

LGO Policy on Reasonable Adjustments for Service Users

The LGO is committed to taking action to ensure that the way we work does not place disabled people at a disadvantage and to meet our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Our legal duties

Anyone providing goods, facilities or services to the public or a section of the public, or carrying out public functions, who find that there are barriers to disabled people in the way they do things must consider making adjustments. If those adjustments are reasonable they must be made.

The duty is 'anticipatory'. This means a service provider cannot wait until a disabled person wants to use the service. They must think in advance (and on an ongoing basis) about what disabled people with a range of impairments (such as people who have a visual or hearing impairment, a mobility impairment or a learning disability) might reasonably need.

The Equality Act 2010 requires us to provide reasonable adjustments for people who are "disabled". Under the Act this means they have a *"physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities"*.

The duty is to make "reasonable adjustments" if the way that we carry out our functions places a disabled person at a "substantial disadvantage" compared to someone who is not disabled.

What are reasonable adjustments?

Reasonable adjustments are not defined by the Act. There is a [Code of Practice](#) which gives guidance as to the kind of adjustments that could be made. Depending on the individual's needs, these might include, for example:

- Providing documents or correspondence in larger print, or with a specific colour contrast (which may help people with conditions such as dyslexia)
- Giving someone more time than would usually be allowed to provide further information or comments on their complaint
- Using the telephone rather than written communication (e.g. for someone with a visual disability)
- Translating documents or correspondence into Braille
- Communicating with a person through their representative or advocate
- Arranging for a single point of contact at the Ombudsman's office
- Providing access to an 'easyread' version of our decision for those with a learning disability
- Providing a person who uses British Sign Language (BSL) with an interpreter

Asking for reasonable adjustments

We will let people know that they can request adjustments by:

- Publishing this policy on our website and highlighting it to bodies in our jurisdiction (e.g. councils)
- Asking people when they first contact us if they have a disability and might need an adjustment
- Making sure that our staff are aware of their responsibilities
- Including a statement in our leaflets that invites people to contact us if they need us to adapt the way we communicate

We consider each request individually and aim to agree any adjustments with individuals to avoid us making incorrect assumptions about needs.

Our response to requests

Before making an adjustment, we need to consider some important factors:

- What the disadvantage would be if the adjustment were not made
- Whether the adjustment will be effective in reducing the disadvantage
- How practical it is to make it
- Whether it would disrupt our other activities unreasonably
- The cost and availability of resources, including external help and finance

We will try to agree a reasonable adjustment with a minimum of delay. In some cases we may need to consider the request in more detail.

There may be circumstances where we decide not to meet the request. The law says that an adjustment only has to be made if it is “reasonable”. We need to take account of the cost or resource implications of making the adjustment, whether the request itself is reasonable and whether there is a less expensive way of meeting the request. Where it is very difficult to provide the adjustment or meeting it would interfere with our ability to meet our legal obligations we may decide it is not “reasonable”.

Complaints about failure to provide reasonable adjustments

If someone is dissatisfied with our response to their request for reasonable adjustment, or with the reasonable adjustment provided, they can complain to us about this. We will respond in accordance with our [service complaints policy](#).

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