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disabled
Every Child Matters

Disabled children & housing

Campaign briefing from the Every Disabled Child Matters campaign, supported by evidence from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Families with disabled children are more likely than other families to be living in bad housing. Indeed, they may be one of the worst housed groups in Britain. EDCM want to see the following priority actions taken to tackle this situation:

- 1. Government Offices to ensure that all English regions are considering the housing needs of families with disabled children in their housing strategies.**
- 2. DCLG to amend the 'bedroom standard' to reflect the need for all disabled children to have a separate bedroom from other children in their household.**
- 3. DCSF to issue guidance reminding children's services departments of their existing legal duty to fund adaptations.**

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Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM) is the campaign to get rights and justice for every disabled child. It has been set up by four leading organisations working with disabled children and their families – Contact a Family, the Council for Disabled Children, Mencap and the Special Educational Consortium. EDCM is funded by the True Colours Trust.

Find out more and sign up to support the campaign at www.edcm.org.uk

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The Every Disabled Child Matters campaign (EDCM) and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) have come together to highlight the housing needs of families with disabled children.

EDCM is the campaign to get rights and justice for disabled children. All children have the right to live in a decent home, under UK and international law. However, for disabled children, lack of suitable housing can have a profound effect on their quality of life and outcomes.

As the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit¹ has reported, unsuitable housing can mean families are left unable to meet their child's basic needs, such as playing, joining in with family life and moving around the house, and make them more dependent on external care and support services. This is unlikely to be cost-effective, and reduces the independence of the whole family, including the disabled child.

It is critical to note that housing problems are not just an issue for children with physical impairments. Families where the child has behavioural problems or learning disabilities are more likely to have problems with the location of their home or safety issues within the house or garden.

The housing problems faced by disabled children and their families

The nature of housing problems faced by families with disabled children are wide and varied. They include poor housing condition, a lack of space for both the storage and use of equipment, a lack of space to carry out therapies, inadequate facilities to meet carer's needs and a lack of access in or around the home. Families also face barriers to improving their housing situation, including a lack of information and transparency on the process for adaptations or moving, inadequate assessment processes and funding restrictions that enable this to happen.

Poor housing has a significant impact on both disabled children and their parents and siblings. For the disabled child, it can restrict their play or leisure experiences, prevent their ability to develop self-care skills and independence and risk physical harm. The impact of bad housing on parents' physical health is also an issue, with parents commonly reporting back injuries as a result of regularly carrying their child up and down stairs. Parents also report experiencing mental health problems, with a lack of space to take time out from the demands of caring, particularly where their child has behavioural problems. This is also an issue for siblings, who may experience disturbed sleep if forced to share a bedroom with their disabled sibling.

The impact of bad housing on parents' physical health is also an issue ...

To support this campaign briefing, JRF have produced a summary report providing an overview of what is currently known about the housing

circumstances of disabled children and their families, drawing on published government statistics, secondary analysis of government surveys, and primary quantitative and qualitative research studies. The full summary can be downloaded from the JRF website (www.jrf.org.uk). Analysis indicates that these families are amongst the worst housed families in Britain.

The policy framework

Housing is a neglected issue in the policy debate on disabled children. The government's transformation programme for disabled children's services, *Aiming High for Disabled Children*,² focuses on health and care services. Disabled children's educational needs are the focus on the government's SEN strategy, *Removing Barriers to Achievement*.³ The technical description for the new national indicator⁴ on services for disabled children, against which all local authorities and their partners will be measured through the Comprehensive Area Assessment process, is silent as to whether housing issues will be covered by the indicator.

Housing is a neglected issue in the policy debate on disabled children.

This is not to say that no progress on disabled children's housing needs has been made at a policy level. The most significant change has been the abolition of the means test for families with disabled children when applying for the Disabled Facilities Grant, the main housing adaptation grant. Also, Standard 8 of the National Service Framework for Children,⁵ which focuses on disabled children and children with complex health needs, states (at p18) that local agencies should ensure that: 'commissioning of services for disabled children and their families includes consideration of their housing, community equipment and wheelchair needs'.

But these are ad hoc gains. The policy focus needs now to be reinforced through a strategic approach to tackling the housing challenges facing disabled children and their families. The government's commitment to affordable housing for all should apply equally to families with disabled children. A new strategic approach will require leadership at both a national and local level. This briefing sets out the case for change and makes recommendations for action both locally and nationally.

