

Reasonable Adjustments Policy

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1.0 Overview

- 1.1 The Council is committed to providing excellent customer service.
- 1.2 One of the Council's values is to be "Caring and Compassionate". To achieve this the Council strives to be sensitive to the different needs and circumstances of all of our residents and will make reasonable adjustments to ensure our services are accessible to all.

2.0 Scope of the policy

- 2.1 This policy outlines what a reasonable adjustment is and how the Council will action these requests when received to ensure we are compliant with Equality and Diversity legislation and regulations.
- 2.2 This policy does not seek to explain how we will approach every situation, it is intended to be a general statement of our policy. This policy is designed to:
 - confirm the Councils commitment to improving accessibility for everybody that it deals with
 - set out some of the basic principles of our legal duty to provide reasonable adjustments for people
 - set out the factors that we will consider in dealing with requests for reasonable adjustments

3.0 What is a reasonable adjustment?

3.1 A reasonable adjustment involves making a change to the way that we usually do things to ensure that we are fair to all of our residents. This may involve departing from our usual practice in the way we do things if we find that the current position places a person at a substantial disadvantage. For example, we may:

- Allow more time for someone to respond or provide information.
- Make sure our buildings do not present obstacles for disabled people, for instance by providing lifts or ground floor meeting rooms or offer a suitable alternative location.
- Provide specialist equipment or additional support.

3.2 Where appropriate we will discuss the requirements with the individual concerned and seek to reach agreement on what may be reasonable in the circumstances.

3.3 Under the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

3.4 Under the Act, the Council have a duty to make reasonable adjustments in the following three circumstances:

- Where a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.
- Where a physical feature puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.
- Where a disabled person would, but for the provision of an auxiliary aid, be put at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.

Where any of the above circumstances apply, the Council must take such steps which are reasonable to either avoid the disadvantage or to provide the auxiliary aid.

3.5 The Equality Act does not define what is "reasonable" but guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission suggests that the most relevant factors are:

- Whether the adjustment will help the individual to overcome the disadvantage they have
- The adjustment should be designed to fully address the disadvantage it is meant to overcome, for example providing a meeting room which is accessible by wheelchair may not properly overcome the barriers faced by the wheelchair user if there are no disabled toilet facilities also available.
- Whether it is practical to provide the adjustment

- What the resource implications of making the adjustment are; how much it will cost and whether this is proportionate to the adjustment being requested

4.0 Requesting a reasonable adjustment

4.1 We will let the residents know that we can provide reasonable adjustments, for example by:

- Including wording on our published documents indicating that we can provide the document in an alternative format on request.
- Publishing this policy on our website; and
- Working with key representative groups and others to raise awareness of this policy.
- Promoting the policy to housing tenants e.g. at getting to know you visits and in tenant's newsletters.

4.2 Requests for a reasonable adjustment can be made via any of our contact channels including directly to our staff.

4.3 The requested adjustments will always be discussed with the individual.

5.0 Types of reasonable adjustments we can offer

5.1 There is no prescribed list of reasonable adjustments; the adjustment will depend on the individual's needs. We will discuss the requirements with the person concerned and seek to reach agreement on what may be reasonable in the circumstances. We will not make assumptions about whether a disabled person requires any reasonable adjustments or about what those adjustments should be. Some examples of the reasonable adjustments we can make are:

- Offer additional support to residents with temporary or enhanced needs. These can include those with visual or speech impairment and varying degrees of memory problems.
- Provide support in different formats e.g. large print or coloured paper.
- Provide information in a format that meets their requirements.
- Provide a variety of communication channel options e.g. face to face visits.
- Signpost to additional support services.
- Identify and carry out adaptations (i.e. make physical changes).
- Provide support with accessing disabled aids and equipment.
- Support with financial matters. including Welfare Benefits.
- Work with advocates or representatives who are supporting individuals

6.0 How do we decide what is reasonable?

6.1 In most cases, we will be able to agree and deliver the required reasonable adjustments with a minimum of delay. In some cases, we may need a conversation

with the resident to consider in more detail how best to overcome the difficulties the resident may be experiencing. For example, where the adjustment requested may be difficult to provide or where it may interfere with our statutory or regulatory obligations.

6.2 The Equality Act does not define what is ‘reasonable’ but guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission Suggest that the most relevant factors are:

- The effectiveness of the adjustment(s) in preventing or reducing the disadvantage for the disabled person
- The practicality of us making the adjustments
- The availability of our resources including external assistance and finance
- Any disruption to the service that making the adjustment may cause.

6.3 In some circumstances the Council will be unable to make the adjustment as it is not ‘reasonable’, for example where the cost of the adjustment is not practical. In such circumstances the Council will inform the resident as to why this is the case and discuss with the resident alternative options.

7.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

7.1 The Council will record and monitor the reasonable adjustments that have been requested and made. The timescales of the review will be decided on a case-by-case basis. This will allow us to review the services we provide and help us identify whether there are any wider steps that we can take to improve our services.

7.2 The anonymised information will be published on our on our website.

7.3 An annual report of any requests relating to housing services, will be considered by the Housing Assurance Board.

8.0 Review

8.1 The Policy is to be reviewed every two years or in response to changes in relevant legislation and or other Newark and Sherwood District Council policies, procedures and agreements.

8.2 This Policy has been reviewed alongside guidance from the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Approval, Consultation and Review Timetable

Document title	Reasonable Adjustments Policy		
Version number	DRAFT v.1 – replaces 1 February 2022 policy	Protective marking	Official

Lead Director	Director Customer Services and Organisational Development		
Lead Business Unit	Customer Services		
Lead Contact	Customer Services Business Manager		
Date approved (SLT)	14 May 2024	Date approved (Members)	3 July 2024 portfolio holder decision
Reviews due:	July 2026		
Consultation			
Consultee	Date	Comments received	Material change requested (yes/no)
Involved tenants	June 2024	Yes	No