

BS 9266:2013



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Design of accessible and adaptable general needs housing – Code of practice

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Summary of pages

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Foreword

Publishing information

This British Standard is published by BSI Standards Limited, under licence from The British Standards Institution, and came into effect on 31 July 2013. It was prepared by Technical Committee B/559, *Access to buildings for disabled people*. A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

Supersession

This British Standard supersedes DD 266:2007, which is withdrawn.

Relationship with other publications

This British Standard supplements BS 8300:2009+A1, which, although it incorporates certain recommendations on dwellings into the general guidance, does not feature housing as a building type, but is concerned mainly with public, commercial and service buildings.

BS 9266 provides advice on the design of accessible and adaptable general needs housing and has drawn on a number of sources including the criteria from the *Lifetime homes design guide* [1] and the government document *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods* [2]. For more information on the 16 lifetime homes criteria, refer to www.lifetimehomes.org.uk¹⁾.

BS 9266 is concerned largely with access to and within, and use of, residential buildings. Recommendations for means of escape in the event of fire, and for fire safety generally, are given in BS 9979 and BS 9991.

Information about this document

This document converts DD 266 into a full British Standard. It is a full revision of the Draft for Development, and incorporates the following principal changes:

- change of title and clarification of scope;
- significant re-structure of the document;
- general revision to take into account other recent guidance, including BS 8300:2009+A1;
- revised recommendations for stairs and ramps;
- revised recommendations for lifts;
- revised and simplified recommendations for bathrooms and WCs;
- additional guidance on lighting.

Much new housing in Britain is widely recognized to be spatially constrained. The recommendations in this standard have been developed in the light of these constraints, and in the knowledge that households might have to make compromises (e.g. reducing furniture), to accommodate family members who have developed or acquired temporary or permanent impairments.

With reasonable space and careful attention to the design of kitchens, bathrooms, and the amount and location of storage space, homes designed in accordance with BS 9266 might be suitable for some wheelchair users. However, many wheelchair users and some older people with particular access, storage and circulation needs might need the space and circulation standards of a home designed in accordance with the *Wheelchair housing design guide* [3].

¹⁾ Last accessed 25 July 2013.

Use of this document

As a code of practice, this British Standard takes the form of guidance and recommendations. It should not be quoted as if it were a specification and particular care should be taken to ensure that claims of compliance are not misleading.

Any user claiming compliance with this British Standard is expected to be able to justify any course of action that deviates from its recommendations.

It has been assumed in the preparation of this British Standard that the execution of its provisions will be entrusted to appropriately qualified and experienced people, for whose use it has been produced.

Presentational conventions

The provisions in this standard are presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Its recommendations are expressed in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is "should".

Commentary, explanation and general informative material is presented in smaller italic type, and does not constitute a normative element.

The word "should" is used to express recommendations of this standard. The word "may" is used in the text to express permissibility, e.g. as an alternative to the primary recommendation of the clause. The word "can" is used to express possibility, e.g. a consequence of an action or an event.

Notes and commentaries are provided throughout the text of this standard. Notes give references and additional information that are important but do not form part of the recommendations. Commentaries give background information.

Contractual and legal considerations

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

Introduction

This British Standard explains how, by following the key principles of inclusive design, general needs housing can be made sufficiently flexible and convenient to meet the existing and changing needs of more households, and so give people more choice over where they live.

The population of the United Kingdom, in common with most of mainland Europe, is ageing and its numbers increasing.²⁾ The balance (ignoring for these purposes any changes in retirement ages) between the working population and those over 65 is expected to tilt further towards the latter.

In consequence, average household sizes have fallen, with the proportion of one- and two-person households increasing and that of three-, four- and five-person households falling.

The net result of these demographic trends is that the number of households is expected to grow by about 230 000 per year from 2013 until 2037.

Meanwhile, fewer and smaller homes are being built in the UK.

In 2010 the number of new houses built fell to just over 100 000, and while the average size of new dwellings elsewhere in the EU, with the sole exception of Italy, has increased, in England and Wales it has fallen. This might be at least partly accounted for by the fall in household sizes, but then, household sizes are falling across Europe.

There can be no certainty that these exceptional trends in the UK will continue, but it might be prudent to assume that they will. If the housing stock of the future is to match up to the Government's stated ambition in the *National planning policy framework* [4] to accommodate "...the housing needs of different groups in the community, including disabled people, older people and families with children, ...[with] ...high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider development schemes...", much greater attention will need to be paid to the design of internal layout, to ensure that they are robust to the changing needs of occupants over time.