Families with disabled children: the worst housed group in Britain?

The government estimates that there are 770,000 children in the UK who have a disability based on the definition used in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.⁶ The needs of this group of children will vary enormously, from children with mild learning or physical disabilities through to children with more profound learning disabilities, behaviour problems and complex health needs.

As disabled children grow into adulthood, a suitable home will be an essential requirement for their ability to live as independently as possible.

However, the prospect of an independent life in adulthood will also be undermined if disabled children experience poor housing in their family home. This report therefore focuses on the difficulties faced by families with disabled children in accessing suitable housing.

The current data on the housing situation of disabled children compared with other groups means the answer to the question of whether disabled children are the worst-housed group in Britain cannot be conclusive. But the evidence is certainly sufficient to sustain the following propositions:

- Disabled children are less likely than other groups of disabled people to be living in suitable housing
- Disabled children are less well housed than other families with children, even those who are living on similar incomes
- Suitable housing is hugely important to disabled children and their families
- Few agencies recognise, let alone address, its significance.

The most recent Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) report on housing in England shows that amongst ‘persons with a serious medical condition or disability’ only one group emerged as more likely to live in unsuitable accommodation than to live in suitable: those ‘aged 15 or less’.⁷ Less than half (48%) of the families with disabled children covered by the survey were living in suitable accommodation. Looking back over findings from earlier surveys (2000/01 onwards) shows that there has been no improvement in this figure over that period.

Housing and disabled children: the detail

Tenure

The basic housing profile of families with disabled children is different to other families. In particular, families with disabled children have not experienced the same major shift towards home ownership that other families have experienced. Across the population of disabled children, there is consistent evidence that these families are more likely to be renting their homes than families with non-disabled children. In 2001, 69% of families with non-disabled children were homeowners compared with 56% of families with disabled children. Families whose children have severe disabilities are even more likely to be renting their homes: a 2002 survey found that less than half (43%) of these families were homeowners.⁸

Housing condition

Families with a disabled child are less likely to be living in a ‘decent home’ than families with a non-disabled child.⁹ In fact, on a closer analysis, families with disabled children are more likely to report problems with the condition of their homes on every indicator of housing condition except the presence of central heating.¹⁰ In a 2000 survey of families with severely disabled children, over a quarter said the condition of their home made it unsuitable for their child.¹¹

Families with disabled children are twice as likely to report difficulties in keeping the house and / or the child's bedroom warm. This is particularly problematic where children have conditions which are made worse by cold weather or where a child has very limited physical movement and is therefore always either lying or sitting. In addition, these families are 50% more likely than other families to rate their home as being in a poor state of repair. When families themselves were asked about the state of repair of their home, 30% of families with disabled children were dissatisfied compared with 18% of other families.¹²

Suitability

A survey of almost 3,000 families with a severely disabled child living in England and Wales in 2000 found that housing difficulties experienced by these families clustered into eleven problem areas (see Table 1).¹³

Table 1: The nature and extent of housing problems experienced by families with a disabled child

Problem area	Proportion of families reporting difficulties
Family space (space to play, space apart from other family members)	55%
'Functional rooms' (kitchen, toilet, bathroom) difficult to use	42%
Only one toilet and/or bathroom	41%
Lack of space for storage of equipment	38%
Location	38%
Access around, and in and out of, the home	33%
Lack of downstairs toilet and/or bathing facilities	33%
Housing condition	27%
Lack of space to use equipment and carry out therapies	21%
Inadequate facilities to meet carer needs (e.g. lifting, toileting, bathing)	21%
Safety inside the home	3%

The majority of families (86%) were living in homes where there were difficulties with at least one of these problem areas, and a quarter of families were experiencing difficulties with six or more different problems.

The table above highlights the range of ways in which a home can be unsuitable for a family with a disabled child. This finding challenges

the stereotypical view of housing need being an access issue. Instead, the dominant theme from the data was space (see below).

The other most common problems were that 'functional rooms' (kitchen, toilet, bathroom) were unsuitable, either for parents as they cared for their child and/or for the children to use themselves, and that the home had only one toilet and/or bathroom. One in five families indicated their home lacked adaptations/equipment to support them as they cared for their child.

One in three families had problems with access within or in and out of the home, and a similar proportion found the lack of a downstairs toilet/bathroom presented problems.

"If he messes his nappy I have to carry him upstairs to the bathroom. As I have no shower I have to try holding him up with one hand then throwing jugs of water over him with the other hand. Therefore a downstairs bathroom with a shower would be very helpful."

Over a third of families reported difficulties with the location of their home. This could be due to the location being unsafe for the child (for example, by a busy road), difficulties with neighbours, and/or the lack of local facilities or services.

"My son is beaten up by neighbourhood children because of the way he is."

Overcrowding and space

Space is a major concern for families with disabled children. These families are 50% more likely to live in overcrowded accommodation than other families.¹⁴ The 2001 census data and the government's 2004 Family and Children Study show that families with disabled children are more likely to have insufficient bedrooms for their children and be generally 'under-accommodated' (to have insufficient rooms overall for a household of their size).¹⁵

The 2000 survey of families with severely disabled children identified three different problem areas concerned with space. Lack of family space was the most frequently reported problem (55%).

"We need two houses. One for him and one for us."

"My perfect home if I could design it... it would have a large family room, if it's trashed it doesn't matter. And then a large kitchen, a large dining room and a conservatory. It would have a big garden and child proof. Things would be out of the way. Covers on the sockets, windows not too low."

In addition, almost four out of ten families reported insufficient space for storing equipment and one in five said there was not enough space in their home to use equipment (for example, standing frames) and to carry out therapies. Comparison of these figures with data collected by the Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey¹⁶ suggests that families with a severely disabled child are much more likely to report problems with lack of space than families in similar economic circumstances but with non-disabled children.¹⁷

Overall satisfaction

The 2003-2004 English House Conditions Survey asked participants for an overall rating of their satisfaction with their home. Families with a disabled child were twice as likely to report being very dissatisfied with their home compared to families with non-disabled children. Similarly, just a third reported being very satisfied compared to almost a half of families with non-disabled children.

The 2000 survey of families with severely disabled children found that half of parents reported that they needed to change their housing in some way so that it better suited the needs of their child and the rest of their family. This suggests that, for many families, their housing difficulties were impacting on their lives in such a way that some action needed to be taken.

Which families are affected?

A crucial finding from the research is that *all* families with a disabled child are likely to experience housing difficulties, regardless of the nature of their child's impairment.¹⁸ This reiterates that housing need is not simply about physical impairment and access issues. In addition, analysis of the data identified some housing difficulties are universally experienced, whereas others are more likely to be experienced by children with certain sorts of impairments, see Figure 1.

Figure 1: Associations between impairments and housing problems experienced

Not associated with a particular impairment

- Family space
- Difficulty using functional rooms
- Housing condition

Associated with a physical impairment and/or serious health problem

- Lack of space to use equipment or carry out therapies
- Lack of space for storing equipment
- Lack of facilities to assist parent with lifting and handling
- Access within, and in and out of, home

Associated with behaviour and/or learning difficulties

- Safety inside the home
 - Location
-

Social disadvantage exacerbates but does not totally explain the poor housing situation of families with disabled children. In the 2000 survey, families with the lowest incomes experienced a greater number of difficulties with their housing compared to higher income families.¹⁹ Families with disabled children remain disproportionately likely to be in poverty as a result of both lower incomes and higher costs.²⁰ However, even higher income families reported an average of three different problems with their homes.

Black and minority ethnic families reported a greater number of difficulties with their housing in both the 2000 survey and earlier research.²¹ In addition, research has consistently identified that Pakistani and Bangladeshi families with disabled children appear to be particularly vulnerable to unmet housing need and living in poor housing conditions.

The impact of poor housing on families with disabled children

Despite its relative lack of profile as a policy issue, housing is a critical issue for both disabled children and their families.²²

Impact on children

Disabled children and young people spend more time at home than non-disabled children, which means that their home environment is even more important to this group of children.²³ There is evidence to suggest, however, that disabled children's homes are the most restrictive environments in which they spend time.²⁴

"When I'm at school I go round in ma [sic] wheelchair, and when I'm at home I just sit in a seat."

(Hannah, 9, very limited mobility)

Oldman and Beresford (1998) found that disabled children wanted to be able to access all parts of their home, including the garden. When asked about their 'ideal home' all the children mentioned having greater space within the house and having a garden.

