



Reasonable Adjustments Policy

1. Aim of policy

We are committed to ensuring that disabled people are not disadvantaged in accessing our services. This policy is intended to provide guidance on meeting individual needs covered by the Equality Act (2010) through offering appropriate adjustments. It is also to ensure we continue to deliver high standards in customer service, meet customers' needs and align these standards with those set out in our Equality and Diversity and Inclusion Framework.

The aim of the policy is to;

1. Confirm our commitment to improving accessibility for all of our customers.
2. Set out the principles of our commitment to provide reasonable adjustments for customers who require them
3. Details what factors we will take into account when dealing with requests for reasonable adjustments

2. Scope of policy

We are committed to maintaining a high standard of accessibility to our services for all customers. We ensure our approach embraces all customers who have a mental or physical impairment as defined by the act as follows:

“If he or she has a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (S6(1))”

We can provide reasonable adjustments in circumstances which are not defined as a disability according to the Equality Act but will make services accessible to customers with special need or circumstance.

Whilst it is not possible to list all such circumstances, below is a list of some examples:

- Providing translation or interpreting services for customers whose first language is not English
- Providing additional support for customers with literacy problems; provision of auxiliary aids
- Provision of information in appropriate alternative formats (eg large print, Braille, coloured paper etc)
- Extension of time limits (where it is lawful to do so)
- Use of email or telephone in preference to hard copy letter
- Use of plain English or Easy Read service
- Communication through a representative or intermediary
- Rest or comfort breaks in meetings

3. Policy statement

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) provides a legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and to advance equality of opportunity for all. We commit to comply with the provisions for public bodies under the Act.

Under the Act the legal duty to make reasonable adjustments arises in three circumstances:

1. When changing a policy, procedure or any standard practices
2. Where a physical feature puts a disabled customer at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with customers who are not disabled
3. Where a disabled person, without the provision of an additional aid or service, would be put at a substantial disadvantage* in comparison with customers who are not disabled

*Substantial disadvantage is defined in the Equality Act 2010 s.212(1) as 'more than minor or trivial'

4. Policy

A Reasonable Adjustment is a legal term described in the Equality Act (2010). It means that we have a duty to make reasonable adjustments where it's working practices (including policies and procedures) or physical premises put a disabled customer at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with customers who are not disabled.

It is not possible to produce an exhaustive list of reasonable adjustments since an adjustment can only be determined as reasonable or not in relation to a specific set of circumstances.

However, the Equality Act's Code of Practice suggests that, when deciding whether an adjustment is reasonable, the following issues should be considered:

1. The effectiveness of an adjustment in preventing or reducing the disadvantage for the disabled person – for example, the adjustment should be designed to fully address the disadvantage it is meant to overcome
2. The practicability of the adjustment – for example, it may not be necessary or practical to have a wheelchair accessible toilet on every floor of an office, providing that at least one such toilet is available to wheelchair users
3. The financial and other costs of any adjustment – for example, if a customer requests higher specification of an aid or adaptation than the standard item issued, as long as the standard item will perform the same task – it may be reasonable to refuse on grounds of cost, provided the alternative is suitable
4. The extent of the disruption caused – for example, it would not be practical for a staff member to devote all of their time to one customer, as other customers would inevitably suffer
5. The availability of financial or other assistance – for example, a grant for funding may be available to supplement any adjustment needed.

We will take the following approach;

1. Ask – don't assume. Remember that many disabilities or special needs are not necessarily visible or obvious. Therefore, we should ask our customers routinely whether they need additional support. We don't need to be intrusive –we should explain how we would normally deal with an issue the person has raised and then ask: "Do you need any additional support, for example because of a disability or other special circumstance?" That leaves the way open for the person to tell you as much or as little as he or she chooses about the circumstance whilst still requesting the support they need.

2. Listen. Most customers with disabilities or special needs will know what support they need and will tell you how you can help them. Try to meet their request where it is reasonable to do so.
3. Be flexible. Customers in similar sets of circumstances may have different ways of dealing with them – just because people have a similar disability, it does not mean that they will require the same support.

5. Statutory requirements

The policy is being introduced as a supplement to the Equality and Diversity Policy to ensure we meet the Housing Ombudsman Service Guidance which states
Landlords must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and may need to adapt normal policies, procedures, or processes to accommodate an individual's needs.
Landlords must satisfy themselves that their policy sets out how they will respond to reasonable adjustments requests in line with the Equality Act and that complaints handlers have had appropriate training to deal with such requests.

6. Related policies

Equality and Diversity Policy

7. Monitor and review process

The Policy will be reviewed annually in conjunction with the Equality and Diversity Policy and monitored in accordance with the Equality and diversity Policy

8. References/appendices

The Equality Act 2010 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

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