

# HOW SHOULD A HOUSE LOOK FOR DISABLED PEOPLE?

Our designs reflect the fact that we live in an era where comfort takes precedence over all else. How to include a bathroom into a bedroom and how to connect the kitchen to the living area to make it more adaptable and accessible are just a few of the requests that clients have.

However, what can we say about disabled people? How are their homes adapted to their needs, such as the willingness to use a wheelchair? In practise, finding such a home that meets the needs of its residents is much more difficult, given that one billion people, or 15% of the global total, live with some type of disability. Obstacles to complete socio-economic integration of disabled people involve such things as unreachable buildings and public transport, lack of adaptive technologies that would help in communication, exclusionary stereotyping and community disgrace. At this point, we can acknowledge that London is an accessible metropolitan area with wheelchair accessible public transport system; workplaces, hospitals, banks, shopping malls, etc. with lifts, ramps and disabled parking spaces. However, when it comes to housing, the number of homes is not completely accessible to disabled people. The London Plan policy stipulates that at least 10 percent of new houses must be fully accessible or highly adaptable for wheelchair-using residents.

In this case, we see a strong market demand for bungalows, which are more suitable than townhouses or flats but also significantly more expensive. Additionally, bungalows are elderly people's preference due to their health conditions and inability to move from upstairs to downstairs.

According to Scope, there are 14.1 million people in the UK who have a long-term illness or disability that limits their mobility, lifting or carrying. Taking this number into account, along with the elderly population, the UK has only about 2 million bungalows. Is that sufficient in this instance? Not at all. The London Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance "Accessible London" outlines the fundamental characteristics that make a home wheelchair-accessible.

By **Cristina Gore**

Market Research Associate  
**YELLOWKIOSK**



Numerous studies emphasise the importance of smart houses with an interface system as a proper solution for enabling disabled people to be more independent and self-reliant in their home environment, highlighting the aspects that should be available, such as free movement, ease of access, and control. Such an interface should be compatible with their disability, allowing the users to interact without being limited by their impairments. For example, someone with a physical disability may require a phone interface, while a blind or a person who has no hands may require voice recognition technology. Nevertheless, developing a smart home with a diverse variety of components that can address various user needs could be challenging in terms of financial support, as this type of structure requires a significant investment. Tara Donovan, style director at Wayfair, stated for Forbes in 2019 that when designing an accessible space that is particularly adjusted to suit somebody's health requirements, it is critical to consider options to improve the client's usual routine. For example, flooring is important for those who rely on prosthetics and wheelchairs. Because moving from one surface to another frequently requires rigorous attempts, the home should be designed with low pile carpet or fairly tough flooring on a consistent level throughout. Modifications of doors, ramps, handrails or the lighting design are helpful for people with mobility and other physical limitations; nevertheless, wheelchair users and others whose disabilities limit the use of their hands frequently require extra accessibility measures. In 1999, Parliament authorised an amendment requiring basic access in all new housing developments, however, it is still insufficient for individuals with disabilities to adapt newly purchased homes to their needs, and it is also prohibitively expensive given that the employment rate for disabled individuals is only 52.7% (2021).