

Monday November 16, 2009



PRESS RELEASE

Housing needs of disabled to be mapped

Disabled people are being urged to come forward to help shape the most comprehensive study of their housing needs in the city.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council is mapping housing and accommodation services for people with physical and sensory disabilities.

The authority has commissioned local company Wider Impact to carry out workshops with disabled groups, consult housing providers and survey disabled people's needs and aspirations.

Councillor John Daniels, cabinet member for housing, environment and neighbourhood services, said: "We want disabled people to come forward and explain their housing needs.

"It's important we gain a greater understanding of their requirements so we can tailor our services to offer greater support. Previous research has focused on the supply and demand of accommodation for older people and people with learning disabilities. This new research will help fill a gap in our knowledge.

"National surveys indicate that there is a huge shortfall in the supply of accessible housing and we want to explore how this impacts on people in the city."

The work will help the council meet requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 which places a duty on councils to deliver an equal housing experience for disabled people.

A total of 500 copies of the survey have been produced, and it is available to complete online at <http://www.widerimpact.com/disabilities-survey> . It will ask disabled people how accessible their home is, and whether it would be better suited with adaptations such as a lower level shower or bigger kitchen. It will also ask disabled people to rate their homes in such areas as safety, parking, affordable maintenance and access to a private garden. The survey will explain other council services, and ask residents to rate housing, care and support services.

Anika Baddeley, from Chell, has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair. The 31-year-old lives in her own home that her family has worked to adapt. She

said: "Housing is a major issue for disabled people. I know disabled people in my age group who live in communal sheltered housing, which is not always what people want. The questionnaire is the only way to be able to begin to understand the issue effectively and I would like to see disabled people take this opportunity to give their views."

The research will run until January 2010. Its findings will advise the city's future housing strategy and action plans; commissioning for Supporting People, which helps vulnerable adults; and a wider strategy development for people with physical and sensory disability.

-Ends-

For media enquiries, please call Andrew Brunt at Stoke-on-Trent City Council press office on 01782 232671.

www.stoke.gov.uk/news