

CUSTOMER INCLUSION AND SUPPORT POLICY



RGS PROPERTIES

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Policy Owner: Director of Housing & Customer Services

Approved By: Board of Directors

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Document Information

Item	Details
Policy Name	Customer Inclusion and Support Policy
Policy Owner	Director of Housing & Customer Services
Approved By	Board of Directors
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Effective Date	11 June 2026
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Audience	Customers, Employees, Contractors, Partners
Related Policies	Safeguarding Policy, Complaints and Compensation Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, Data Protection Policy, Tenancy Management Policy
Regulatory Framework	Social Housing Regulation Act 2023, Equality Act 2010, Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, UK GDPR



Purpose

RGS Properties is committed to delivering fair, accessible, and inclusive housing services to all customers. We recognise that customers may have diverse needs, circumstances, vulnerabilities, and protected characteristics that require adjustments to how services are delivered.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote inclusion and equality in all housing services.
- Ensure customers can access services without discrimination.
- Identify and respond to vulnerabilities and support needs.
- Make reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Provide fair outcomes for all customers.
- Support tenancy sustainment and customer wellbeing.
- Ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

RGS Properties is committed to treating all customers with dignity, respect, fairness, and compassion.



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1. Introduction

RGS Properties recognises that customers come from diverse backgrounds and may experience circumstances that affect their ability to access housing services.

We are committed to:

- Delivering customer-focused services.
- Promoting equality and inclusion.
- Removing barriers to service access.
- Supporting vulnerable customers.
- Preventing discrimination and exclusion.
- Ensuring all customers receive fair treatment.

We will actively seek to understand individual needs and make reasonable adjustments where required.

What This Means for Customers

Customers can expect:

- Respectful treatment at all times.
- Accessible communication.
- Fair and equitable services.
- Support when experiencing difficulties.
- Confidential handling of personal information.
- Appropriate adjustments based on individual needs.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All RGS Properties employees.
- Agency workers and contractors.
- Board members.
- Volunteers.
- Customers, tenants, leaseholders, applicants, and household members.

The policy covers:

- Equality and inclusion.
- Vulnerability identification.
- Customer support.
- Reasonable adjustments.
- Communication accessibility.
- Staff training.



- Monitoring and reporting.

3. Protected Characteristics and Vulnerabilities

Protected Characteristics

RGS Properties complies fully with the Equality Act 2010.

The following protected characteristics are recognised:

3.1 Age

We will provide services suitable for customers of all ages and avoid age-related discrimination or assumptions.

3.2 Disability

We will make reasonable adjustments for customers with physical, sensory, learning, mental health, or cognitive disabilities.

3.3 Gender Reassignment

We will respect customers' gender identity, chosen names, and preferred pronouns.

3.4 Marriage and Civil Partnership

Customers will receive equal treatment regardless of marital or partnership status.

3.5 Pregnancy and Maternity

We will provide flexibility and support during pregnancy and maternity periods.

3.6 Race

We will challenge discrimination and ensure services are accessible to people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds.

3.7 Religion or Belief

We will respect customers' faiths, beliefs, customs, and observances.

3.8 Sex

We will ensure equal treatment regardless of sex or gender.

3.9 Sexual Orientation

We will provide a safe and inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ customers.

Additional Vulnerabilities

Vulnerability may be temporary, permanent, or fluctuating.



Examples include:

- Physical illness.
- Mental health conditions.
- Learning disabilities.
- Cognitive impairment.
- Domestic abuse.
- Financial hardship.
- Debt issues.
- Unemployment.
- Substance misuse.
- Language barriers.
- Digital exclusion.
- Social isolation.
- Bereavement.
- Trauma.
- Safeguarding concerns.
- Risk of homelessness.
- Reduced decision-making capacity.

Customers may experience multiple vulnerabilities simultaneously, requiring tailored support.

Safeguarding

RGS Properties is committed to safeguarding children and adults at risk.

Any safeguarding concerns identified by employees or contractors must be reported immediately in accordance with the RGS Properties Safeguarding Policy.

