

# Reasonable Adjustment Policy



Directorate: Communities

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## Document Information

### Scope:

At Salix Homes we are committed to ensuring our services can be accessed by customers with disabilities and/ or other additional needs.

The policy defines what a 'reasonable adjustment' is, in what type of circumstances they will be carried out and how a request for a reasonable adjustment can be made.

This policy does not aim to explain how we will approach every circumstance where a customer with disabilities requires a service to be adjusted. It is a general statement of our commitment to ensure customer with disabilities are not at a disadvantage when accessing our services.

This policy applies to all Salix Homes customers.

### Service Standards / Performance Measures / Corporate Strategy:

- Number and type of reasonable adjustments made by service
- Number of reasonable adjustments refused by reason
- Number of appeals and outcomes

### Risks:

#### Failure to deliver effective customer service – Executive Director of Customers and Communities

Failure to respond effectively to the needs of our customers –

- Reasonable adjustments policy in place
- Clear policy and procedure in place for vulnerable customers to ensure we respond to their needs effectively and efficiently.

### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:

Salix Homes is committed to promoting and embedding a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) within our workplaces and the communities we serve.

## Document Information

- Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents;
- Diversity is recognising difference and responding positively to those differences;
- Inclusion is about creating an environment where our services and employment opportunities are accessible to all.

We are committed to meeting our obligations and duties under the Equality Act 2010 and to promoting equal opportunities both in the provision of services and in our employment practices. We will consider all the protected characteristics of the Act which are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity

We also recognise that Socioeconomic background is an area where inequalities exist and commit to addressing this disadvantage and inequality in our communities where able to do so.

We are also mindful of our duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty, which is to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Where reasonable to do so, Salix Homes will make any reasonable adjustment to ensure compliance with the Act.

### Related Policy/Procedure & Documents:

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy  
 Equipment and Adaptations Policy  
 Vulnerable Customers Policy  
 Tenancy Management Policy  
 Lettings Policy  
 Anti-Social Behaviour, Hate Crime and Domestic Abuse Policy  
 Tenancy Sustainment Policy  
 Income Management Policy

Document Information
<p>Tenancy Audit Policy Repairs Policy</p>
<p><b>Related Legislation / Relevant Regulation:</b></p> <p>Equality Act 2010 RSH Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code 2020</p>
<p><b>Retention &amp; Legal Basis for Storage:</b></p> <p>Records on a reasonable adjustments agreed for customers will be kept for the lifetime of the tenancy and will be updated on a minimum of a three year basis as part of the Tenancy Audit process and more regularly where a customer requests a service from us.</p> <p>Salix Homes process reasonable adjustment data and records under the following purposes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal Obligation: Processing is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation.</li> <li>• Consent: Consent of the data subject.</li> <li>• Necessary for Contract: Processing is necessary for the performance of a contract with the data subject or to take steps to enter into a contract.</li> <li>• Official Authority / Public Interest: Processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stakeholders:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colleagues</li> <li>• Tenants</li> <li>• Leaseholders</li> <li>• Housing applicants</li> </ul>
<p><b>Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)</b> <i>All documents that include any involvement with personal data should complete a DPIA <b>prior</b> to completion and ideally before drafting.</i></p> <p><i>This section should include details of when the DPIA was completed, by whom and where the summary can be found. If no DPIA was required, enter the reason here.</i></p>
<p><b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b> <i>All customer facing and employee-based documents should complete an EIA <b>prior</b> to completion and ideally before drafting.</i></p> <p><i>This section should include details of when the EIA was completed, by whom and where the summary can be found. If no EIA was required, enter the reason here.</i></p>

## Introduction

1. This policy has been written in accordance with our duties and commitments under the Equality Act 2010.
2. Additionally, the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard, requires us to "provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of (our) tenants" and to "demonstrate that (we) understand the different needs of tenants, including in relation to the equality strands and tenants with additional support needs."
3. We are committed to making sure our services can be easily accessed by customers with disabilities and/or additional needs.
4. This policy does not aim to explain how we will approach every circumstance where a customer with disabilities requires a service to be adjusted. It is a general statement of our commitment to ensure customer with disabilities are not at a disadvantage when accessing our services.
5. The policy defines what a 'reasonable adjustment' is, in what type of circumstances they will be carried out and how a request for a reasonable adjustment can be made.
6. Many of the adjustments we offer to our services can also be made available to our customers without disabilities.
7. As part of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, all staff receive training that is specifically aimed at promoting diversity and addressing barriers that individuals from protected groups (including disability) may face when accessing our services.

## The Equality Act 2010

8. Under the Equality Act 2010 (The Act) a person is considered as having a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long term' negative effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
9. The Act provides a legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and to advance equality of opportunity for all. Under the Act, we have a legal duty to make adjustments in the following three circumstances:
  - Where there is a provision, criterion or practice which puts a person with a disability at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled.
  - Where a physical feature puts a person with a disability at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled
  - Where a person with a disability would, but for the provision of an auxiliary aid, be put at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.

