



**National Landlords Association:**

***Response to the Communities, Equality and Local Government  
Committee***

**February 2013**

1. The National Landlords Association (NLA) exists to protect and promote the interests of private residential landlords.
2. With more than 20,000 individual landlords from around the United Kingdom and over 100 local authority associates, we provide a comprehensive range of benefits and services to our members and strive to raise standards in the private rented sector.
3. The NLA seeks a fair legislative and regulatory environment for the private rented sector while aiming to ensure that landlords are aware of their statutory rights and responsibilities.
4. The National Landlords Association (NLA) would like to thank the committee for providing the opportunity to comment on this consultation.
5. The NLA has enjoyed a successful working relationship with many Councils in relation to the private rented sector. The continuation of this work in relation to adaptation of the private rented sector housing will be important if the government's aims are to be achieved. The use of private sector landlord forums will be important in the development of home adaptation strategy and we would welcome engagement within the home adaptation framework.
6. The NLA believes that delays are caused with the delivery of home adaptation due to a failure to understand the lifecycle of the private rented sector. Councils fail to engage with landlords and explain the process clearly and what is required.
7. In many situations it is only the homeowner who can apply for a grant, rented property presents a difficulty?
8. The finance that is available to adapt a property to meet the needs of the disabled tenant. However, there is no finance available for a landlord to readapt their property for general use. Thus they incur a cost at the end of the tenancy.
9. Disability is not a catch all condition. Every disabled person will have specific needs and want to adapt their homes according to those needs. However, when that tenancy ends the property is only suited for a disabled tenant with similar needs to the previous occupant, a small adaptation can make it suitable rather than a full adaptation, therefore a saving can be made.
10. Adapted properties are available in the majority of towns and cities across Wales and the rest of the United Kingdom. However, there is an incredible lack of understanding from agents, landlords and tenants about how to pair disabled tenants to the adapted properties. Most online property search websites do not contain filters to find adapted properties. Online companies and estate agents need to change their property websites so that it is as possible – and as easy – to search for accessibility criteria, such as ramp access, banisters, walk-in showers, level access, downstairs toilets and stair-lifts, as it would be to search for location.

11. Currently, there is no official channel by which adapted properties can be paired with viable disabled tenants, especially between local authorities. Local authorities have the ability to compile a list of adapted properties within their area if the adaptations have been funded by the Authority. The Accessible Property Register is an excellent private website which contains residential properties with adaptations. Relevant parties with information should add properties with accessible adaptations to the Accessible Property Register and share adverts with local and national disability organisations. People who use the private rented sector are not limited to a single local authority and where a property is adapted in a neighbouring borough a person should be able to access it.
12. Landlords do not discriminate on the basis of gender, sex, race or disability. However, landlords are concerned with seeing a return on their investment. The NLA are in discussions to deliver training to our members on the needs of disabled people entering the property market as buyers or tenants. We recognise that adapted properties are in high demand and there are many disabled people who want to live in and find accessible accommodation.
13. From property investors point of view, if the demand for disabled tenants is strong and sustainable then there is a financial case to adapt the property for long term tenure.
14. The cost to remove the adaptation from a house by a council, for another council to then adapt a house in a neighbouring council area does not make financial logic in these financial tight times. A register of adapted houses should be formalised, for use between councils. We would ask that there is provision to either opt-in or provides a clear means to opt-out should a landlord wish.
15. The development of housing and associated infrastructure needs to look at the long term implications especially with an ageing population.
16. The use of the private rented sector will become more important in the coming years. The bringing of empty homes back into use will play an important role in coming years, and the consideration of adapting for disabled access should be a consideration when this is being considered.
17. The risk of introducing policy without looking at the downstream impacts runs the risk of increasing costs.
18. We would welcome giving evidence to the committee on the matters raised.
19. Again, the NLA would like to thank Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee for the opportunity to respond to this consultation and hope you find our comments useful.