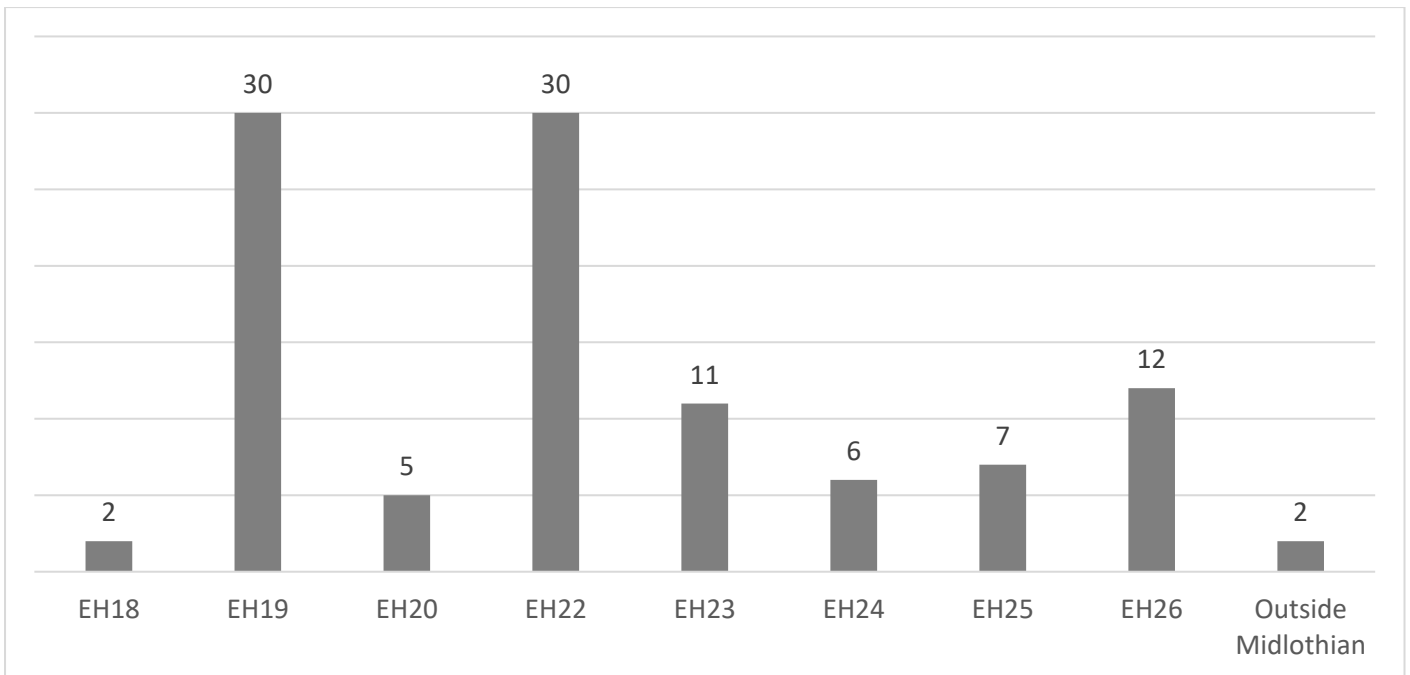
It is ESSENTIAL to have wheelchair users on planning committees.

It's great that moving forward wheelchair accessible housing can be improved but a focus group with actual wheelchair users and or the carers pushing the chairs would give clear focus on key issues relevant.

