

Wythenshawe Community Housing Group Reasonable Adjustment Statement

WCHG is committed to providing excellent customer services and to ensuring that we better understand and meet the needs and requirements of our residents. We aim to do this by facilitating fair and equal access to our services. Where necessary or appropriate we will make reasonable adjustments if it will help our residents to access these services.

This statement does not seek out to explain how we will approach every situation, it is intended as a general statement of our approach by:

- confirming our commitment to improving accessibility for everybody that we deal with
- setting out some of the basic principles of our commitments to providing reasonable adjustments
- setting out the factors we will take into account when dealing with requests for reasonable adjustments

Many of the arrangements that we offer people with health conditions or disabilities can also be made available for those without. For example, provision of documents in larger font than our usual font.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 provides a legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and to advance equality of opportunity for all. Under the Act the legal duty to make reasonable adjustments arises in three circumstances:

- where there is a provision, criterion or practice which puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter 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 (substantial disadvantage is defined in the Equality Act 2010 s.212(1) as 'more than minor or trivial')

What is a reasonable adjustment?

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 customers. This may involve:

- departing from our usual practice in the way we do things, if we find that the current position places that person at a substantial disadvantage, for instance by allowing more time than we usually would for someone to respond or provide information; or

- providing specialist equipment or additional support, such as a sign language interpreter for a meeting or event; or
- making sure our buildings do not present obstacles for disabled people, for instance by providing a lift or ground level meeting rooms.

Requesting reasonable adjustments

We will let people know that they can request reasonable adjustments in the following ways:

- by including a paragraph in written communications
- by asking whether a reasonable adjustment might be required over the telephone
- by publishing this statement on our website
- by working with key representative groups and others to raise awareness that we can make reasonable adjustments

Types of reasonable adjustments we can offer

There is no prescribed list of reasonable adjustments; the adjustment will depend on an 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 adjustments that we can make include:

- the provision of auxiliary aids
- the provision of information in appropriate alternative formats e.g. large print, Braille, coloured paper
- the reasonable extension of time limits e.g. to request the escalation of a complaint
- the provision of correspondence in a larger font size
- the use of email or the telephone in preference to hard copy letters where appropriate which may assist those with a visual impairment
- speaking clearly to our customers with the offer of additional time to cover the issues they need to discuss
- using plain English appropriate to the person we are dealing with and avoiding jargon
- arranging meetings in rooms that have appropriate facilities
- rest and comfort breaks in meetings
- communicating with people through their representative if requested and approved by them
- arranging home visits for those who have particular mobility difficulties
- communicating with people through their representative (whether or not this is a legal representative) or advocate, if requested and approved by them

How do we determine what is reasonable?

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:

- the effectiveness of the adjustment(s) in preventing or reducing the disadvantage for the individual
- 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

Effectiveness

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.

Practicality

It may not be possible for us to provide additional time to customers for example if there are legislative deadlines to meet.

Resources

For an adjustment to be reasonable, it should be effective. However, it is important to remember that an adjustment which is deemed effective, may not be considered reasonable. For example, resourcing is not just about the cost, but it may involve other factors for example recruiting additional staff with specific skills. We will need to decide if any resource implications are proportionate to the adjustment being requested.

In the majority of cases we will be able to agree and deliver the required reasonable adjustment with a minimum of delay. In some cases, we may need to consider in more detail how best to overcome the difficulty a disabled person is experiencing, for example, where the adjustment requested may be difficult to provide or where it may interfere with our statutory or regulatory obligations. We may seek advice from expert disability organisations that can assist with signposting and other forms of support.

The adjustments will always be agreed with the person concerned to avoid making incorrect assumptions about a person's needs.

Monitoring

We will record and monitor the reasonable adjustments that have been requested and made. 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.