CRESA Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment

Functional, Accessible, Affordable, Buildable Small Homes
Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities National Science Challenge

FAAB SMALL HOMES: The perspectives of young people with disabilities

PRESENTATION TO FAAB SEMINAR

CHRISTCHURCH, 20 MAY 2024

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Background: unmet needs

Housing: One of the greatest areas of unmet need for PwD

- Limited opportunities in the housing market
  - Despite current emphasis on independent living in mainstream housing

- **Inaccessible, unsuitable, unaffordable housing**
  - Information rarely sought by providers from end-users
  - Providers typically driven by cost effectiveness and replicable design, rather than meeting end-users needs and wants

- **YPwD in Auckland**
  - Living with parents, though wished they weren't!
    - Privacy issues and decision-making constraints
    - Reduced sense of home and community belonging

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Can small homes provide solutions?

Small homes perceived by participants in the initial study as affordable but potentially restrictive

What designs for accessible small homes might meet people's needs?

- 2x workshops in Auckland with 10 people (following Bev James' workshop design)
  - 3x young people using wheelchairs
  - 4x young people with significantly limited mobility
  - 1 mother of a young person with cerebral palsy
  - 1 mother of a 21-year-old with cognitive impairment
  - 1 mother of a 13-year-old with cognitive impairment
- 2x in-depth interviews
  - 18 year old with cerebral palsy and his mother

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Key points: Participant responses to the plans

Diversity: All plans drew positive and negative comments

The most discussed issues:

Accessibility and the potential of home to make people feel disabled, isolated and excluded

Factors seen as potentially disabling:

- Any space not designed with people with disabilities explicitly in mind
- Hard to use and difficult to modify spaces
- Poorly lit and disconnected –no view or connection to people/places beyond
- Homes situated far from public transport and employment options for young people

What I like, need and want…

Accessible spaces

- Spaces that enable daily activities and independence

Storage space: size and design

- Large fridge/freezer space and cupboard space throughout the house
  - Storage of essential equipment (e.g., mobility aids), medicines and ability to bulk buy food (limiting costs and trips)
- Clear floor space for those who can move independent at ground level
- Spaces for both socialising and privacy
- Space for any care-givers

What I like, need and want…

Attention to flow and movement throughout the house

- Essential to avoid awkward spaces and awkward movement through the house
- Facilitating feels of comfort, ease, and being 'at home'

Attention to small scale design issues

- E.g. placement of power points
- Lack of attention to small scale design issues can be hugely disabling on a daily basis

Consideration of how rooms can be affordably multi-use

- Reflecting the changing nature of health- and disability-related needs/wants (short-term and long-term changes)

What I dislike…

Lack of windows

- E.g., windowless bathrooms

No consideration of light, view and connection

- Dark or poorly considered lighting
- Lack of views
  - Green space, neighbours and the community beyond
- Feeling ‘in a box’
  - Heightened sense of being set apart due to disabilities

What I dislike…

Lack of a ‘sanctuary’ space

- Somewhere uncluttered to relax and deal with everyday challenges (big or small e.g., room or corner)

Lack of privacy

- Reduces sense of independence and capability

Spaces that are hard to modify

- Difficult and poorly designed spaces that can be hugely expensive or hard to modify

Perceived barriers

Limited design options able to facilitate:

1) **independence and assistance;**
2) **privacy and connection;**
3) **affordability and accessibility,**

Ignoring the impacts of housing on other areas of YP's lives

- Access to transport, employment/education, and social relationships
- Shaping self perception (e.g., feeling in/capable)

Poor communication between YPwD and designers/builders, and costly and inflexible laws and processes

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Suggestions from participants for designers

- Get to know YPwD, their wants and needs
- Include YPwD in the whole design and build process e.g., co-design
- Become an expert in universal and/or accessible design
- Manage issues of cost effectiveness and replicable design by making universal design and accessibility a norm
- Make all new builds accessible or create a bylaw to ensure a set percentage (e.g., 25-50%) of new builds are accessible.
- Consider that disability is a norm (given ageing populations)
- Keep in mind that people with disabilities have restricted incomes

The #1 message from participants

YPwD are often seeking employment and independence (to differing degrees), as well as social belonging and inclusion in everyday life.

They are interested in well-designed, accessible and affordable small homes that support them being active and contributing members of our communities.

For more information

https://faabsmallhomes.goodhomes.co.nz/