Furthermore, the Communities and Local Government department website states that: "As well as providing support for older people today, there is also the challenge of making sure that the right type of housing and support is available for future generations of older people".³⁾

Generally, older people spend 70% to 90% of their time in their own home. Most older people want to remain in their own home, and a familiar environment is important in maintaining independence. Research also suggests that many older people affected by health conditions or disability find it difficult to move around their home and use the facilities in comfort and with dignity.

²⁾ Data taken from *Housing statistics in the European Union* [5]. The report shows that over the past 30 years the UK population has grown by 9.5% – almost double the rate experienced in Germany, but less than half the rate seen in France and Spain, and only slightly less than half that seen in the Netherlands, already the most densely populated country in the EU with a population density almost double that of the UK. While data collected for the report show the dwelling size averaged over the entirety of the housing stock in England in 2001 to be 86.9 m², the average size of new dwellings over the period 1981 to 2001 was only 82.7 m². For all other member states for which figures exist, including the Netherlands and with the sole exception of Italy, the average size of new dwellings increased, in some cases by a considerable margin.

³⁾ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingolderpeople> [last accessed 25 July 2013].

The requirements of a dwelling's occupants can change as a result of accident, illness or ageing, giving rise to reduced mobility or increasing sensory loss. In order to meet these changing requirements, homes need to be both accessible and adaptable: accessible for both visitors and residents, and adaptable to meet residents' changing needs, both temporary and longer term.

Some design features might need to be incorporated when the dwelling is first built; others might only need to have provision made at the outset for their future adaptation. Incorporation of these design features also makes the dwelling convenient for disabled visitors and most resident households, including some (but not all) wheelchair users, without the need to undertake expensive or disruptive alterations or substantial adaptations.

Anticipating some of these trends, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation supported work in the 1990s to develop the concept of lifetime homes, which aimed to incorporate the principles of accessibility and adaptability in good housing design. The current *Lifetime homes design guide* [1], developed by Housing Association, reflects contemporary knowledge and expectation, and continues to be used by local authorities as they seek to meet the needs of their current and anticipated resident populations. However, it was felt that a new British Standard, building on the principles of the lifetime homes standards but expanded and more detailed, was required to serve the needs of industry and the professions, and to have a wider application in both the public and private sectors.

It is not expected that this British Standard will automatically apply to all new homes, but local authorities will need to make informed choices about the mix of housing types and tenures that will be required over the coming decades. Housing providers will need appropriate tools to ensure that strategic decisions can be put into effect. It is expected that this British Standard will play a significant role in helping them to achieve their aims.

1 Scope

This British Standard gives recommendations for the design of accessible and adaptable general needs housing, whether in the form of flats or individual houses. It covers car parking, external access routes to blocks of flats or individual houses, common circulation areas in blocks of flats, circulation areas within dwellings, and the provision of key rooms and facilities.

This British Standard is intended to be used for new dwellings that are designed to be accessible and adaptable. The recommendations can also be used for assessing the accessibility and adaptability of existing dwellings and, where practicable, as a basis for their improvement. The extent to which the recommendations apply to renovations, refurbishments and conversions (including listed and historic buildings) is determined on a case-by-case basis.

This British Standard does not cover the design of public buildings, which are covered in BS 8300:2009+A1. It does not cover purpose-designed wheelchair housing, purpose-designed housing for older people such as "extra care", "close care", "assisted living" etc., or other types of housing which include assistance or care facilities.

This British Standard does not provide comprehensive advice on the external environment.

2 Normative references

The following documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document and are indispensable for its application. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

BS 5395-1, *Stairs – Part 1: Code of practice for the design of stairs with straight flights and winders*

BS 5900, *Powered home lifts with partially enclosed carriers and no liftway enclosures – Specification*

BS 6180, *Barriers in and about buildings – Code of practice*

BS 6440, *Powered vertical lifting platforms having non-enclosed or partially enclosed liftways intended for use by persons with impaired mobility – Specification*

BS 9991, *Fire safety in the design, management and use of residential buildings – Code of practice*

BS 9999, *Code of practice for fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings*

BS EN 81-1, *Safety rules for the construction and installation of lifts – Part 1: Electric lifts*

BS EN 81-2, *Safety rules for the construction and installation of lifts – Part 2: Hydraulic lifts*

BS EN 81-28, *Safety rules for the construction and installation of lifts – Part 28: Remote alarm on passenger and goods passenger lifts*

BS EN 81-40, *Safety rules for the construction and installation of lifts – Part 40: Special lifts for the transport of persons and goods – Stairlifts and inclined lifting platforms intended for persons with impaired mobility*

BS EN 81-41, *Safety rules for the construction and installation of lifts – Part 41: Special lifts for the transport of persons and goods – Vertical lifting platforms intended for use by persons with impaired mobility*