



Lancaster City Council

Housing and Property: Council Housing

Reasonable Adjustments Policy

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1. Introduction & Policy Objectives
2. Scope
3. Legislation, Regulatory Standards & Approved Codes of Practice
4. Defining Reasonable Adjustments
5. When is an Adjustment Reasonable?
6. Types of Reasonable Adjustments Offered
7. Requesting a Reasonable Adjustment
8. Vulnerable Tenants
9. Financial Considerations
10. Monitoring
11. Related Policies
12. Review

1. Introduction & Policy Objectives

- 1.1. This Policy details how we'll carry out our legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities. We are committed to ensuring all our customers have equal access to our services whatever their circumstances and one of the ways we do this is through reasonable adjustments to remove barriers or reduce any disadvantage.
- 1.2. The objective of this policy is to set out Council Housing's definition of 'reasonable', provide an overview of the types of adjustments we will consider and how customers can request a reasonable adjustment.
- 1.3. It is not practical or reasonable to cover every scenario in which a reasonable adjustment may be considered within this policy, but we are committed to considering and adjusting services where appropriate, on a case-by-case basis in a sensitive, confidential and person-centred way that ensures every customer is treated fairly and with dignity.

2. Scope

- 2.1. The policy applies to all customers and residents of Lancaster City Council - Council Housing, irrespective of tenure. It does not apply to staff.

3. Legislation, Regulatory Standards & Approved Codes of Practice.

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Housing Ombudsman's Code of Practice
- Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England 2015

4. Defining Reasonable Adjustments

- 4.1. A 'reasonable adjustment' is a legal term defined by the Equality Act 2010: 'To make an adjustment to make a physical change to premises or to change work practices to avoid or correct the disadvantage to a person with a disability'.
- 4.2. We use the definition of a disability set out in the Equality Act 2010. This clarifies you're disabled if you have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- 4.3. The Equality Act covers some impairments automatically, even if you have no symptoms. The term disability includes hidden disabilities. These are disabilities with no physical signs and include learning difficulties and mental health conditions.

5. When is an Adjustment Reasonable?

- 5.1. 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 disabled person
 - The practicality of making the adjustment(s)
 - The availability of resources including external assistance and finance
 - Any disruption to the service that making the adjustment may cause.

- 5.2. In practice many reasonable adjustments involve little or no cost or additional resourcing requirements and are easy to implement. In the circumstances where we are unable to make a reasonable adjustment, we will work together with the customer to find the most appropriate alternative solution for them.
- 5.3. In changing policies, criteria or practices we are not required to change the basic nature of the service we offer but where there are lessons to be learnt about how we strengthen our approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, we will commit to embedding these where practically possible.

6. Types of Reasonable Adjustments Offered

- 6.1. There is no defined list of reasonable adjustments as the adjustment required will depend on the needs of the individual. We will discuss the requirements with the person concerned and will seek to reach an 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 they should be, and will instead have sensitive and confidential discussions when required.
- 6.2. Below provides a summary of the types of adjustments that may be reasonable. This list is not exhaustive, and staff are empowered to use their discretion to find an appropriate solution.
 - Provision of information in appropriate alternative formats (eg large print, Braille, coloured paper, Easy Read etc)
 - Extension of time limits (where it is lawful and practical to do so)
 - Using the customers preferred type of communication (eg email or letter)
 - Communication through a representative or intermediary
 - Rest or comfort breaks in meetings.
 - Carrying out small repairs that would ordinarily be a resident's responsibility but may be challenging for an individual to complete, due to their circumstances. This could include replacing batteries in a smoke alarm, for example.

7. Requesting a Reasonable Adjustment

- 7.1. Customers can request a reasonable adjustment at any time when contacting us. It is both encouraged and recommended that we should be made aware of the request as soon as possible so that we may deal with the request in the most effective way. It is not necessary to put the request in writing but there may be times where we ask for further information or supporting evidence to action a request.
- 7.2. Staff will, where appropriate, proactively discuss and ask whether any reasonable adjustments are required. This may be over the phone, through letter or e-mail or during an in-person visit.
- 7.3. We will treat all conversations with sensitivity, confidentiality and on a case-by-case basis. We will listen to a customer's needs and make every effort to meet requests for adjustments when it's reasonable to do so. Where we are unable to meet a request, we will explain why.

8. Vulnerable Tenants

- 8.1. If a customer is found to have vulnerabilities, requests and considerations for reasonable adjustments will also take the Vulnerability Policy into consideration.

9. Financial Considerations

- 9.1. In deciding whether it is reasonable to approve a reasonable adjustment, staff will consider the value for money impact (such as resources or effective use of budgets) as a criterion to decide whether it's appropriate to approve the adjustment.
- 9.2. Adjustments that are costly and have limited impact on the customer and the situation that requires support, are unlikely to be approved.

10. Monitoring

- 10.1. The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed through feedback from the survey programme, complaints and from colleagues delivering services. Feedback from these sources, as well as our resident panel, will be used to shape and steer the next review of the policy

11. Related Policies

- 11.1. The following policies relate to reasonable adjustments:
- Vulnerable Tenants
 - Safeguarding Adults & Children
 - Adaptations
 - Allocations
 - Rent Policy
 - Repairs and Maintenance

12. Review

- 12.1. This policy will be reviewed in 2 years or sooner to address any legislative or regulatory changes. Or in response to any operational issues.