The Building Regulations 2016

Design for Ageing

O1 General Guidance
O2 Dwellings

2016 edition - for use in England*
This unapproved document gives guidance for compliance with the Building Regulations for building work carried out in England. It also applies to building work carried out on accepted energy buildings in Wales as defined in the Welsh Ministers (Transfer of Functions) (No.2) Order 2009.
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Approved Document O: Designing for Ageing

Guidance
This speculative document is the first in what may become a series of provocations intended to explore potential scenarios for future Building Regulations. It has not been approved by the Secretary of State, and it does not yet form part of the current Building Regulations’ Approved Documents. However it is intended to provide guidance for some of the most common building situations encountered by older people. There may be many ways of achieving compliance with the requirements. Thus there is no obligation to adopt any particular solution contained in an Approved Document if you prefer to meet the relevant requirement in some other way.

Other requirements
The guidance contained in an Approved Document relates only to the particular requirements of the Regulations which the document addresses. The building work will also have to comply with the requirements of any other relevant paragraphs in Schedule 1 to the Regulations.

There are Approved Documents which give guidance on each of the Parts of Schedule 1 and on Regulation 7.

Limitation on requirements
In accordance with Regulation 8, the requirements of parts A to D, F to K, N and P (except for paragraphs G2, H2 and J7) of Schedule 1 shall not require anything to be done except for the purposes of securing reasonable standards of health and safety for persons in and about buildings (and any others who may be affected by buildings, or matters connected with buildings).

Materials and workmanship
Any building work which is subject to the requirement imposed by Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations should, in accordance with Regulation 7, be carried out with proper materials and in a workmanlike manner.

Mixed use development
In a mixed use development (such as an Extra-care or Assisted Living facility) part of a building may be used as a dwelling while another part has non-domestic use. In such cases, if the requirements of the Regulations for dwellings and non-domestic use differ, the requirements of
Requirement O1: Wellbeing in housing for older people

The requirements

This speculative Approved Document deals with the requirement of a proposed Part O that could form a part of Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations which it is anticipated could be published in 2016 following the ongoing review of the Building Regulations commissioned in 2010.

Requirements

Access and Use

Wellbeing in housing for older people

O1. Reasonable provision shall be made for older people to:
    (a) live a happy, healthy, independent and secure life; and
    (b) move about in and make connections with all aspects the outside world.

Notes

Means of Escape in Case of Fire: the scope of AD_O is limited to matters of quality of life and the ability to live well independently. It does not extend to means of escape in the event of fire, for which reference should be made to AD_B – ‘Fire Safety’.


Guidance in AD_O reflects more recent experience for an ageing population and should take precedence over the guidance in AD_N where they appear to conflict.
Section 0: General Guidance

Performance
In the research team’s view, the requirements will be met by making reasonable provision to ensure that buildings are healthy, pleasurable, suitable and manageable by older people.

People, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, status, ability or wealth should be able to:

a. live in buildings that promote their independence, happiness, conviviality, security and safety
b. engage with the external world easily and economically.

The provisions are expected to enable older people to cope better on their own and live well, as active participants in their communities, assisting independence and connectivity. The provisions are not necessarily expected to facilitate fully independent living for all older people, especially the very old or those with disabilities.

Where the requirements apply

0.1 The requirements apply if:

a. a dwelling is newly erected
b. an existing non-domestic building is converted or undergoes material alteration
c. an existing institution, public building or shop or part of an existing building undergoes material change of use to a dwelling or dwellings
d. a dwelling is extended.

It should be noted that, regardless of compliance with Building Regulations, there will be obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 for service providers to consider barriers created by physical features in buildings.¶

0.2 Under regulation 4(2), where a building is extended or undergoes a material alteration, the building work must be carried out so that after it has been completed the building complies with the applicable requirements of Schedule 1, or, where it did not fully comply, with any applicable requirement it is no more unsatisfactory than before.¶

0.3 Where a dwelling is extended it should not make the new or the existing building any less satisfactory than it was before. ¶
0.4 It is intended that AD_O would fall under regulation 3 wherein the expression “material alteration” is defined by reference to a list of “relevant requirements” in Schedule 1. This would mean that the alteration of a dwelling is a material alteration if the work would result in the dwelling not complying with AD_O where previously it did. If the dwelling did not previously comply with AD_O the dwelling should not be more unsatisfactory in relation to Part O after the material alteration.

A planned alteration to a dwelling that has the potential to reduce the compliance of the dwelling as a whole with Part O must be carried out in such as way that there is no reduction in the extent of Part O compliance. Similarly, an extension of a dwelling must not result in the dwelling being less compliant with Part O.
Definitions

The following are key terms used in this document:

**Accessible**
In relation to buildings or parts of buildings, means that people are able to gain access regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, status, ability or wealth.

**Amenity**
An outdoor place for peaceful personal fulfilment and leisure.

**Suitable**
Means appropriate, responsive to and relating specifically to the needs of the older occupant.

**Connectivity**
Means the capacity for engaging with other people, places, concepts and events.

**Dwelling**
Means a house or flat (“flat” is defined in regulation 2(1)).

**Engage**
Means actively take part or participate in.

**Happiness**
Means being in a state of fulfilment and contentment.

**Independent**
Means being capable of making choices and take action by and for oneself without the need for assistance from others.

**Manageable**
Means the ability of the occupant to live life independently and operate a building’s systems without assistance both internally and externally.

**Mobility**
Means the ability to move around internally and externally, and make meaningful connections with places, people, nature, or events.

**Wellbeing**
Means a state of good physical and mental health, autonomy, sufficient resources to get by, and the ability to connect to people, places and events in a meaningful way.
Section 1: Dwellings

Objectives
1.1 The aim of this new document is to provide for the wellbeing of older people as they age. It adds to, and must be read in conjunction with, the existing body of Regulations; this requires the designer to exercise judgment in their application and prioritisation.

