

ELEPHANT AND CASTLE

One leg but offered flat with a spiral staircase

By Emma Ailes

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SOUTHWARK COUNCIL has offered to rehouse a one-legged Heygate Estate resident in a home with a spiral staircase.

Oner Baduna, 36, underwent horrific surgery to have his right leg amputated below the knee in April, and has been waiting to be rehoused by the council to a suitable property ever since.

He and his family, who currently live in a maisonette with stairs in Cuddington, are among the last ten secure tenants and sixteen leaseholders left on the estate. They desperately want to move.

Oner told the 'News': "They said they had found a place with modifications for the disabled, but as soon as we got there and the council man opened the door, we saw this winding staircase. He looked at me with half my leg missing and he could not stop apologising after that."

But Oner says it is not the first time that the council has offered him properties with steps, stairs or basements that would be impossible for him to access.

"I don't know how many times they've offered me places with steps.



Oner Baduna with his family

It's a joke," he said.

"They got all the able-bodied people out first and we've been left at the bottom of the pile. The council has been no help at all. This was four or five weeks ago and I haven't heard from them since. It's like they've forgotten about us."

Councillor Ian Wingfield, Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for Housing, said: "I really feel for the Badunas. They are in a difficult situation, which is why I've spoken to them personally about their predicament. Mr Baduna and his family have

very specific needs, which require the sort of homes which are extremely hard to come by.

"We are making every endeavour to find them a wheelchair adapted, ground floor, three-bed home near to where they are living and these properties are always hard to find in inner-London, with so many people requiring the same thing and in such a small geographical area.

"Unfortunately we haven't found anything in the last few weeks, but they are first in line should a suitable property become available."

BERMONDSEY

Estate money to be spent elsewhere

EXCLUSIVE

By Oliver Pugh

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RESIDENTS ON a Bermondsey estate have been told that money intended to make their homes safe from 'drug users' and 'drinkers' will be spent instead on improving housing in other parts of the borough.

Just over £8million was allocated to provide security improvements to the Four Squares Estate in 2005, but new doors have only been fitted to half of the estate.

Residents of the remaining two squares, Layard and Marden, have asked why they will now not get the same security improvements.

Juliet Kemp, from the estate, said: "We've had to put up with noise, nuisance drinking and drug taking. We need action and we need the works to be finished."

A spokesperson for Southwark Council said the £1.2million that was left over, following the work on the first two blocks, was reallocated in 2009 to fund general improvements to other housing stock.

This decision, they said, was consulted on extensively and supported by tenants groups.

Councillor Ian Wingfield, Southwark Council Deputy Leader

and Cabinet member for Housing, said: "The decision to stop improving the security works on the Four Squares Estate was made by the last administration in 2009, when they decided not to include it in the two year improvement works programme.

"As a cabinet we are currently looking at the options for making every council home in Southwark warm, dry and safe and this includes spending on security on estates. We also have a solid commitment to increase CCTV coverage in the areas that it is most needed."

But local Lib Dem councillors have denied responsibility, suggesting Labour risk is falling short of an election pledge to make every home safe, warm and dry.

Cllr Anood Al-Samerai, leader of the Lib Dem group, said: "It is outrageous to contemplate spending money that has been earmarked for the Four Squares elsewhere. The two blocks on the Four Squares without security have a problem with anti-social behaviour and the residents demand a solution. We will fight this proposal every inch of the way, so that the residents of Layard and Marden can have a safe and secure home."

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