CITY OF YORK COUNCIL

Specialist and Supported Housing, Accessibility and new housing, and Co-living

Non-statutory planning guidance

Approved 3 November 2026



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Introduction

The purpose of this Guidance Note is to set out how Local Plan Policies H3, H9, H10 and other specialist housing related policy obligations will be implemented in the decision-making process. This Guidance Note is non statutory and does not introduce new policy or impose requirements beyond those contained in the Local Plan or national planning policy and guidance.

The Guidance Note draws on the Council's wider evidence base, including the Local Housing Needs Assessment (2022), the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, and the Learning Disabilities and Autistic People Needs Assessment (2024). These documents do not in themselves constitute planning policy.

All proposals will be assessed on their individual merits, taking account of site-specific circumstances, design considerations, viability evidence where relevant, and the full range of material considerations.

This Guidance Note will be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure continued alignment with changes in national planning policy and associated regulations.

Specialist and supported housing

Policy H3 sets out the expectations that specialist housing for people with care and support needs should be incorporated into neighbourhoods. Reflecting the intention of policy H3 to create balanced communities, specialist housing should not be concentrated in any areas and will be expected to be spread throughout the city. This is supported by policy within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Policy H9 also provides more detail around the provision of specialist housing for older people and identifies that specialist housing proposals will be supported where they meet the identified need in the city. Developers of specialist housing will be encouraged to engage with the Housing Policy Team at an early stage, who will work with Adult and/or Children's Social Care Teams to advise on the types and tenure that are needed. Providers of specialist housing are encouraged to follow best practice, and designs should be accessible, inclusive and suitable for people with a range of individual needs, including sensory, physical, communication and mobility needs, ensuring that people can use and access the environment safely, comfortably and independently wherever possible. This may be informed by resources such as the Housing LIN good practice library.

The need for specialist housing is evidenced in the Local Housing Needs Assessment (and any subsequent updates):

"The analysis suggests that there is likely to be some increase in the number of younger people (generally those aged 16/18 to 64) with a disability across the City. There are a range of disabilities that are likely to require some degree of support, or potentially some form of specialised housing solution." (paragraph 6.21)

During 2026/27 the Council is preparing a Supported Housing Strategy, in accordance with its obligations under the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023. This will provide further guidance on needs and will supplement this Guidance Note.

We have also developed a **Strategic housing needs assessment: people with learning disabilities and Autistic people**: For North

Yorkshire Council, City of York Council and Humber & North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (July 2024)

For York, in summary, the report estimates that across both Learning Disabilities and Autism client groups:

- an additional c.35 units of supported housing and c.5 shared lives places are needed by 2029;
- an additional c.70 units of supported housing and c.7 shared lives places are needed by 2034;
- an additional c.110 units of supported housing and c.10 shared lives places are needed by 2039.

The Adult Social Care Market Position Statement provides additional guidance on supported housing development.

Further definition of needs will be established in the City of York Supported Housing Strategy during 2026-27.

Accessibility and new housing

Policy H3 requires that housing is built to be as flexible as possible to accommodate people's changing circumstances over their lifetime. Our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) has an overview assessment of the health of York's population. For instance, we know that, across the whole York population, 17% of people say that they are 'disabled under the Equality Act', including 6% of people who say that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot.

We encourage you to design all homes to accessibility Part M4(2) standard as a minimum. Our LHNA shows that we have a need for 9% of all homes to meet M4(3) and up to 25% of affordable housing to meet M4(3) and we would encourage all residential schemes to achieve this level of provision, and to provide justification where it cannot be achieved.). Where the property is being provided as an affordable home, the Nominations Agreement for the scheme must ensure that households with an assessed need for the M4(3) homes will be prioritised for all initial and future allocations of affordable housing.

The provision of a dedicated car parking space within, or in close proximity to, all M4(3) homes is encouraged to support residents' mobility needs.

Local Plan viability evidence indicates that the majority of residential typologies would still be viable with this provision alongside evidence in the LHNA indicating that there is a need for such provision within the city. Policy H3 of the Local Plan supports future development that meets

needs identified in the latest LHNA, including provision of an appropriate proportion of housing that meets the higher access standards of Part M Building Regulations. Where an appropriate proportion of Part M housing is not proposed, developers should demonstrate how the characteristics of the site mean that delivery of such housing is inappropriate, impractical or unviable.

Age Friendly York, in conjunction with City of York Council, have developed a checklist to help assess the suitability of housing for the needs of people who are frail disabled or with a long-term condition. The checklist can be used by developers to support their applications and demonstrate compliance with policy H3 requirements for flexible future-proof housing.

Co-Living

Co-Living is a relatively new type of housing designed to be an alternative to living in a shared rental house or flat. While the Local Plan doesn't address this type of housing, we recognise that it has the potential to contribute to the housing mix.

Co-Living development is a type of non-self-contained housing with individual rooms and communal spaces and facilities. There is an emphasis on communal living with shared dining, recreation and sometimes also workspaces. It differs from student accommodation (Purpose Built Student Accommodation or PBSA), which is designed specifically to meet the needs of students and is subject to the requirements of policy H7 of the Local Plan. It also differs from Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in that it is, generally, purpose-built and professionally managed with high levels of shared facilities. Additionally, HMOs are traditionally formed from a converted house and would be smaller in scale than a Co-Living development.

Predominantly Co-Living developments will differ from other forms of development in terms of the quality and amount of communal space. This should provide space for residents to:

- cook, prepare and eat meals;
- relax and socialise, including with guests;
- work from home; and
- do laundry.

There should also be good quality external amenity space, in accordance with policies D1: Placemaking, D2: Landscape and setting,

and GI6: New open space provision[1] of the Local Plan, available to all residents unless site constraints make this unachievable. Where there is no external space provided, this should be fully justified.

The length of tenancy agreements will ensure that Co-Living developments differ from hotels and hostels; we would expect that these provide a reasonable level of security and comply with statutory requirements including the Renters Rights Act.

The site should be in a well-connected area with good access to frequent public transport options and there should be a range of services and facilities within the local area as developments are likely to be car-free.

While decisions will be made on a case by case basis, taking into account features such as the length of tenancy and level of communal facilities provided, we consider that Co-Living provides a form of residential development which would be liable for an affordable housing contribution under policy H10: Affordable Housing of the Local Plan. This reflects the wording of policy H10 which requires affordable housing provision from residential schemes of 5 or more dwellings.

[1] See our Commuted sum payments for open space in new developments guidance for further information on required levels of open space