1.2 The Regulations aim to secure Wellbeing for older people in dwellings, but it is recognised that what applies to older people is applicable to all people. It is expected that AD_O will become the adopted standard for all types of dwelling.

Approach to the dwelling
1.3 All thresholds should be level to permit wheeled vehicles to pass easily into the dwelling. Follow the guidance given in AD_M.

1.4 External entrance thresholds to dwellings shall provide sufficient space to allow for personalisation. They shall be generous enough to provide a place to rest, to chat to neighbours, shelter from the weather and grow plants. If possible they should provide sufficient space to store and charge a mobility vehicle.

See para 1.4

Diagram 1.1 External entrance threshold
**Space Standards**

1.5 Space standards for older people need to be larger than a normal house if it is to remain resilient to life changes. Dwellings also need to be capable of accommodating changes such as rails and hoists as and when they may be required, and should be designed accordingly. Dwelling sizes should follow Lifetimes Homes guidance as a minimum to allow for a future of limited mobility (www.lifetimehomes.org). Where possible larger accommodation should be provided which accommodates wheelchair users (GWDG).

1.6 Within the provisions of AD_B, dwellings should be designed to be open plan so that those people confined to bed can participate in the social life around them. There should be sufficient openings to enable this, such as sliding doors between rooms, which shall be minimum 1500mm wide measured between door stops.

1.7 An area of 2.5 width x 2.5 depth in plan shall be provided for storage of a lifetime’s possessions. This may be within a dwelling or external but if it is external it shall be easily accessible, subject to the same provisions of accessibility as the dwelling itself.

1.8 Sufficient space shall be provided to allow a carer or relative to live with the occupant. Where it is not possible to provide this in a separate room, provision shall be made for a temporary bedspace that can accommodate a carer staying for up to a month, such as a fold-down or sofa bed or a guest apartment provided as part of the dwelling complex.

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**Diagram 1.2**  Connections with relatives and the outside world

See para 1.10
1.9 Sufficient space shall be provided to allow for hobbies, pets and for the accommodation of a special piece of furniture, for example, a dresser, dressing table, wardrobe or dining table.

**Steps**

1.10 Any steps used shall be shallow and shall have handrails provided in accordance with public buildings requirements of AD_M and AD_K.

**Outdoor space**

1.11 Private outdoor amenity space shall be provided which is minimum 1.5 deep x 2.5m wide and accessible by level threshold from the interior of the dwelling.

See para 1.12

![Diagram 1.3](image)

**Security**

1.12 All dwellings shall have appropriate security devices to provide the ability for an older person to monitor who is visiting both in the street and outside their door from a chair in their living room or their bed.

1.13 Every dwelling shall have appropriate security devices to ensure reasonable peace of mind. Nothing herein shall however contravene the provisions for means of escape set out in AD_B.
Social Contact

1.14 All dwellings shall contain sufficient physical means by which older people can conduct social relationships, and make connections with nature, with time (year, day), with the weather and with the broader outside world. In addition these may be supplemented, but not replaced, by digital connections. See diagram 1.3.

1.15 Physical openings in building fabric (windows, doors) shall be of a size and positioned in such ways as to give uninterrupted contact with life outside the dwelling. Such openings shall not contravene provisions in AD_K and AD_N).

1.16 Opening and restrictive devices shall be selected and sited so that they are easy for older people to use. Location of operating devices shall be in accordance with AD_N. Where this contravenes the provisions of AD_N discretion shall be used in prioritising the position of such devices.

Indoor Environmental Quality

1.17 Every dwelling shall provide adequate warmth, fresh air and daylighting to ensure a healthy environment for older people.

Thermal insulation

1.18 Older people spend a larger amount of time at home and are less active than the general population, therefore the average daytime heating level shall reach 23 degrees C and 19 degrees C at night.

1.19 Thermal insulation standards and air tightness in the building fabric shall conform to or improve on the requirements of AD_L1 Parts A and B.

Ventilation

1.20 Fresh air is essential and especially where dwellings are airtight. Ventilation rates shall confirm the AD_F. Heat recovery devices shall be employed wherever possible.

1.21 Cross ventilation shall be used except in extreme, proven cases, to avoid dwellings overheating and to ensure good daylight.

1.22 Windows shall be operable by hand and capable of being cleaned from within the dwelling.

Daylight

1.23 Good daylighting is essential for older people, allowing them to see better and stay healthy. All dwellings shall be designed in accordance with the requirements of Code for Sustainable Homes Category 7 - Daylighting, with the aim of achieving four credits. Contrasts and surfaces shall be designed to avoid glare.
1.24 Reliance on artificial lighting, even if supplemented by daylight lamps, should be avoided.

Colour and contrast
1.25 Contrast shall be used to theme spaces and provide orientation.

1.26 Grab rails shall be provided in colours contrasting with their background location.

Sound Insulation
1.27 All dwellings shall be designed in accordance with the requirements of Code for Sustainable Homes Category 7 - Sound Insulation, with the aim of achieving four credits.

Quotes
§ UK Statutory Instruments: The Building Regulations 2010, no 2214, clause 8, p. 9, Crown Copyright
¶ Building Regulations 2000, Approved Document Part M.

Thanks
To Fran Williams at Sarah Wigglesworth Architects for designing this document and Dr Adam Park, University of Sheffield, for his diagrams, part of his work on the DWELL project.
References

UK Statutory Instruments: *The Building Regulations 2010, 2013*
Building Regulations 2000, *Approved Document Part M*
*Greenwich Wheelchair Site Brief 2012*, www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk