

I trust that the information provided in this letter demonstrates the Home Department's support for the Disability & Inclusion Strategy and its efforts to deliver it.

Deputy F W Quin, Deputy Minister

Housing Department

Thank you for your letter of 9th June 2015 asking for details of the work that the Housing Department has undertaken in relation to the above Strategy.

I am pleased to report that since the Strategy was approved by the States in November 2013 the Department has:

- Opened two extra care housing schemes in St. Martin's and the Vale;
- Changed its social housing eligibility criteria so that more disabled people can access the Department's social rented housing; and
- Revised its allocations policy to 'fast track' applicants with physical and mental disabilities.

To take each in turn:

Extra care housing

At time of writing 26 disabled people, including people with learning disabilities, have moved from Health and Social Services Department accommodation into extra care housing, where they can live more independently. Further are expected as the two schemes expand in 2015 and 2016.

Extra care housing has also been made available to disabled people who were living in the community, either by themselves or with their families.

New eligibility criteria

Now, working age adults with physical disabilities but no dependents are eligible for rented accommodation managed by the Housing Department and the Guernsey Housing Association, as opposed to just the latter.

Revised allocations policy

When they apply for social housing, disabled people living in accommodation which does not meet their needs are now given greater priority than before. In combination with the new rules governing access to Housing Department properties (see above), this has meant that, on average, disabled people are likely to be offered suitable accommodation more quickly than before.

I am happy to provide further details on any of the above.

Deputy D B Jones, Minister

Public Services Department

I am writing in response to your letter of the 9 June 2015, in which you asked for an update on work undertaken by the Public Service Department (PSD) since November 2013 in relation to the Disability and Inclusion Strategy.

By their nature, some of PSD's sites present difficulties for disabled access. However, measures for reasonable adjustment are fully embedded where possible, such as assistance facilities at locations providing transport services such as Guernsey Harbours and Guernsey Airport, and full access to customer service facilities at the head offices of public service providers such as Guernsey Water and States Works.

In addition, Guernsey Airport has been working with Aurigny and the Guernsey Disability Alliance to improve information for passengers pre and post flight and the existing policies and training are in the process of being reviewed with the States Disability Officer.

The new policy will include clear advice for passengers to secure assistance from the car park to the aircraft, with a combined responsibility between ourselves and the airlines being more clearly defined. In addition we anticipate some be-spoke training for staff on disability issues and Aurigny has committed to attend those sessions with its training staff.

We are also looking at whether any future development of the terminal could include bespoke 'changing places' facilities – which would provide assistance for the most disabled passengers with provision of a wet room with hoist and other changing facilities. This would represent a significant investment and external support or funding for fit out may be required.

In addition to physical measures to improve accessibility, billing entities such as Guernsey Water, States Works and Guernsey Harbours accept payments via a number of routes such as direct debit, online or via telephone.

The Department realises that more can be done and has focused on helping to address some of these areas as directed by the States in resolution 11 of the 2013 report. The Department's corporate strategy provides for the 2013 resolutions, and includes a key objective to review the equality of access to PSD's services and infrastructure (including pricing strategies) for the disabled and more vulnerable members of the community. This objective is led by the Department's Finance Business Partner, who has responsibility to ensure that a review is conducted, along with an accessibility survey of PSD properties and establish an action plan of prioritised work to implement reasonable adjustment if necessary.