



## **A forever home means that when life changes, your home is ready for it!**

There are lots of easy things you can build into your planning to save yourself the headache down the line. An accessible home isn't just an asset for your future, it's a great way to ensure that your friends and whanau can be safe and comfortable too.

### **Exterior Pathways**

- Slip resistant path
- Preferably minimum 1m wide
- Easy access from letterbox to front door
- If using paving stones consider the distance between for easy step length
- Consider raised garden beds.

### **Entrances**

- Exterior sensor lighting
- Unblocked space of approx. 1 x 1m at the door entrance
- Minimise level to enter home - if not possible provide handrails
- If a stepless entrance isn't possible, ensure your entry has stairs with a uniform rise and longer tread depth if possible
- Have your floor to exterior decks
- Make sure the main entry to your home is protected from the weather.

### **Garages and Driveways**

- Parking spaces should be wide enough for getting in and out of cars while carrying objects
- Make sure children's play areas are separated from anywhere a vehicle will be
- Try to ensure your vehicle access allows the vehicle to turn around, rather than having to reverse out of the property
- Fencing or plantings should allow drivers to see pedestrians and cyclists, particularly between the driveway and the footpath
- Ensure direct, well lit and possibly covered access from the garage to the house
- Install lights with some kind of sensor between your home and parking.

### **Bedrooms**

- Ensure you have clear space to easily access around the sides of the bed
- A bedroom on the ground floor
- Put light switches by the bed or plugs for lamps.



## General Interior

- Wide and clear door openings – 910mm or more
- Lever style door handles
- Light switches at a consistent height throughout (similar height to door handles), within easy reach and at the entrance to the room.
- Power points at consistent height and away from corners
- Good lighting in all rooms with particularly well-lit high traffic areas.
- Consider window placement for ease of access and placement of curtains or blinds. Avoid having to reach across furniture, automated curtains could be a solution.
- Think about a fire escape route.

## Bathroom / toilets

- A bathroom on the ground floor with easy access
- Strengthened walls to accommodate future handrails and shower seat
- Lever handle taps and hand held shower rose on a slide rail
- Select a floor surface that is slip resistant and easy to clean
- Rounded edges of cupboards, doors and benches
- Bathroom glazing made of safety or toughened glass
- Ensure the bathroom has good natural ventilation and extractor fan
- Avoid stairs between a bedroom and the closest toilet
- Avoid the risk of burns by positioning the shower mixer so the water temperature can be adjusted before the user enters the shower
- Consider installing a level entry shower
- Minimum shower size recommended is 1 x 1m
- Size of entry to shower should be at least 800mm
- Consider a walk-in shower flush with the ground or what your bathroom will be like with a ramp to the lip of the shower stall.
- Avoid locating a heated towel rail where it is likely to be used as a grab rail.

## Kitchen

- Design the kitchen so people don't have to walk through the high traffic areas of the kitchen to access the house
- Position the kitchen so it's possible to see indoor and outdoor play areas
- If possible, design the kitchen so it can be temporarily fenced off for young children
- Lever handles on all taps
- Plan appliance heights to reduce bending
- Appliances are easily accessible and positioned away from corners
- Choose appliances with easy-to-use knobs, handles and controls



- Allow for a space next to the oven and microwave to place hot dishes on
- Consider use of drawers instead of cupboards
- Choose slip resistant flooring
- Avoid sharp edges on benches, cabinets and handles
- Kitchen should have a minimum of six power outlets for the safe use of appliances
- Minimise the distance hot food is carried between the kitchen and dining area
- Make the floor between the kitchen and the dining area level to reduce trips
- Ensure your kitchen has a permanent means of ventilation at the cooking source to remove the heat, smoke and steam that occur during cooking
- Position hob isolating switch within easy reach and preferably not directly behind the oven.

## Hallways

- Ideally install low level night lights turned on by motion sensors
- Make sure doors don't open into the hallway
- Ideally the hallway width should be at least 1m

## I want to know more about building an accessible home

Check out Firstport's housing section for advice on designing your home, visit your local disability information center or contact us:

- [www.firstport.co.nz/housing](http://www.firstport.co.nz/housing)
- [comms@firstport.co.nz](mailto:comms@firstport.co.nz)

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