# London Plan meets just 23% of adaptable‑home requirement, leaving thousands of disabled Londoners with few options



According to the Evening Standard, London’s flagship planning policy is failing to deliver the accessible homes it promised: the London Plan, adopted in 2021, requires 90% of new‑build dwellings to be designed to be easily adaptable for people with accessibility needs and 10% to be wheelchair accessible or readily adaptable. Yet, the Standard reports, only 23% of new build completions met that adaptable‑home standard last year, leaving thousands of disabled Londoners with severely limited options on the housing market.

The policy rests on two recognised technical standards. Under the Building Regulations’ optional requirements — commonly referred to as M4(2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings) and M4(3) (wheelchair user dwellings) — homes should include features such as step‑free access, widened doorways and circulation space, and bathrooms that can be adapted or used by people with mobility needs. The London Plan embeds those expectations into planning policy, making them a baseline for new housing delivery across the capital. According to the Standard, the gap between policy and practice is therefore not one of ambition but of implementation.

Campaigners and disability charities have long warned that without enforceable delivery mechanisms, high‑level policy will not translate into homes that disabled people can actually live in. The low compliance rate reported by the Standard will reinforce those concerns: advocates say it effectively sidelines wheelchair users and others who require accessible features, forcing many to remain in unsuitable housing, rely on expensive adaptations, or join long waits for social housing that meets their needs. The shortfall also risks entrenching inequality by concentrating accessible accommodation in limited parts of the city rather than ensuring it is available across communities and tenures.

There are several explanations offered by industry and planning observers for why new‑build performance has lagged. Developers often point to viability pressures, rising construction costs and competing policy demands — such as the need to maximise unit numbers on constrained sites — which they say can make it harder to deliver the full quota of M4(2) and M4(3) homes. Local planning authorities, campaigners argue, do not always enforce the London Plan requirements consistently at the planning application stage, and viability assessments can be used to negotiate down accessibility standards. The result, according to the Standard’s reporting, is a patchwork of delivery rather than a consistent city‑wide approach.

Policy remedies are already familiar to planners and advocates. Stronger, clearer conditions attached to planning permissions; more systematic monitoring and transparent reporting of compliance rates; and tighter scrutiny of viability claims could all shore up delivery. Some London boroughs and housing associations have gone further by adopting their own supplementary planning documents or design codes to lock in accessible design, and campaigners urge City Hall to incentivise or require similar measures across the capital. The Standard’s coverage makes clear that, for many campaigners, incremental improvements are not enough: they want accountability and timetables for closing the gap between policy and completion.

Meeting the London Plan’s accessibility ambitions is not simply a matter of aesthetics or convenience: it determines whether disabled Londoners can live independently, access employment and participate in civic life. According to the Standard, the current shortfall exposes a systemic failure to translate planning rules into the homes London needs. City Hall, boroughs and developers will face growing pressure to explain why the figures remain so far short of the plan’s targets — and to agree a practical, funded route to fix it.

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## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/disabled-londoners-accessible-housing-sadiq-khan-gla-b1242440.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/disabled-londoners-accessible-housing-sadiq-khan-gla-b1242440.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/disabled-londoners-accessible-housing-sadiq-khan-gla-b1242440.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/disabled-londoners-accessible-housing-sadiq-khan-gla-b1242440.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/disabled-londoners-accessible-housing-sadiq-khan-gla-b1242440.html)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/disabled-londoners-accessible-housing-sadiq-khan-gla-b1242440.html)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/disabled-londoners-accessible-housing-sadiq-khan-gla-b1242440.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data