# Disabled man in Edinburgh trapped by inadequate wheelchair access highlights Scotland’s wider housing crisis



A disabled man in Edinburgh has voiced his frustrations after being effectively "trapped" in his own flat, a situation he claims has arisen due to inadequate accessibility modifications and misrepresentations regarding the property’s wheelchair-friendly features. Lucas Honey, 35, has asserted that the flat he occupies in Granton Harbour was advertised as fully wheelchair-accessible, a claim he contends is far from reality. Issues have been mounting since he moved in back in 2021, complicating his ability to live independently, which is essential for someone with his disabilities.

Honey's primary concern is the inadequacy of the main entrance door, which, after recent modifications by the managing company C~URB, has become too narrow for his wheelchair. Despite raising this issue for over four years, he reports that nothing was done until he recently escalated the matter during site meetings. While company representatives acknowledged their oversight, Honey’s insistence for swift resolution has so far yielded no timeline for repairs, leaving him feeling sidelined and powerless.

This situation underscores a broader and troubling trend throughout Scotland, where many disabled individuals find themselves in unsuitable living conditions. According to a troubling report, since 2018, over 31,000 people have applied for home adaptations, yet only 38% of requests have been completed. The issues are often exacerbated by bureaucratic delays and wealthy systemic barriers, such as a significant lack of accessible housing across the country. Current statistics reveal that only 1% of housing is fully suitable for wheelchair users, illustrating the scale of the problem.

The Scottish Government has introduced the 'Housing to 2040' strategy, aiming to tackle these challenges with initiatives like the Scottish Accessible Homes Standard. This approach is positioned as a first step towards addressing the glaring inadequacies within the housing system for disabled individuals. However, experts emphasise the urgent need for improved building regulations to ensure new developments meet necessary accessibility standards.

The rising demand for adapted housing has been spotlighted by advocacy groups such as Inclusion Scotland, which estimates that 86,000 households are currently in need of adaptations. They argue for a national target that mandates new housing developments—including at least 10% of new builds—to comply with wheelchair accessibility standards. Such measures could significantly improve the quality of life for disabled individuals who yearn for the independence and dignity that adequate housing can provide.

Honey's situation has also had a profound effect on his personal well-being. Relying on limited support services, he finds that much of the assistance available to him is consumed by routine household tasks, leaving him little time for activities outside his home. His social interactions have dwindled, leaving him isolated and undermining both his physical and mental health. “I cannot go shopping, for a walk, or out to meet friends,” he laments, expressing the frustration that many in similar situations experience when their fundamental needs for independence and mobility go unmet.

Despite C~URB's public commitment to resolving accessibility issues, which align with ongoing discussions around regularisation of housing for individuals with disabilities, many affected residents like Honey remain sceptical. Advocacy groups assert that, until robust actions are taken, the plight of disabled individuals trapped in unsuitable accommodations will persist.

The continuing struggle for improved housing accessibility in Scotland raises larger questions about societal commitment to inclusivity and the rights of disabled individuals. Living Rent, a union advocating for tenants, has highlighted the systemic neglect faced by residents like Honey, calling for a transformation in the approach towards accessible living solutions. Advocates argue that everyone deserves homes that respect their dignity and ensure their right to live independently.

Honey's plea is a powerful reminder that addressing these housing crises is not just a matter of policy, but one of fundamental human rights that affects thousands of lives across Scotland. The dialogue surrounding accessible housing must evolve, ensuring that solutions are not just promised but realised, enabling disabled individuals to not only leave their homes but to thrive within their communities.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 4, 5, 6
2. Paragraph 3
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6. Paragraph 4
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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/disabled-scot-trapped-flat-cannot-35233344> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-to-2040-equalities-position-statement/pages/housing-to-2040-and-the-protected-characteristics/> - The Scottish Government's 'Housing to 2040' strategy outlines plans to address housing challenges for disabled individuals, including the development of a new Scottish Accessible Homes Standard and improvements to the adaptations system. The strategy acknowledges the severe shortage of accessible housing and the need for a national definition of accessibility for all disabilities. It also highlights the importance of building regulations, affordability, and adequate resourcing of adaptations to meet the needs of disabled people.
3. <https://theferret.scot/thousands-disabled-people-left-unsuitable-housing/> - An investigation reveals that thousands of disabled Scots are living in unsuitable housing due to systemic issues in the adaptation grant system. Since 2018, over 31,000 people have applied for home adaptations, but only 38% have been completed. Challenges include bureaucratic delays, funding shortfalls, and a lack of suitable housing options, leaving many disabled individuals isolated and facing physical and mental health impacts.
4. <https://inclusionscotland.org/get-informed/our-policy-focus/housing> - Inclusion Scotland highlights the severe shortage of accessible and adapted housing in Scotland, with 86,000 households needing adaptations. The organization emphasizes the need for a national 10% target for wheelchair-accessible homes in developments over 20 units and advocates for a new Scottish Accessible Homes Standard. They also call for improved building regulations and adequate resourcing of adaptations to meet the needs of disabled people.
5. <https://archive.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/housing-and-disabled-people-scotlands-hidden-crisis> - The Equality and Human Rights Commission's inquiry into accessible housing in Scotland found a significant shortage of accessible homes, with only 1% of housing fully accessible for wheelchair users. The report highlights challenges such as bureaucratic delays in home adaptations, inadequate support for independent living, and a lack of accurate data on disabled people's housing needs. It calls for a national strategy to address these issues and improve housing conditions for disabled individuals.
6. <https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/articles/equality-commission-calls-for-end-to-scotlands-hidden-disability-housing-crisis> - The Equality and Human Rights Commission calls for an end to Scotland's hidden disability housing crisis, highlighting that 61,000 disabled Scots are waiting for home adaptations and 17,000 wheelchair users are poorly housed. The commission recommends building at least 10% of new housing to accessible standards, developing an accessible housing register, ensuring quick installation of adaptations, and properly assessing the current and future needs of Scotland's disabled population.
7. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/new-scots-affordable-homes-built-too-small-for-wheelchairs-1432398> - Research commissioned by the Scottish Government reveals that many new affordable homes being built in Scotland are too small for wheelchair users. The study indicates that the 'Housing for Varying Needs' standards do not provide sufficient floor space for wheelchairs, potentially leaving many disabled individuals without suitable housing. The findings highlight the need for accessible housing standards to be incorporated into new developments to meet the needs of disabled residents.