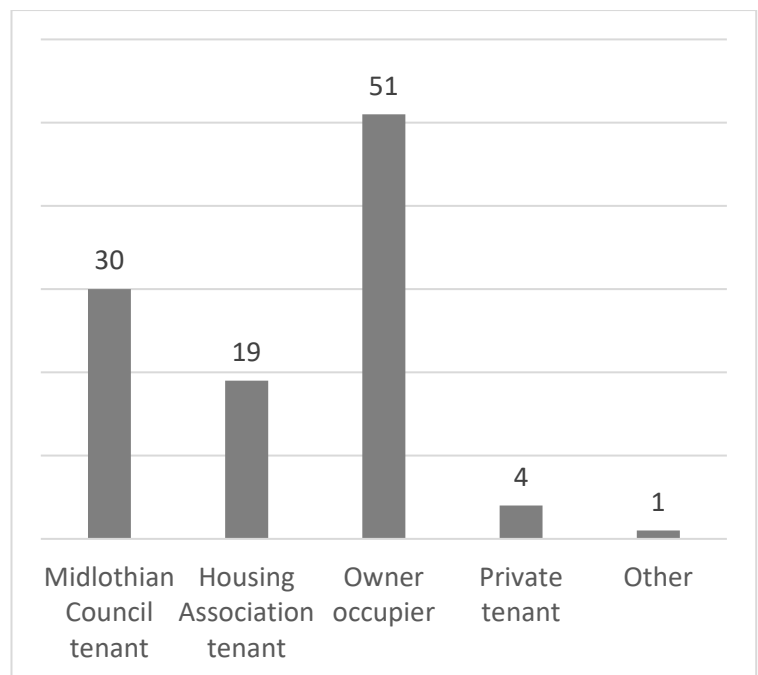
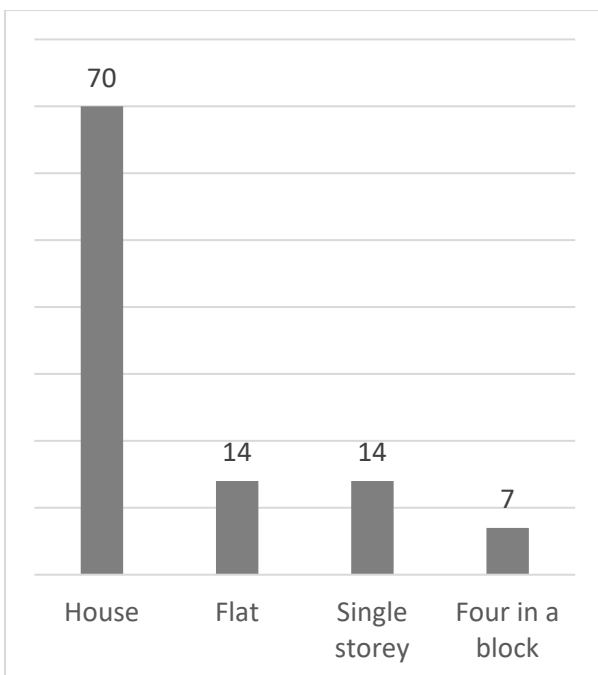
New houses should all be accessible or easily adapted. Current housing should have the opportunity to be adapted to meet need eg stair lifts, wet floor showers, ramping etc without long waits and ridiculous criteria that discriminates against a lot of people especially our older population. It should not be means tested but should be available for all depending on need and not cost.

Who filled out the questionnaire?

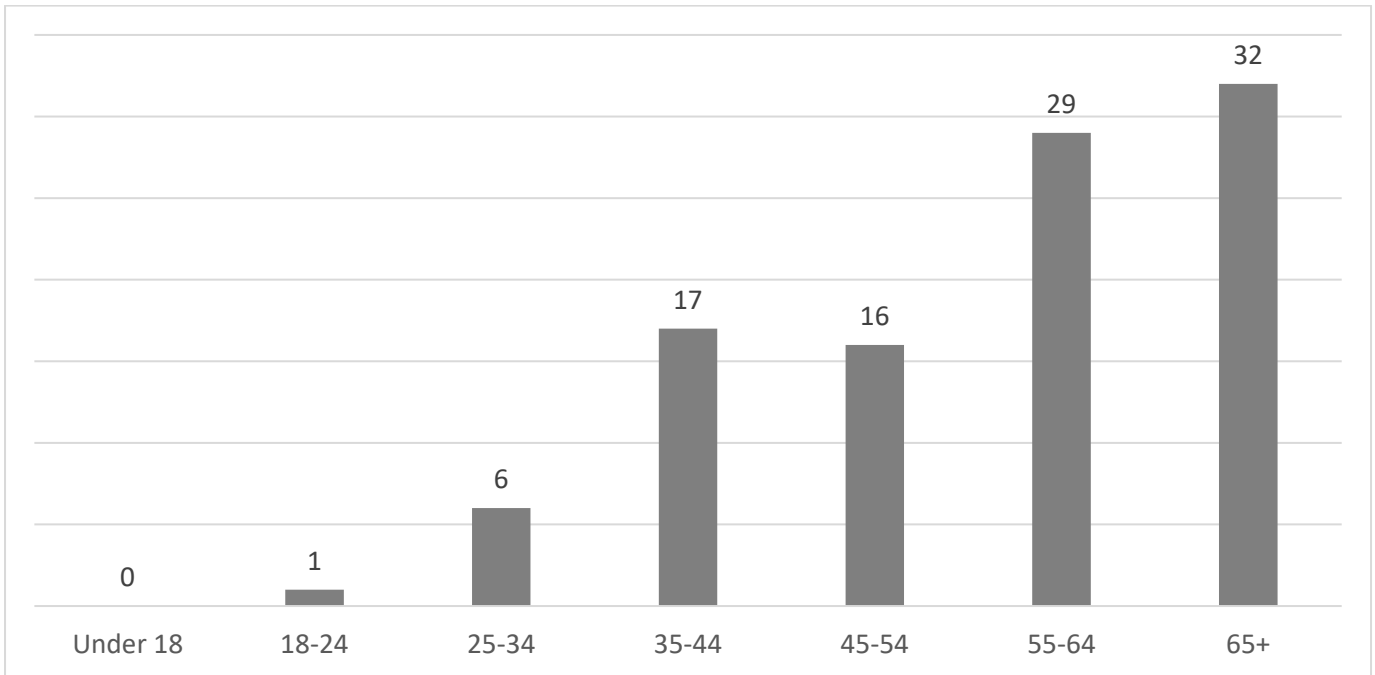
Where people live:



Type of house/tenure

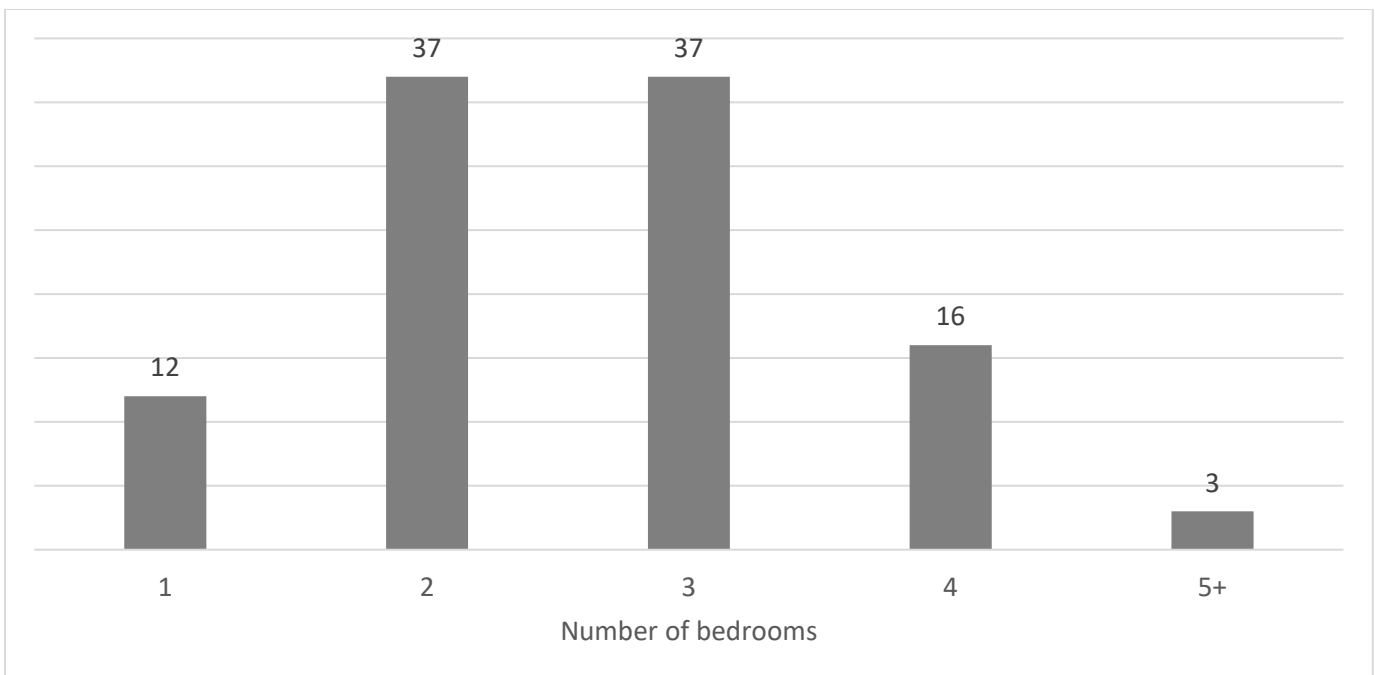


Age



Number of bedrooms:

77 people say this is the right number for them, 11 think it is too many and 14 think it is too few.



Comments

'Fine unless a full time cater needed'

'Our 3rd bedroom is the access to our home from the ramp and it houses all equipment for my disabled son'