

vulnerability policy

**Doing the right thing for our customers –
our approach to vulnerability and
reasonable adjustments**

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1. Policy statement

- 1.1 We believe in a life without barriers. Our approach to providing homes and services ensures that we do what we can to make sure that we aren't, inadvertently, one of life's barriers. We will deliver homes and services that are relevant, appropriate and meet people's needs, enabling them to enjoy living in their home and community and sustain their tenancy.
- 1.2 believe housing is committed to reflecting the diversity of the community and ensuring the inclusion of people from all different backgrounds. We aim to reflect our customers' different needs in the homes and services we provide by being relevant, responsive and sensitive to individual needs and by providing choice for current and future customers.
- 1.3 We recognise that some of the different needs that affect our customers' ability to access and benefit from our homes and services are related to vulnerabilities or difficulties that affect their everyday living. Vulnerability can be a variable state, occurring at different stages of a person's life; it may be temporary or may only apply in certain circumstances. Being vulnerable can impact on a person's ability to access our services, manage their home or tenancy, live safely in their home or engage with neighbours and the wider community.
- 1.4 The word vulnerable can have negative connotations and can be seen as limiting and stigmatising. There are also many occasions when people would not see themselves as vulnerable or want to be labelled in such a way. However, as a widely accepted and understood term it serves a useful purpose in communicating our commitment to deliver tailored services that reflect people's different needs.
- 1.5 In meeting the needs of our customers, we will make reasonable adjustments to our services and the way we deliver them. Adjustments will meet our customers' diverse needs and address barriers that might impede their access to our service, reflecting individual circumstances. Adjustments will also be proportionate, practical and sustainable for both our customers and our business.

2. Policy aims

- 2.1. At the heart of our offer to customers is delivering healthy and affordable homes that people feel safe in and communities that they feel proud to be part of. Our approach to managing our homes and neighbourhoods focuses on our customers, their needs and expectations and considers how people live in and experience their homes and neighbourhoods.

- 2.2. Our customers are all individuals, and we recognise that the service they need or want from us reflects their individual circumstances as well as their choices and preferences. We also recognise that people's circumstances can change and that we need to reflect and adjust our approach to take these changes into account. We will endeavour to meet diverse needs, address vulnerabilities and provide choice for our current and potential customers.
- 2.3. We will take customer needs and vulnerabilities into account and make reasonable adjustments to ensure that:
 - we deliver excellent services, tailored to individual needs so that people are not disadvantaged or put at risk
 - we deliver homes that meet people's needs, are safe and support independent living for as long as possible
 - we take vulnerabilities into account when taking enforcement action, providing support and ensuring our actions are proportionate.
- 2.4. We will take a consistent approach to assessing need and will record relevant information, confidentially and sensitively. We will use this information appropriately to ensure our colleagues, contractors and partners use it to deliver services that meet different needs. We will always do this according to the parameters set out in our Data Protection Policy, with the appropriate consents and safeguards.
- 2.5. We are committed to training our colleagues to both raise awareness of the different needs or vulnerabilities that exist within our communities but also how to adjust our services to reflect these needs.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to all Board members, employees and contractors working for or on behalf of believe housing.
- 3.2. This policy applies to all customers living in our homes, applying for housing with us, living in our communities or otherwise receiving any service from us.
- 3.3. In our delivery of this policy, we will follow relevant statutory and regulatory guidance that governs our service delivery as a social housing provider.

4. Roles and responsibilities

- 4.1. This policy applies to all areas of our service delivery and will be reflected across all our areas of activity, in our policies and procedures. Each service area director is responsible for its implementation in their service area, including ensuring that their

teams are trained and supported in its delivery and that customer information is managed according to our Data Protection Policy.

4.2. The Executive Director of Communities and Customer Service has strategic responsibility for the delivery, implementation and review of this policy.

5. Monitoring and review

5.1. This policy will be monitored through our regularly monitoring of the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), particularly:

- Overall satisfaction
- Satisfaction that believe housing treats tenants fairly and with respect.

5.2. We will review and update this policy every three years, or if there is a significant change in relevant statutory or regulatory requirements.

6. Links to other policies and procedures

6.1. This policy is relevant for all our service delivery areas and links to all of our customer-facing policies and procedures, including but not limited to:

- Customer Strategy
- Believe in People Strategy
- Assets and Place Strategy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Repairs Policy
- Lettings and Allocations Policy
- Tenancy Management Policy
- Anti-social Behaviour Policy
- Independent Living Policy
- Damp and Mould Policy
- Complaints, Compensation and Compliments Policy.