

## A stairlift for the 21st century Pearson Lloyd creates Flow X for the design generation



London design office Pearson Lloyd has unveiled Flow X, a revolutionary new stairlift that puts comfort, aesthetics and user experience at the forefront of its design. Developed for mobility specialist Access BDD, a division of the global tech company TK Elevator, Flow X is a transformative, technologically advanced mobility solution that – in a first for the market – is as visually appealing as it is life-enhancingly functional.

For most design studios, designing a stairlift is far from the top of their to-do list – but that's precisely what attracted Pearson Lloyd to the project. Today's design world focuses on the creation of attention-grabbing, marketing-driven products,



rather than solving real-life problems. As a result, aesthetic and user-centered innovation in less glamorous product categories such as medical and mobility tends to come slowly, if at all. A stairlift is a product of necessity, not aspiration. Few people actively want a stairlift in their home so, historically, few studios have wanted to design one.



The innovative folding mechanism at the centre of Pearson Lloyd's design both enhances the ergonomic function and reduces the impact Flow X has in the home of discerning customers.

The Flow X design is the result of Access BDD's international competition to find a design team to create the next generation of stairlift. As the winning agency, Pearson Lloyd saw opportunities both for user-centered design and to aesthetically reinvent an overlooked product, hoping to overcome the wider stigma attached to the stairlift by both designers and consumers.



# Pearson Lloyd

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Pearson Lloyd's furniture design experience ensured sensitive integration of technology into a market-leading ergonomic experience. The innovative armrests include a pre-programmed emergency call button linked to a household or mobile phone.

By showing the innovation possible in a neglected category, Pearson Lloyd and Access BDD hope to convince the design community to shift their focus from high-profile designs towards products with real-world positive impact.





A first for the sector, Pearson Lloyd's Flow X stairlift has a domestic materiality more suited to the home environment, including a laminated timber backrest, ensuring it sits comfortably alongside familiar 20th century furniture designs.

## Putting the user first

The result of 10 years of research, design and development, Flow X is comfortable, intuitive and easy to use, with an elegant ergonomic design that is simply not found in comparable products. Patented ASL (Advanced Swivel Levelling) technology ensures the seat and footrest rotate together, maintaining optimal distances between the chair and the staircase and enabling the user to get on and off without twisting their body. A unique folding mechanism (with automatic and manual options) at the heart of the design means that the chair takes up minimal space on the stairs when not in use, and, importantly, allows the user to park the stairlift without bending the back and knees.





The new Flow X stairlift designed by Pearson Lloyd for Access achieves an elegantly compact footprint in homes where design is primary consideration.

Flow X's innovative arms unfold to provide support for sitting and standing, and can unfold fully to allow easy side access from a wheelchair. All user-operated controls are located on the arms, which rotate from an elevated yoke attached to the chair's central spine and curved, supportive backrest. The resultant space beneath the arms allows freedom of the legs and hips while the user is seated.

The controls have been designed to be as simple and intuitive as possible. The unique joystick is easily manipulated by any part of the hand or wrist, and the buttons and indicator lights have been carefully placed to be visible and operable in any position. Flow X also incorporates a built-in call function that allows three phone numbers to be programmed in, enabling users to contact family, friends and medical/care teams. They can also answer incoming calls while the chair is moving.





The intuitive controls of Flow X are handily placed on 180-degree foldable arms that allow wheelchair users easy access from either side of the stairlift.

## Changing minds, improving lives

Like many mobility and medical products, stairlifts have historically been heavily engineered solutions, with little priority given to design, aesthetics or comfort. This has often resulted in a poor user experience that has discouraged the less able-bodied from installing stairlifts until the need has become unavoidable – usually after repeated falls and injuries. Often, individuals prefer to give up the family home and move to single-level living spaces rather than stomach the stigma of a stairlift.

By focusing on the user experience and optimising what is possible from an engineering perspective, Pearson Lloyd and Access BDD have created a product that people needn't be ashamed to install in their homes, enabling them to retain their independence and stay there longer. Given that remaining in one's own home statistically produces better longevity outcomes and quality of life than going into



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care, anything that can be done to increase the acceptability of stairlifts is hugely beneficial.



With Flow X, Pearson Lloyd have designed a modern stairlift for the 21st century home.

The population of adults aged 60 and over is growing rapidly, and will soon exceed that of under-fives. With a new generation of discerning, design-aware, tech-literate seniors on the rise, Flow X is one of the first stairlift products designed specifically to meet the physical and emotional needs of this increasingly independent audience.

*"At Pearson Lloyd, we accepted the challenge to design the next generation chairlift as we saw that it was a product category that deserves the highest level of design thinking. Mobility solutions are unfairly overlooked by the design community, but with Flow X we hope to destigmatise the sector with an empathetic and contemporary approach to ergonomics and user-interface design. Our approach drew from our extensive experience rethinking the home, the office and aviation seating over the last two decades. Here, we are designing for our future selves."*

– Luke Pearson, cofounder of Pearson Lloyd



## Notes to editors

### **Red Dot of the Red Dot Award: Product Design 2021**

Pearson Lloyd's product variant, the S200 for TK Home Solutions BV, has been awarded 'Red Dot of the Red Dot Award: Product Design 2021'. Featuring the same design, structural platform and innovations as Flow X, S200 was packaged for a separate market with a different aesthetic, trim and finish offer. The award recognises over five years of design development, the patented Advanced Swivel Levelling system, technological advances and unrivalled ergonomics.

### **Pearson Lloyd**

Founded in East London in 1997 by Luke Pearson and Tom Lloyd, the design office Pearson Lloyd works with manufacturers, brands and public bodies to identify and build products, spaces and services that respond to the challenges of the day and enhance our experience of the world. Their philosophy of 'Making Design Work' emphasises the studio's passion for the act of making functional, beautiful and efficient solutions that serve equally the needs of their clients, their users and society.

[pearsonlloyd.com](https://pearsonlloyd.com)

[instagram.com/pearsonlloyd](https://instagram.com/pearsonlloyd)

**Access BDD** has been supplying stairlifts from its location in Teesside since 1976, when the company was founded as Project and Design, manufacturing the Stair-El stairlift for private customers and local authorities. Since 1999, Access BDD has been part of the global technology giant TK Elevator, and today, as the reseller division of TK Access Ltd, supplies a network of partners across the globe with stairlifts, platform lifts and home lifts.

[accessbdd.com](https://accessbdd.com)

**TK Elevator** has established itself as one of the world's leading elevator companies with a product portfolio comprising elevators for residential and commercial buildings, innovative and highly customised solutions for state-of-the-art skyscrapers, escalators and moving walks, passenger boarding bridges, and stair and platform lifts. With digital offerings including the integrated cloud-based service solution MAX Platform, there are no limits to urban mobility. TKE – move beyond.

[tkelevator.com](https://tkelevator.com)