

# Reasonable Adjustment Alternative Formats Policy and Procedure

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## Summary

The aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure that all residents can access our services, including information, and that reasonable adjustments are made as necessary to help facilitate this
- Ensure alternative formats are available on request for any of our publicly available documents or communications.
- Assist employees in the management of the provision of the above
- Ensure that Housing 21 meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards

Housing 21 is committed to ensuring that all residents can access our services. This includes residents who may need our information in a different language or format in order to understand it. We will make reasonable adjustments for those who may need additional support to access our services. Those residents who need an aid or adaptation to their housing should read the [Housing 21 Aids and Adaptations Policy and Procedure](#).

## **What is a reasonable adjustment?**

Ensuring action is taken to support residents in accessing information in the way most appropriate for them.

## **Requesting a reasonable adjustment**

We let people know we can provide reasonable adjustments by:

- Including information in written communications
- Asking whether a reasonable adjustment is required on the telephone
- Including a note on our published documents indicating we can provide the document in an alternative format on request
- Publishing this policy on our website
- Working with leaders and groups across the organisation to raise awareness of this policy

### **Types of reasonable adjustments**

Adjustments depend on individual need of residents. We will discuss individual requirements with the person concerned and seek to reach agreement on what is reasonable in the circumstances. We will not make assumptions about whether a resident requires any reasonable adjustments or about what those adjustments should be.

Examples include:

- Provision of information in appropriate alternative formats (eg large print, Braille, coloured paper etc) and / or in a different language
- Use of plain English or Easy Read service
- Provision of auxiliary aids
- Use of sign language such as British Sign Language (BSL) or signed English
- Communication through a representative or intermediary
- Use of email or telephone in preference to hard copy letters
- Rest or comfort breaks in meetings

### **Information which may be requested in alternative formats**

- Centrally produced or printed documents including leaflets, handbooks, and newsletters.
- Regionally produced standard notifications/communications, such as rent and service charge letters/tenancy agreements, etc.

We will not translate documents that are available from external sources, for example AgeUK, etc.

Documents can be translated into a range of formats and / or languages on

request. We aim to recognise the diverse needs of our residents and remove barriers to communication wherever possible.

### **Our response to requests for reasonable adjustments**

Each case will be looked at on an individual basis and 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 the situation in more detail to overcome the difficulty a resident is experiencing or seek advice from expert organisations to assist with signposting.

Where information is required in alternative formats, this will be provided in the most timely and cost-effective way.

All resident information leaflets and handbooks should contain an alternative formats statement, preferably in font size 16-20 if the document allows. This can be amended to suit the document but should be similar to this:

**If you need any information in a different format, for example large print, Braille, audio file or another language, please contact your scheme manager or email [Communications@housing21.org.uk](mailto:Communications@housing21.org.uk)**

### **How do we decide what is reasonable?**

Guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission suggests that we need to consider:

- The effectiveness of the adjustment in preventing or reducing the disadvantage for the person needing additional support
- The practicality of us making the adjustments
- The availability of resources – including budget / external assistance
- Any disruption to the service making the adjustment might cause

Effectiveness – the adjustment needs to fully address the disadvantage it is meant to overcome

Practicality – for example additional time may not always be possible if there are additional deadlines to meet

Resources – this includes not just the cost but also potentially the need for additional staff with specific skills etc.

Regular review - we will regularly review reasonable adjustments made to help us review our services and identify whether we can do more to improve them.

## Feedback

Please forward any feedback to [communications@housing21.org.uk](mailto:communications@housing21.org.uk)

## Procedure for requesting alternative formats

| Step by step guidelines |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Step 1                  | Consider whether help can be provided by signposting the resident to where there is local support in place. For example, a family member, friend or representative from an appropriate community group may be able to help informally with communication needs or translation.   |
| Step 2                  | If Step 1 isn't possible, please send your request by email to <a href="mailto:Communications@housing21.org.uk">Communications@housing21.org.uk</a> The email should contain your name, the contact details of the person who needs the alternative format, the reason the format is needed, an approximate timescale within which the format is needed and the actual format required, such as Braille, audio etc. Please allow three weeks where possible for the process. N.B. there is no longer any need to complete a form or get it authorised. |
| Step 3                  | Please make sure that you attach the document that needs to be provided in the alternative format to the email.  |
| Step 4                  | On receipt of the request we will check if we have already have this document available in the alternative format.   |

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|--------|--|
| Step 5 | If not, we will request a quote and organise for the document to be provided in the alternative format. The cost of will come out of a central budget held by the Marketing and Communications Team. |
| Step 6 | Once the alternative format is received, it will be sent to the person who has requested it by email or post.  |

### Procedure for telephone translation services

If you need to use a telephone translation service to interpret a different language, we have an arrangement with a company called Language Line. This service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The aim of Language Line is to meet the need for an interpreter whenever we may need it.

- Language Line has an extensive team of professional interpreters and is able to offer translation services for approximately 100 languages.
- Language Line is used widely throughout the country in the UK public sector.
- The service can also provide a traditional translation service for any of our documents, see alternative formats section above.

Below is the procedure for accessing the service:

- Retirement Housing Managers/Extra Care Manager/Registered Managers will act as the regional contacts for Language Line.
- Customer Account Number **C6867**
- You will need to quote a customer ID number, which is 522139 – Housing 21
- The service is available 24 hours, seven days a week.
- The local rate number to access the service is:
  - Enquiries: **0800 169 2879**

- Fax: **0800 783 2443**
- Email: [enquiries@languageline.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@languageline.co.uk)
- You will need to quote your name and the language you require translating.
- Stay on the line whilst an interpreter is contacted.
- Introduce yourself to the interpreter and brief him or her about the situation.
- Go ahead and start your conversation, using the telephone receiver as a go between.
- We are currently exploring accessing this service via video call – please mention this if it is something which would be helpful in your individual situation.

### **Useful sources of information**

Here are some alternatives you might like to suggest for people with reading difficulties:

[Royal National Institute for the Blind \(RNIB\)](#) can help with assistive technology for blind people.

They can provide information on computers and other devices that may help such as phones, mobiles, smartphones, iPads (and other tablets) and electronic magnifiers that have features and adaptations built in to assist people who are blind or partially sighted.

**Tel: 0303 123 9999** or email [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk).

[Action for deafness](#) has an online shop for the best products for deaf and hard of hearing people.

**Tel: 01444 415582**

**The official version of this document will be maintained in the Policy Hub.**

**Before referring to any printed copies, please ensure they are up-to-date.**