### What is a reasonable adjustment?

10. A reasonable adjustment is a change to the way we usually do things to take account of a customer's individual needs. This could be a physical alteration to one of our homes or premises, for example, fitting a lift, wide doors or a ramp, it could be a change to one of our policies, procedures or services or a change in how we communicate with someone.
11. In all circumstances, the reasonable adjustment is being made to ensure all of our services can be equally accessed by customers with disabilities, as well as those who do not.

### Types of reasonable adjustment we can offer

12. 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.
13. Some examples of the adjustments that we can make include:
  - Assistive aids e.g. magnifiers for reading, audio newsletters, grab rails
  - Adaptations to a customer's home such as wide doors, ramps or fitting a lift.
  - Information in appropriate alternative formats (eg large print, Braille, coloured paper etc.)
  - Use of email or telephone in preference to hard copy letters
  - Use of plain English or Easy Read service
  - Communication through a representative or intermediary
  - Speaking clearly to our customers with the offer of additional time to cover the issues they need to discuss.
  - Providing an interpreter (including sign language) when appropriate
  - Arranging home visits for those who have particular mobility difficulties.
  - Providing services or appointment times to take account of medical needs or special circumstances.

### Requesting a reasonable adjustment

14. We will let people know that we can provide reasonable adjustments in the following ways:
  - Asking whether a reasonable adjustment might be required over the telephone.
  - Publishing our policy on our website.
  - Including a note on our published documents and letters indicating that we can provide a documents in an alternative format on request.
  - Identify where reasonable adjustments may be required when we are delivering services to you or carrying out home visits.
15. A reasonable adjustment can be requested from us in the following ways:
  - In writing, explaining what the adjustment is and why it is needed. This can be done by letter or email.

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- By telephoning our Customer Service Centre.
  - By referral from a local authority or other relevant agency.
  - By a family member when we have been given permission for them to do so.
  - A member of staff may suggest for one to be made, when they are aware it will support the customer's needs.
16. In most cases we will be able to agree and deliver the required reasonable adjustment with a minimum of delay. However, in some cases it may be necessary for us to consider in more detail how best to overcome the difficulty a customer with disabilities is experiencing and/or seek advice from expert disability organisations that can assist with signposting and other forms of support.

## Deciding what is reasonable

17. 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 disadvantage for the disabled person.
  - The practicality of us making the adjustments.
  - The availability of resources including external assistance and finance.
  - Any disruption to the service that making the adjustment may cause.
18. **Effectiveness** - The adjustment should be designed to fully address the disadvantage it is meant to overcome. For example, providing an audio version of documents may not properly overcome the barriers faced by the disabled person if there are other requirements that need to be overcome, for example the customer also has a hearing impairment.
19. **Practicality** - For example it may not be possible for to widen doors in a customer's home if there isn't the space to do so.
20. **Resources** - For an adjustment to be reasonable, it should be effective. However, it is important to remember that is 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. If an adjustment costs a significant amount, it may not be reasonable to make the adjustment if the organisation does not have the money to do so.
21. **Disruption to services** – For example, it would not usually be reasonable for a member of staff to devote all of their time or a disproportionate amount of time to one person or case as others will inevitably suffer. The amount of extra time provided must therefore be 'reasonable' in all the circumstances.
22. The reasonableness of an adjustment will be evaluated against the resource available to our services. In practice many reasonable adjustments involve little or no cost or additional resourcing requirements and are relatively easy to implement.
23. In the unlikely event that a reasonable adjustment is not able to be made, we will work with the customer to find the most appropriate alternative solution.

### Keeping a record of the customer's needs

24. At the beginning of a customer's tenancy, they will be asked whether they have any support needs and/or any communication preferences.
25. These will be recorded onto our customer contact system and will be used in order to meet the customer's specific needs throughout the duration of their tenancy. We will use appropriate flags on our customer contact system.
26. We will proactively keep this information up to date for the duration of the tenancy by;
  - Checking when a customer calls the customer service centre to request a service.
  - Checking when we visit a customer or deliver a service to a customer.
  - Carrying out periodic tenancy audits.

### Reasonable adjustment to our complaints process

27. We will make reasonable adjustments to our complaints service where necessary to ensuring customers with a disability are not at a disadvantage when accessing the service.
28. Examples of reasonable adjustments we will make are;
  - Using the customer's communication preference through out the complaint.
  - We will not request a complaint be made in writing where this prevents a barrier or disadvantage to the customer due to their disability or additional needs.
  - Extension of any time limits (where it is lawful to do so).
  - Provide information in alternative formats (Braille, large print, coloured paper).

### Appeals

29. If a customer is dissatisfied with the arrangements or decision we have made regarding a reasonable adjustment, we will respond in accordance with our Complaints Policy.
30. If necessary when reviewing our decision, we will seek advice from specific expert disability groups.