Respect for Personal Identity

We recognise the importance of respecting personal identity, including:

- Preferred names.
- Pronouns.
- Cultural identity.
- Religious beliefs.
- Communication preferences.

All customers will be treated respectfully and without prejudice.



4. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

This policy supports compliance with:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards

Related RGS Properties policies include:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Complaints and Compensation Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Tenancy Management Policy
- Allocations and Lettings Policy

5. Our Approach

RGS Properties adopts the following principles:

5.1 Tell Us Once

Customers should not repeatedly provide the same information.

Where consent is given, customer support requirements and reasonable adjustments will be securely recorded for future use.

5.2 Customer Inclusion

Services will be designed to be accessible and inclusive.

Potential barriers will be identified and removed wherever possible.

5.3 Positive and Proactive Support

We will actively identify risks and vulnerabilities and offer support before problems escalate.

5.4 Collaborative Working

Where appropriate, we will work with:



- Family members.
- Advocates.
- Support workers.
- Carers.
- Local authorities.
- Health services.
- Community organisations.

5.5 Single Point of Contact (SPOC)

Where customer circumstances are complex, RGS Properties may assign a dedicated officer to coordinate support and communications.

6. Understanding Customer Needs and Reasonable Adjustments

We will regularly assess customer needs through:

- Direct conversations.
- Housing management visits.
- Repairs appointments.
- Customer surveys.
- Complaints and feedback.
- Support referrals.

Reasonable Adjustments

Examples include:

Communication Adjustments

- Large print correspondence.
- Alternative formats.
- Translation services.
- Interpretation services.
- Telephone communication.
- Email communication.
- Easy-read documents.

Service Delivery Adjustments

- Flexible appointments.
- Extended appointment times.
- Additional contact and welfare checks.
- Priority responses where appropriate.



- Tailored support plans.

Housing Support

- Referrals to specialist agencies.
- Financial inclusion advice.
- Welfare benefits guidance.
- Tenancy sustainment support.
- Digital inclusion support.

All adjustments will be considered individually and proportionately.

7. Staff Training and Awareness

RGS Properties will ensure staff receive appropriate training on:

- Equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Protected characteristics.
- Vulnerability awareness.
- Safeguarding.
- Customer service excellence.
- Mental health awareness.
- Communication skills.
- Reasonable adjustments.
- Data protection and confidentiality.
- Housing Ombudsman expectations.

Training records will be maintained and reviewed regularly.

8. Monitoring and Performance

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:

- Customer satisfaction surveys.
- Complaints analysis.
- Service accessibility reviews.
- Equality impact assessments.
- Internal audits.
- Regulatory compliance reviews.
- Customer feedback forums.

Performance information may include:

- Number of reasonable adjustments provided.



- Vulnerability referrals.
- Safeguarding referrals.
- Complaint trends.
- Customer satisfaction outcomes.

Findings will be used to drive continuous improvement.

9. Exceptions

There may be occasions where strict application of this policy is not appropriate.

In such circumstances, decisions will:

- Be made on a case-by-case basis.
- Be reasonable and proportionate.
- Consider customer welfare.
- Be documented appropriately.
- Be approved by a senior manager where necessary.

Any exceptions must remain compliant with legal and regulatory obligations.

10. Privacy and Data Protection

RGS Properties is committed to protecting customer information.

All personal data collected under this policy will be processed in accordance with:

- UK GDPR
- Data Protection Act 2018
- RGS Properties Data Protection Policy

We will:

- Collect only necessary information.
- Obtain consent where required.
- Store information securely.
- Restrict access to authorised personnel.
- Retain information only for as long as necessary.
- Respect customer rights regarding their personal data.

Customers may request access to their personal information at any time in accordance with applicable legislation.



Alternative Formats

RGS Properties can provide this policy in alternative formats, including:

- Large print
- Audio format
- Easy Read format
- Braille (where available)
- Translated versions

Requests should be made by contacting:

RGS Properties

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Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where:

- Legislation changes.
- Regulatory requirements change.
- Housing Ombudsman guidance changes.
- Significant operational changes occur.
- Customer feedback identifies improvement opportunities.

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