



# Caring for an Ageing Population

IRCC

Tokyo

May 2010



The Scottish  
Government



# Today

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- Background
- Accessibility to visitability to liveability
- Regulation Development
- Fire and Group Homes



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# Caring For An Ageing Population

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- Scotland has a separate government from United Kingdom
- Key policy of providing free care for elderly people
- Scotland is projected to experience demographic shift, leading to an increasing average age, caused by considerable increases in the over-60 age group, between now and 2031.
- It is therefore necessary that buildings are built to be accessible to all irrespective of age or disability

# Non-Domestic and Public Buildings

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- For non domestic or public buildings, the Scottish regulations seek to ensure that all buildings, with some exceptions, are designed and constructed to provide safe, unassisted and convenient access to and throughout the building.
- Therefore the levels of accessibility and safety that is required for a commercial office building, for example, are no different to the standards that a residential care home would be expected to meet.

# Non-Domestic and Public Buildings

- A public building built following the guidance in the regulations will be accessible to most people regardless of their age, disability or personal circumstances
- However it is recognised that some people may have additional needs such as a wheelchair user
- Residential buildings (e.g. Hotels), there is a requirement for a proportion of bedrooms to have an increased manoeuvring space, an assistance alarm and accessible sanitary accommodation

# Domestic Buildings

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- In terms of domestic properties, guidance was introduced in 2007 to improve the standard of new housing in relation to its accessibility
- The amendments introduced a range of criteria that not only increases the accessibility of the house to a wider range of occupants but also incorporates measures which allow the building to be easier to adapt to the occupants' changing needs as they grow older allowing them to remain in their home longer.

# Building Regulation Provisions

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- Issues addressed by the Building Regulations :
- Access to a wider range of houses (standard 4.1) and ensuring that previously problematic house types, such as townhouses (3 or more storeys) where most accommodation is on an upper storey, are more accessible (standard 4.2); and
- Locating at least one apartment and kitchen, both of a defined minimum size (standard 3.11), and accessible sanitary accommodation (standard 3.12), together on one level (standard 4.2);

# Building Regulation Provisions

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- Improved minimum door and corridor sizes, applied within each storey of a house (standard 4.2), making movement between rooms easier
- Design of stairs to improve access between levels, including increased width to allow fitting of an extra handrail (standard 4.3)
- Location of controls to electrical fixtures and windows for ease of use (standard 4.8); and
- Provision for common adaptations, such as a level access shower (standard 3.12) or stair lift (standard 4.2), within house layouts to enable simpler alteration to suit the future needs of occupants.

# Group Homes

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- In Scotland group homes have always caused difficulty in terms of building regulations
- Some may fall within the definition of a 'dwelling' (house) whilst others are 'sheltered housing complexes' or in some cases 'residential care buildings because of the type of care or support provided
- The latter two attract higher fire safety standards



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# Building Regulations

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- There is confusion whether permission is required for a change of use for a house with several unrelated elderly occupants
- A single house may provide a residence for up to 6 unrelated elderly occupants who receive some form of care or support service
- The fire alarm system in a house would typically be smoke alarms in the living room, circulation areas and a heat detector in the kitchen

# New Care Homes

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- Families or the Government may choose to place elderly occupants in a residential care home or institution due to their personal circumstances
- In such cases, a newly constructed care home would require an automatic fire detection alarm system throughout and an automatic water sprinkler system



# Shared Residential Accommodation

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- Where 7-10 residents share a large house and the highest storey is not more than 4 storeys this is termed 'shared residential accommodation'
- The house would require an internal fire protected escape stair and fire detection throughout the dwelling

# Sheltered Housing Complex

- Where 2 or more dwellings are designed specifically for vulnerable elderly occupants, this is termed a 'sheltered housing complex'
- This type of building would require an automatic water sprinkler system to be installed.
- The fire alarm system would also be monitored remotely usually by way of a remote call centre

# Public Expectation

- The Public expectation is that all buildings are safe and the occupants normally consider that a fire will never affect them
- Politically it is recognised that having houses that will cater for our ageing population is a key strategy for the Scottish Government
- Houses that can easily be adapted for the future needs of our elderly population is considered to be more sustainable i.e. future proofing our buildings

# Public Expectation

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- This will allow elderly occupants to be cared for in their own home on a case by case basis
- Some occupants may receive 1 hour of care or support per week whilst others may be immobile and receive continuous care by a residential staff

# Cost of Alterations to Existing Houses

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- Building regulations are not sensitive to the cost of alteration of normal housing to "Group Homes" but the building permit fee is waived where applications are solely for adaptations for disabled people

# Other Legislation

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- Group home with 3 or more unrelated elderly individuals would require to be licensed as a house in multiple occupation (HMO)
- The fire safety measures inside an HMO would require to be determined on a risk assessment basis and as a minimum would need to meet the same provisions as any other house

# Adequacy of Current Regulations

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- In Scotland we consider that the fire regulations in Scotland could be improved for group homes classified as houses under the Building (Scotland) Act 2003 and would welcome the outcomes of this research
- We look forward to reviewing this piece of work currently being undertaken by Japan



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