



Broxtowe
Borough
COUNCIL

**CUSTOMERS WITH
ADDITIONAL SUPPORT
NEEDS POLICY**

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1.0 Scope

This policy applies to all tenants, leaseholders and applicants of Broxtowe Borough Council who require additional support to sustain their tenancy or lease or apply for housing. The term customer will be used in the policy, when it applies to all groups.

2.0 Purpose

We recognise that some customers may on occasion require additional support when using our services. This policy identifies how we will tailor our services to be able to offer this support those applicants and tenants.

3.0 Aims and Objectives

The Council understands that many people who require additional support, would not describe themselves as vulnerable. However, as this term is used within the regulatory code and legislation, it is also included within this policy.

We are committed to providing homes and services which meet the needs of all members of the community. The aims of this policy are to:

- Provide tailored services to vulnerable
- Request and manage up to date customer data which identifies customers who require additional support and those who may need it in the future
- Develop effective partnerships with support agencies who can provide support to potentially vulnerable customers
- Ensure employees have access to appropriate support, training and services to provide a tailored service to potentially vulnerable applicants and tenants.

We acknowledge that it is not possible to identify every scenario in which a customer can be defined as vulnerable or may require additional support.

4.0 Regulatory Code and Legal Framework

The Regulatory Code Tenancy Standard states that we should take into account the needs of those households who are “vulnerable by reason of age, disability, or illness and households with children, including through the provision of tenancies which provide a reasonable degree of stability”.

The Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) lists a number of categories under which “customer or residents” could be classed as vulnerable. This includes,

- People with a recent history of homelessness, rough sleepers, refugees and those with no experience of independent living;
- Those with substance misuse problems. e.g. alcohol or drugs;
- People in receipt of, or entitled to state retirement pension;
- Ex-offenders;

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- Those at risk of domestic abuse;
- People with learning difficulties;
- Those with serious long term, or terminal, illness;
- Young people at risk, including those leaving care as well as teenage parents;
- Those people with a mental, physical or sensory disability who are in receipt of a state benefit, or are entitled to such a benefit, as a result of that disability;
- Others with a disability which has an impact upon the performance of normal daily living tasks; and
- People with a child under 12 months old in the household.

Through the Equality Act 2010 the Council as a landlord has a duty 'to make reasonable adjustments'. This includes changing a policy or practice (including the terms of the tenancy agreement) and providing extra aids or services.

The Care Act 2014 introduced on local authorities to promote the wellbeing of people with care and support needs, and suggests that rather than refer to such people as "vulnerable", their individual needs and aspirations should be recognised and local authorities and their partners should work together to reduce their exposure to the risk of harm and neglect.

We will adopt the existing legal and regulatory framework whilst also acknowledging that vulnerability is complex and can be temporary, periodic, recurring or on-going.

5.0 Policy

5.1 Tailored Services

The Council will tailor its existing services to meet the needs of customers with additional support needs as required, where it is reasonable and proportionate to do so. This may include (not an exhaustive list);

- providing a flexible repairs service to meet the needs of vulnerable residents
- waiving a recharge where a resident's vulnerability prevents them from adhering to current policy
- providing assistance with claiming financial benefits to which they may be entitled
- signposting to other agencies which may be able to provide relevant support
- help to report behaviour to the Police which may be causing distress or concern
- encouragement to access GP or mental health services
- facilitating discussions with wider family members regarding welfare needs
- conducting a risk assessment to assess and reduce the risk of harm to the resident or nearby neighbourhoods

Some Council housing services have been specifically designed to support customers who require additional support:

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- Independent Living – for customer aged 60 and above, or aged 40 and above with a disability
- Lifeline – for customers who wish to have support available via a 24 hour response call centre
- Aids and Adaptations - for customers who require adaptations to allow access to their homes
- Assistive Gardens Scheme – for elderly and disabled customers who require additional support to enable them to manage their gardens
- Tenancy Sustainment Service – provides one-to-one support to tenants that require additional support to sustain their tenancy
- Financial Inclusion Service – provides financial advice and support to tenants that require assistance with financial matters

We will provide alternative communication formats to support customers who may be need support due to their inability to access or understand the information that we provide. This may include; translations, interpreters, Braille formats and large print documents.

5.2 Identifying Applicants and Tenants with additional support needs

The Council will aim to identify all applicants and tenants who have additional support needs. Feedback will be sought from the vulnerable person, housing employees and other support agencies in identifying vulnerability.

Information will be collected by the Council at various points during the tenancy including; housing application and new tenant sign up.

Through tenancy sustainment support for customers affected by welfare reform and during visits information will be updated and new support needs may be identified.

Customer data will be held in line with Data Protection principles on the housing management system and will help identify individuals and the services that may be required.

5.3 Partnership Working

There will be occasions when a customer's complex needs are best met by adopting a partnership approach. The council will build strong relationships with a variety of support agencies to effectively support the customer. Referrals will be made to external agencies with the consent of the customer and we will participate in case conferencing and the Broxtowe Complex Case Panel to ensure that appropriate support is available.

We recognise that not all customers who have additional support needs will wish to receive additional support to manage their support needs.

5.4 Training

It is important that employees have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to provide support to all customers, including those with additional support needs. Employees will receive training relevant to their roles in a variety of areas relating to vulnerability. This training will be reviewed to ensure that the team's knowledge and skills are kept up to date.

The safety and wellbeing of employees is important. Employees will be supported in their work with customers with additional support needs.

6.0 Safeguarding

Broxtowe Borough Council has policies and procedures regarding safeguarding adults and children identified as being "at risk". This policy should be read in conjunction with these documents.

7.0 Equality and Diversity

Broxtowe Borough Council Equality and Diversity Policy states:

The Council believes that all of our residents and customers have a right to expect and receive high quality services that are appropriate and meet their needs. In order to ensure that services are independently accessible, the Council will work to tackle and eliminate whatever barriers may exist. The Council will:

- Engage with and involve communities in the design and development of policies and services and make revisions to service planning where necessary
- Ensure our buildings to which the public want or need access are as accessible as possible, making reasonable adjustments wherever practicable
- Provide clear information about Council services in ways and in formats that meet the needs of particular individuals or groups
- Monitor take-up of services to ensure they do not discriminate or exclude anyone on grounds of a protected characteristic without justification.

An equality impact assessment of this policy has been undertaken.

8.0 Related Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

This policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Anti-social behaviour Policy
- Hoarding Protocol
- Hate Crime Policy
- Aids and Adaptations Policy
- Data Protection
- Equality and Diversity Policy

9.0 Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years. It is not expected that there will be changes to regulation or legislation which will have an impact on the need to review this policy sooner.

10.0 Document History and Approval

Date	Version	Committee Name
1/11/2017	1.0	Housing Committee
26/5/2021	2.0	Housing Committee