



Customer Accessibility and Vulnerability Statement

Aspire is committed to ensuring that all customers have equal access to our services and will treat all customers with fairness, dignity and respect.

We offer a substantial amount of additional support and respond with flexibility to customers experiencing circumstances (potentially temporarily) that may increase their vulnerability and affect their ability to manage their tenancy. However, we recognise the need for further improvement, particularly in ensuring a consistent approach by equipping our colleagues with the necessary information, understanding, and tools to effectively address the needs of vulnerable customers.

In preparing this statement, we have had in mind the Housing Ombudsman's definition of vulnerability in the context of housing complaints (in its report 'Spotlight on: Attitudes, respect and rights - Relationship of Equals produced in January 2024') as: "A dynamic circumstance which arises from a combination of a resident's personal circumstances, characteristics and their housing complaint. Vulnerability may be exacerbated when a social landlord or the Housing Ombudsman Service does not act with appropriate levels of care when dealing with a resident's complaint... if effective reasonable adjustments have been put in place, the vulnerability may be reduced".

Therefore, we appreciate that levels of vulnerability can be affected by many things, but that housing and housing services are potential factors.

Our aim is to:

- **Understand Needs:** We will endeavour to understand and capture the circumstances of customers and prospective customers.
- **Accessible Services:** Strive to make our services as accessible as possible and understand and comply with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- **Training Our Team:** Continue to train and support our colleagues so they have the knowledge to respond appropriately.
- **Alternatives:** We understand that one size does not fit all and will endeavour to modify and tailor our services where possible/appropriate to do so.

Reasonable Adjustments

We can have a legal duty to consider reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010. Reasonable adjustments are changes or alterations made, or auxiliary aids provided to address disadvantages that would otherwise face people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, including those with a disability.

Although the Equality Act 2010 does not specifically define what ‘reasonable’ means, the guidance suggests the relevant factors are:

- How effective the adjustment is at preventing or reducing a person being disadvantaged because of their disability (either generally or for a particular customer or service user).
- The practicality of us making the adjustment, including whether the change can actually be made.
- The availability of our resources: this may take into account how many people would benefit from proposed changes and the resources required to deliver that to ensure the change is proportionate to the resources required.
- Any disruption to services that are because of the adjustment (or the resources required to implement the adjustment/provide the aid).
- The cost.