Living in unsuitable housing restricted children's play or leisure experiences, primarily because it restricted their ability to move about the house independently and/or safely.

"Every time I walk in the door, I turn and trip up over the sofa."

(Boy, 9, visual impairment)

Unsuitable housing also impinged on their ability to develop self-care skills, such as cooking, and also meant they needed (unnecessarily) their parents to help them with bathing and using the toilet.

"I would prefer my mum and dad not to help us [sic] in the toilet 'cos I'm getting older, it's nerve wracking and stuff. Even though it's me mum and dad I still don't like it.... when I tell my friends they think I'm sick or something. I usually 'go' about four or five times a day. I try to keep it in a bit longer 'cos it's hard getting up the stairs."

(Laura, 13, limited mobility)

Heywood (2004) also reports children being bored, and feeling helpless and overly dependent as a result of living in housing which did not accommodate their needs.²⁵

“I want to wash the pots. Amy [sister] comes and washes them or Zoe [sister]. And I get frustrated ‘cos I’ve never washed the pots yet.”

(Kate, 8, visual impairment).

Parents also report risks of physical harm to their child associated with living in unsuitable housing. These included children falling in the bath or shower, having accidents in the kitchen, and the pain experienced whilst being lifted awkwardly by their parents.²⁶ Finally, research shows that unsuitable housing can prevent babies and children being discharged home following birth or significant and traumatic injury, resulting in very prolonged stays in hospital.²⁷

By contrast, suitable housing promotes independence and life skills which disabled children value.

“I love my sink, because if it weren’t for my sink I wouldn’t be able to get myself a drink, I wouldn’t be able to do my teeth, and I wouldn’t be able to wash my hands or anything like that.”

(girl, 8 years, wheelchair user)

“Within 24 hours of being in this house it was like WOW! She was a different child. Her confidence increased overnight. I can’t describe to you the difference...”

Impact on parents

Parents of disabled children are also clear that suitable housing is an essential prerequisite of their family’s ability to live an ordinary life.

“If you’ve got your home right you can cope. This house is like a cocoon, it doesn’t matter what’s coming to us now.”

By contrast, the physical and psychological consequences for parents of caring for a disabled child in an environment which is not suitable for the child’s or parent’s needs are well documented.

In terms of the impact on physical health, parents report back injuries, injuries sustained when falling on the stairs whilst carrying their child and interrupted sleep caused by having to share a bedroom with the disabled child.²⁸

“There [are] 18 steps. Well you think about it 3 stone 11 pounds. When I get to the top I am knackered. I’m not Arnold Schwarzenegger, I’m not. I am getting older and older. I love my ‘baby’. I want to keep her. I’m concerned about my back.”

Qualitative research with parents also reveals the psychological strain of living in unsuitable housing. In particular, overcrowded living space and the lack of space for different family members to have time out from each other can be a significant source of stress, especially where the child has learning disabilities

and/or behavioural problems. This stress can be compounded by the need to address the problems with unsuitable housing.

A study of over 300 mothers caring for a severely disabled child found that mothers who felt their house was unsuitable for their child had significantly higher scores on a measure of stress compared to those who thought their house was suitable.²⁹ In a long-term study of families with a child with Down's Syndrome, adequacy of housing was found to be significantly associated with levels of stress and perceived satisfaction with life among mothers.³⁰

The impact on siblings

When parents are interviewed about the impact of unsuitable housing on their lives, they also typically mention the way it effects their other (non-disabled) children. In particular, where a sibling shared a bedroom with the disabled child, parents talked about siblings experiencing disturbed sleep, or, where the disabled child had behavioural problems, a lack of a private space for 'time out' and to store valued or fragile possessions.

Seeking resolutions to housing problems

Access to information on meeting housing needs and housing services is an issue raised by parents as a barrier to them being able to resolve their housing difficulties, particularly for black and minority ethnic families. Fazil et al's (2002) work with Pakistani and Bangladeshi families showed that these families found housing to be a particularly difficult service to identify and make contact with.³¹

There is evidence that, unless the local housing authority is funding or part-funding an adaptation through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), then families do not or cannot access advice and information about addressing their housing needs.³² However, only a minority of families receive a DFG and therefore have access to expert advice.

Parents and practitioners report significant difficulties with the adaptations delivery process.³³ These include: delays in the application and assessment process, assessments not taking account of the changing (developmental) needs of the child, and assessments not accounting for child-specific needs (for example, play), or the needs of other family members. Parents also report disagreements, usually driven by funding constraints, between them and professionals about the best solution. A third of families who reported receiving an occupational therapy assessment of their housing needs report that nothing had changed or happened as a result of the assessment.³⁴ There are a number of reasons for this including: families

Parents also report disagreements, usually driven by funding constraints, between them and professionals about the best solution.

not being awarded a Disabled Facilities Grant to carry out an adaptation or being unable to afford their assessed contribution towards the cost of the adaptation; the local authority or housing association being unable to provide more suitable accommodation, or long delays in the assessment and delivery process.

Successfully negotiating the housing adaptations process can lead to a range of benefits for disabled children and their families. Improvements or changes experienced by children include increased independence, more confidence and greater self-reliance.³⁵ Parents identify adaptations in terms of easing the process of caring for their child as either a reduction in the physical demands or emotional strain.³⁶

However, families who have moved to a more suitable home for their child still report problems with their home, and only one in five families who have made adaptations report that all their housing needs are met.³⁷ Indeed, a fifth of families were still living in homes which were unsuitable in multiple ways. This reflects the range of ways in which a house may be unsuitable as well as inadequacies in the ways these families housing needs are currently being met.

Conclusions and recommendations

On the available evidence, it is clear that families with disabled children are amongst the worst housed families in Britain. This alone should be sufficient reason for housing issues for these families to move to the forefront of the policy debate.

Research which has looked specifically at the housing needs of disabled children and their families has shown that many families experience multiple difficulties with their home. It has also shown that any disabled child (regardless of their impairment) is likely to be living in unsuitable housing. The key, and universal, difficulty reported by families is a lack of space. Though limited, the research reveals the negative impact of living in unsuitable housing on the physical and emotional well-being of all family members.

The figures on the numbers of families living in unsuitable housing is, in itself, an indicator that statutory services are not meeting the housing needs of these families. More detailed work on the experiences of families who have tried to resolve their housing problems reveals that difficulties accessing expert advice and/or information about services, inadequate assessment processes, a lack of a holistic, multi-agency approach, and funding restrictions can all impact on the adaptation delivery process. For families who want to move, it is highly unlikely that they will have access to expert advice to help them identify and choose the most appropriate property.

Finally, whether families adapt or move, the complexity of their housing needs can mean certain aspects of housing suitability may not be addressed. Thus the experiences of living in homes which do not meet their needs is perpetuated and the well-being of family members continues to be under threat, as is the opportunity to have an ordinary childhood and family life.

Parents tell us that the poor housing situation of their families increases the demand for other specialist services, including short breaks. Investment

to improve the suitability of housing for these families is therefore not only morally right but makes sound economic sense. We suggest that the following actions by central and local government and partner agencies, taken together, would significantly increase the number of families with disabled children living in suitable housing:

Government (regional and local) and inspection bodies ensure that disabled children are a priority group within housing and planning strategies

This means:

- Government Offices ensuring that all English regions and localities are considering the housing needs of families with disabled children as they develop their housing strategies

At present, there is no meaningful national or regional expectation to plan to meet the housing needs of families with disabled children. Existing housing strategies in each Government Office region, within the Regional Spatial Strategy, need to take full account of the housing needs of families with disabled children. Government Offices should be able to demonstrate that families with disabled children have been involved in the process of developing the strategy.

- Local planning authorities ensuring that the Local Development Framework is developed in full consultation with families with disabled children

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 creates new responsibilities for spatial planning for English District Councils through Local Development Frameworks (LDF). Each District Council should be able to demonstrate that families with disabled children have been involved in the process of developing the LDF.

- Inspection bodies, including the Audit Commission, the Planning Inspectorate and Ofsted, collaborating to ensure that the housing situation of families with disabled children is reflected in their work generally and is a specific focus of the new Comprehensive Area Assessments

Services for disabled children will be a focus of the new Comprehensive Area Assessments, replacing Joint Area Reviews from 2008/9. However, the disabled children's indicator (NI 54) does not focus on housing. Inspection bodies therefore need to consult proactively with families in every local area to determine whether they are satisfied with their housing situation, and whether housing and children's services departments are meeting their duties towards them.

