

Reasonable Adjustments Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

Apna Ghar HA (AGHA) is committed to ensuring that disabled people are not disadvantaged in accessing its services. To this end we will make reasonable adjustments for disabled people. The Equality Act 2010, protects the right of those with protected characteristic which includes disability. This policy does not seek to explain how we will approach every situation, it is intended as a general statement and:

- Confirms our commitment to improving accessibility for everybody that we deal with
- Sets out some of the basic principles of our commitment to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled people
- Sets out the factors that we will take into account in dealing with requests for reasonable adjustments.

Many of the arrangements that we offer for disabled people can also be made available for those who do not have disabilities. For example, provision of documents in larger font than our usual font.

This policy applies to all AGHA customers.

2. WHAT IS A REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT?

To make an adjustment means to make a physical change to premises or to change our work practices to remove, reduce or prevent the disadvantage to a person with a disability. Examples of this include:

- Allowing more time than we would usually for someone to provide information that we needed; or
- Providing specialist equipment or additional support such as a sign language interpreter for a workshop or event.

3. REQUESTING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Residents can ask for reasonable adjustments at any time. In order to fully and properly consider any reasonable adjustments, residents may be asked to provide supporting evidence of any substantial disadvantage or the nature of their disability that prevents them accessing our services fairly. Where information is not provided by a resident, this may limit or affect any adjustments that we can put in place. We will also let people know that we can provide reasonable adjustments for example in the following ways:

- By publishing our policy on our website
- By asking for and seeking representations from residents, any special provisions or adjustments that might be required e.g., over the phone or during the course of a case or at appointments
- By including offers of support in written communications (e.g., in letters and by asking residents in day-to-day discussions)

4. TYPES OF REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT WE CAN OFFER

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 adjustments that staff can make include:

- Provision of information in appropriate alternative formats (e.g. large print, Braille, coloured paper etc)
- Extension of time limits (where it is lawful and appropriate to do so)
- 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
- Rest or comfort breaks in meetings.

5. OUR RESPONSE TO REQUESTS FOR REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

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 or seek advice from expert disability organisations that can assist with signposting and other forms of support.

6. HOW DO WE DECIDE WHAT IS REASONABLE?

The Equality Act does not define what is 'reasonable' but policy 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 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 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.

Practicality

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

Resources

For an adjustment to be reasonable, it should be effective and remove or reduce the disadvantage that would otherwise exist. However, it is important to remember that an adjustment which is deemed effective, may not be considered reasonable to put in place /implement. 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 is more likely to be reasonable to make the adjustment if the organisation has substantial financial resources to implement the adjustment.

The reasonableness of an adjustment will be balanced against the resource available. In practice, many reasonable adjustments involve little or no cost or additional resourcing requirements and are relatively easy to implement.

In changing policies, criteria or practices we are not required to change the basic nature of the service we offer.

Potential Disruption to AGHA services and activities

For example, it would not usually be reasonable for a colleague to cease work on all other activities and devote all of their time to one person as others will inevitably suffer. The amount of extra time provided must therefore be 'reasonable' in all the circumstances.

7. MONITORING

We will record and monitor the reasonable adjustments (this will usually be on the casefile) 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.

8. DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS ABOUT OUR SERVICE

We are committed to provide a high standard of service, dealing with everyone in a way that is fair and free from discrimination. If a resident is dissatisfied with the arrangements, we have made for providing reasonable adjustments, or failed to make such adjustments, we will respond in accordance with our complaints policy. If necessary when reviewing our decision, we will seek expert advice, including any relevant legal advice.

9. REVIEW

This policy was reviewed and amended in December 2020. This policy will be reviewed every three years or more frequently to take account of changes in good practice and/or legislation. This policy will remain in force between any periods of review.

References and sources:

- Equality Act 2010
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
- Housing Ombudsman Service Policy and Reasonable Adjustment Policy