

# Making life better for wheelchair users in the kitchen

With no government requirements for wheelchair user housing or mandated space standards, inaccessibility is a common problem. However, with good design any environment can support accessibility for wheelchair users – even in the kitchen.

How many people have a disability?<sup>1</sup>

16.0 million people in the UK



Representing  
**24%**  
of the total population

Mobility is the most common impairment<sup>2</sup>

Mobility



47%

Stamina, breathing or fatigue



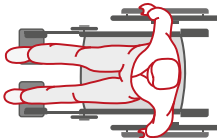
35%

Mental health



32%

Number of wheelchair users in the UK<sup>3</sup>



Approximately

1.2 million

Two thirds of them are regular users

The kitchen is the most likely place for accidents to happen in any home<sup>4</sup>

Area of home

Chance of injury



Kitchen

60%



Garden

33%



Living Room

31%

Fit for purpose homes - wheelchair users in England

57%

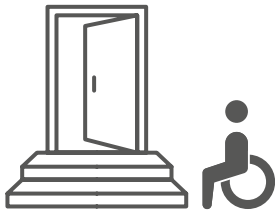
of wheelchair users live in adapted homes<sup>5</sup>



Over

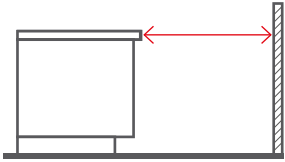
400,000

wheelchair users live in homes which are neither adapted nor accessible<sup>6</sup>



## Wheelchair kitchen adaptations improve user safety

**Accessibility in numbers** – Some of the recommended measurements taken from AKW's latest Accessible Wheelchair Kitchen Design White Paper:



1500 mm x 1500 mm

Clear circulation space between facing floor units, or floor units and a wall. Deep recessed raised height plinths and worktop areas which are clear underneath can often be included in the turning circle calculations



120 mm - 150 mm

Depth of shallow sink bowl, insulated underneath and with a rear waste trap or centre bowl space saver waste



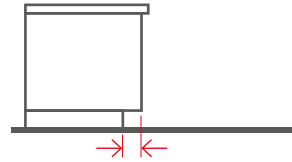
500 mm

Minimum new build kitchen worksurfaces allowance either side of the sink for crockery and plate stacking



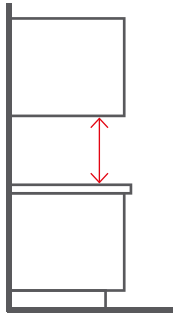
8

Double sockets per kitchen over and above those needed for appliances<sup>7</sup>



150 mm

Deep recessed plinths should be set back 150 mm from the front of cabinets and the height of kickboards should allow for the feet and/or the footplate of the wheelchair to pass underneath the cabinets



350 mm

Maximum height that accessible wall units should be fitted above the worktop. They can also be fitted with manual or electronic drop down baskets to allow easier access to items

Click for more information on AKW's Accessible Wheelchair Kitchen Design White Paper.

1 Department for Work and Pensions, Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021 to 2022, 23 March 2023  
2 House of Commons Library, UK Disability Statistics: Prevalence and Life Experiences, 23 August 2023  
3 National Health Service. 2021. National Wheelchair Data Collection. Available from: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/national-wheelchair/>  
4 <https://www.national-accident-helpline.co.uk/news/post/accidents-home>  
5 <https://www.habinteg.org.uk/latest-news/new-government-data-reveals-accessible-homes-crisis-for-disabled-people-1557/>  
6 Habinteg estimate based on the number of wheelchair users with accessible homes and subtracting from total amount of wheelchair users in England  
7 The Wheelchair housing Design Guide, Third Edition. Good practice recommendations Chapter 12 page 107