

This technical update provides additional guidance on electrical consumer units, position in new homes. It is important that all workmanship carried out during construction is completed in accordance with the relevant tolerances.

Background

The objective of the Approved Document M supporting requirements of Part M of the Building Regulations (England and Wales) in respect of accessible switches and socket outlets is to 'assist those people whose reach is limited to use the dwelling more easily by locating wall mounted switches and socket outlets at suitable heights.'

Diagram 1.5 in M4 (1) of the Approved Document, additionally indicates door bells, entry phones, TV sockets and telephone jack points in accessible positions. The provisions are not necessarily expected to facilitate fully independent living for all people with disabilities. They are intended to enable occupants with disabilities to cope better with reducing mobility and to 'stay put' longer in their own homes.

Details

Approved Document P (2013) states in paragraph 1.4 that...

Wall-mounted socket-outlets, switches and consumer units in new dwellings should be easy to reach, in accordance with Part M of the Building Regulations (Access to and use of buildings).

The Approved Document P goes on to say as a note to paragraph 1.4:

Approved Document M recommends that in new dwellings only, switches and socket-outlets for lighting and other equipment should be between 450mm and 1200mm from finished floor level.

Part M4 (1) paragraph 1.18 states: To assist people who have reduced reach, services and controls should comply with all of the following...b. consumer units are mounted so that the switches are 1350 – 1450mm above floor level.

At this height, the consumer unit is out of reach of young children yet accessible to other people when standing or sitting.

Recommendations

For warranty purposes, we recommend that if the consumer unit is installed to meet the Building Regulations (as described above) then the requirements of our Technical Manual will be satisfied.

Every care was taken to ensure the information in this article was correct at the time of publication. Guidance provided does not replace the reader's professional judgement and any construction project should comply with the relevant Building Regulations or applicable technical standards. For the most up to date Premier Guarantee technical guidance please refer to your Risk Management Surveyor and the latest version of the Premier Guarantee technical manual.