Local government to view housing as integral to any multi-agency service to families with disabled children

This means:

- Local authorities identifying a named senior officer with planning responsibility for disabled children's housing needs

Currently, disabled children's housing issues tend to fall between different service configurations. Housing tends to be adult-focused; children's services tend not to focus on housing issues. Having a single responsible officer within each locality could help overcome this danger.

- Local authorities ensuring that the 'Core Offer' to families with disabled children established through the 'Aiming High for Disabled Children' programme covers housing, including:
 - access to sources of advice and information on housing issues
 - transparency in housing allocations and adaptations processes
 - participation for families in current and future housing decisions

The Core Offer is a set of national expectations for local service delivery around disabled children. It comes from the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme – see www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ahdc – at present, the attention it pays to housing is relatively weak.

- All agencies ensuring all staff have a basic level of housing training and can signpost on for more information. Key workers (or Lead Professionals) are trained and supported to direct families towards appropriate sources of advice and information on housing issues

At present, there is a risk that housing needs and issues will not be identified, especially if they do not relate to accessibility. Greater awareness amongst those professionals most likely to come into contact with families with disabled children is a pre-requisite for closing some of the gaps.

- All agencies incorporate a proper assessment of a family's housing needs into the Common Assessment Framework

All areas should be using the Common Assessment Framework to assess children with additional needs. This should be devised so as to ensure that housing is an integral part of the assessment process.

Government (central, regional and local) and social housing providers to recognise that families with disabled children generally require more space than other families

This means:

- Regional and local planning authorities introducing targets for an appropriate percentage (7-10%) of all new build family housing across all tenures to be built to more generous space standards

The average floor space per dwelling is low in Britain compared to most other European countries, especially for homes built since 1980. At the same time, most housing stock built specifically for disabled people has been targeted at singles or couples (typically older people). Ensuring that a proportion of family houses are built to 'full wheelchair standard' would be one way of improving space standards in the housing market.

- DCLG amending the 'bedroom standard' to reflect the need for all disabled children to have a separate bedroom from other children in the household; social housing providers reflecting this presumption in their lettings policies

At present, all children under a certain age are expected to share under this official rating, and same-sex children in a household are expected to share until the age of 16. Removing this expectation for disabled children would be one way of recognising the particular issues faced in relation to space and its importance.

- DCLG giving a specific focus to overcrowding for families with disabled children to several of the forthcoming overcrowding pathfinder sites

The action plan to tackle overcrowding in England commits to supporting and evaluating pathfinder areas and could provide an excellent opportunity to monitor how families with disabled children fare.

Government (central and local) and social housing providers to improve housing adaptations processes to ensure more families with disabled children live in suitable housing

This means:

- DCSF issuing guidance to clarify the duty on local authorities under section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 to provide aids and adaptations to families with disabled children

There is an existing duty on local authorities to assist with ensuring that families with disabled children have a suitably adapted home. DCSF should remind local authority children's services departments of their obligations to support adaptations, as a supplementary funding stream to the Disabled Facilities Grant.

- DCLG removing the cap on the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) for children

Although the maximum amount of grant available for a mandatory DFG has been raised from £25,000 to £30,000, this is still likely to fall short of what is required to make the homes of some severely disabled children suitable.

- DCSF and DCLG imposing specific time limits for children's services authorities to conduct assessments for DFGs, within the overall time limit for grant applications

At present, although there is an overall time limit for a housing authority to approve a DFG, there is no corresponding requirement for children's services authorities to provide their assessment of what is 'necessary and appropriate' within a specific time frame. A delay in assessment may limit the usefulness of the works undertaken.

- DCSF and DCLG issuing guidance that children's adaptations should facilitate inclusion in family life. A family's ability to eat around a table together would be a good example of this in practice and should be deemed 'necessary and appropriate' for the purposes of a DFG

Currently, depending upon local interpretation, a household may be required to turn over their only family dining space to meet the space needed for an adaptation. Making this feature of family life an explicit expectation would help ameliorate the difficulties presented by overall lack of space.

Supported by JRF evidence, EDCM will be lobbying government Ministers, key regional and local decision-makers and social housing providers to take action against these recommendations.

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This briefing and accompanying documents can be downloaded at www.edcm.org.uk/housing

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