

Reasonable adjustment policy statement

Who's this for?	Customers
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Policy Owner	Executive Director of Customer Experience
Other related documents	Customer Care and Customer Resolution Policy Discretionary Compensation Policy and Procedure Vulnerable Customers Policy

1. Policy statement

At settle, we are committed to ensuring all our residents are able to access our services in a way that works for them. This includes making sure that disabled and vulnerable people are not disadvantaged in accessing our services. We will make any reasonable adjustments for our residents in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

This policy statement is not intended to describe how we will approach every situation, as we recognise that adjustments will need to be made on a case by case basis. Instead, the purpose of this statement is to provide a general overview of our commitment to improve accessibility for everyone that we deal with and:

- Set out some basic principles of our commitment to provide reasonable adjustments, including for disabled people; and
- Set out the factors that we will take into account in dealing with requests for reasonable adjustments.

The arrangements that we offer may not be limited to just those with recognised disabilities and can also in many cases be available for those who do not identify as disabled. We also recognise that we may need to make reasonable adjustments in other cases such as when English isn't a residents first language.

This policy statement applies to all our residents and any of their representatives.

What is a reasonable adjustment?

At settle, we understand making an adjustment to mean making a physical change to premises or to change work practices to avoid or correct any disadvantages. This can include, but not limited to:

- Providing specialist equipment or additional support such as hiring a language translator for a meeting and/or phone call;
- Providing communications in a wide range of forms, including braille and large font; and
- Allowing more time than our usual offer for someone to provide information that is needed.

The Equality Act 2010 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;
- 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.

Types of reasonable adjustment we can offer and our response

As we recognise that reasonable adjustments will need to be made on a case by case basis, we do not have a prescribed list of all reasonable adjustments that we will do.

Any reasonable adjustments will be decided with our residents and/or their representative to ensure that we have taken all the correct steps to avoid or correct the disadvantage.

Some examples of reasonable adjustments our colleagues can make include:

- Provision of information in appropriate alternative forms such as large print and coloured paper;
- Use of plain English;
- The ability to translate any of our webpages into numerous languages, supported by Google Translate on any page;
- Extension of time limits in providing us information or taking action [where is lawful to do so];
- Access to over the phone and written translator through our subscription to the Language Line Translation Service;
- Use of email or telephone in preference to hard copy letters;
- Meeting residents at their home or in their communities, rather than requesting they come into our office.

Current position:

We offer various reasonable adjustments, but do not currently centrally track these requests. Therefore, we are unaware on how we are performing in meeting these requests and also how we could use them to understand our resident base and its subsequent impact on their relationship with us.

We could benefit from further exploring reasonable adjustments to ensure we are able to provide a wider range of options and that we provide the support for colleagues to meet these.

Our focus will be creating a wider equality policy, including exploring greater options of reasonable adjustment and centrally tracking these requests; and familiarising our residents with our position and offering around reasonable adjustments.

2. Key principles

- Apply learnings from reasonable adjustments to improve our service offers.
- Never assume that someone needs a reasonable adjustment nor what that adjustment may be.
- Make reasonable adjustments on a case by case basis.
- Work with residents to find an outcome that works for them.
- Be easy to access, easy to deal with and flexible in our approach.
- Work in a way that is fair and free of any discriminations.

3. Objectives

- To meet our legal obligations as set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- Residents and their representatives are clear on our definitions of reasonable adjustments and how they can request them.
- Contribute to lowering our effort scores and increasing our trust scores.
- Colleagues are empowered to make reasonable adjustments for the best outcomes for our residents.

4. Policy actions

- Training for all colleagues around equality and diversity.
- Training for all front-line colleagues around reasonable adjustments and what steps we can take.
- Customer service training to ensure that all residents are treated with respect.
- Create an overarching Equality policy, that we will co-create with residents and colleagues for this policy to form part of.
- Record and monitor reasonable adjustments that have been requested and made, to help us understand our resident base, review the services that we provide and help identify opportunities that we can take to improve our services.
- Familiarise residents with our reasonable adjustments offer through:
 - A paragraph in our written communications, such as those sent around residents' rent accounts.
 - A note in our published documents that we can provide the document in an alternative format on request.
 - Publishing our policy on our website.
 - Working with key representative groups and others in our communities to raise awareness of this policy statement.
- Provide the required reasonable adjustment as quickly as possible.
- In cases where we may take a bit longer due to needing to consider in more detail what we can do to overcome the difficulty our resident may be facing we will keep in regular contact with the resident or their representative.
- Seek advice from expert disability or vulnerability organisations that can assist with signposting and other forms of support when appropriate.
- Offer appropriate support to customers, and work with recognised advocates, in line with General Data Protection Regulation to assist with the reading, understanding and completion of documentation and/or access.
- Respond in accordance with our complaints policy if a resident and/or their representative is dissatisfied with the arrangements we have made for providing reasonable adjustments. If necessary when reviewing our decision and seek advice from specific expert disability groups or seek legal advice.

5. Desired outcomes

- Customers can access our Reasonable Adjustments Policy easily and are clear on how to make a request and what to expect from us.
- Colleagues understand when and how to make reasonable adjustments.
- Colleagues understand the importance of why we make reasonable adjustments.
- We understand the diversity of our resident base.

6. Performance indicators

- Compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Compliance with the Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2020.
- 100% of reasonable adjustments made.
- 100% of reasonable adjustments requested and/or made logged.
- Effort score of ≤ 4 .
- Trust score of ≥ 7.2 .

7. Key legislation

- The Equality Act 2010
- The GDPR Act 2018
- Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2020

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years in line with any updated relevant legislation, or when there is a business need.