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25th April 2007

Mr John McRorie,
Communities Scotland,
Thistle House,
91 Haymarket Terrace,
Edinburgh
EH12 5HE

Dear Mr McRorie,

**Response to Scottish Executive Consultation Paper:
The Single Survey: Fairer for Everyone**

The College Of Occupational Therapists Specialist Section – Housing (COTSS-H) welcomes the opportunity to comment on this consultation document.

Occupational therapists are uniquely placed to assist disabled individuals who have problems with housing.

It has been my personal experience that for a variety of reasons, social housing tends to be the preferred choice for households in which one or more members of a family unit are disabled, not least the financial implication of disability.

However with the assistance and encouragement of occupational therapists, organisations like Ownership Options and the Disabled Persons Housing Service (DPHS) and government grants i.e. Improvement Repair Grants (IRG) many households in which disability is a major factor are now choosing to stay within the private sector.

That said, choosing the most appropriate property for an 'able-bodied' household is stressful and this can be magnified significantly where the additional pressures surrounding disability are involved. A system where more relevant information (the PIP) is available to the purchaser who has a particular interest because of disability is therefore to be applauded.

The comments from COTSS-Housing are relatively straightforward and relate to Equalities and Accessibility, which in turn relate to adaptations or facilities for the welfare and accommodation of a disabled individual.

Highlighting features that could benefit everyone but especially a disabled buyer will not only save the vendor's time but make it easier for the buyer who has specific requirements e.g. who has a disabled or less able-bodied member of the family.

Suggested additions to Schedule 1: Section 4

1. Which floor is the property on?	_____
2. Is there lift access to the property?	Yes / No
3. Are there three steps or fewer to a main entrance door of the property from the curtilage to entrance	Yes / No
4. Are all clear door opening widths greater than 750mm	Yes / No
5. Is there a toilet on the same level as the livingroom and kitchen	Yes / No
6. Is there a toilet available on an upper floor level	yes / No
7 Do the property entry level rooms have any internal steps or stairs	Yes / No
8 How many rooms are there on ground level	_____
9 Is the hall width 1200mm or less	Yes / No

Answers to the Questions asked:

1. Single Survey
 - a) yes
 - b) yes
 - c) yes
 - d) survey should have a shelf life – as soon as any changes have been registered via planning or building control they need to be registered and then a new survey should be completed.
 - e) There should be a register for information purposes: property type and condition, unable to understand the reasoning that the register would prevent sellers from 'shopping around' Who gets access to the register? Would there be a charge?
 - f) Yes
2. Property Sale Questionnaire
 - a) Yes
 - b) yes
 - c) Shelf life should be until structural/internal layout changes have been made to property
3. Purchasers Information Pack
 - a) yes

- b) Who thought up 12 weeks?, as soon as property pack is available then the property should be able to be marketed, there will be individuals who are looking for a quick sale (early entry date to other property?).
- 4. Who does not have to provide a Purchasers Pack
 - a) yes, the acceptions are appropriate
- 5. Enforcing the system
Yes as long as £500 is more than the cost of providing the survey in the first place!.
- 6. Other equality issues.
None

I trust you will find these comments useful, if you require any further comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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