

Quick Guide

Reasonable Adjustments for Disability

Landlords

A Holistic Approach

Aim to provide a housing service that meets all your tenants' and residents' needs, and be aware that the law requires you to meaningfully consider disability. The law also protects disabled tenants from direct and indirect discrimination and victimisation, so you must make adjustments to make your services accessible to disabled people where reasonable

Planning Ahead



Anticipate and plan ahead for your tenants needs. You must anticipate and prepare in advance to meet the needs of disabled tenants - this is your 'anticipatory duty' - as well as meaningfully considering disability and making changes to your organisation's policies, procedures and physical environment where reasonable.

Communication

Communicate with your disabled tenants. Tell them about the support available. Ask them if they need adjustments or additional support. Treat and communicate with them as equals and do not try to impose support.

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Training

Provide staff training. Ensure that staff can support tenants with a range of impairments, including less visible/hidden disabilities. Do not make assumptions about disability or adjustments.

Aim to anticipate the need for adjustments and deal with reasonable adjustment requests in a polite, constructive and timely way as tenants may struggle to make requests and fear getting drawn into a dispute with their landlord over making them.



Landlords may become involved in difficulties with tenants through failure to acknowledge that a reasonable adjustment is necessary. For example, some disabled tenants may require communication in writing rather than by phone for reasons of disability. They may need longer notice of appointment times than is normally offered. Instead of such tenants being perceived as 'awkward' or 'difficult', they should be seen as making a reasonable request.



Housing associations also often adopt an overly legalistic approach. This is not necessary and is often counter-productive. It is enough to ensure that staff fully understand your policies and procedures. An understanding of the law is helpful, especially that relating to reasonable adjustments and the Equality Act 2010 disability equality duty.



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An understanding of the law is needed only insofar as it helps prevent discrimination against disabled tenants and residents, not to the extent that a legal practitioner would know the law.

Tenant, Resident and Staff Involvement

Take practical steps to involve tenants, residents, and staff with disabilities in how your organization manages disability issues. The cost of the reasonable adjustment cannot be imposed on the recipient, it must be borne by the landlord. Adjusting for your tenants' and residents' needs will improve relations, compliance with disability equality legislation, and performance.

SHAC

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