

# **Reasonable Adjustments Policy**

## **Aim of this policy**

As solicitors we serve a diverse society and in carrying out our role, we want to take reasonable steps in the way that we work with disabled employees and clients so they are not disadvantaged in comparison to people who are not disabled.

## **What are reasonable adjustments?**

A reasonable adjustment means making a change to the way that we usually carry out our work, so as to ensure that we are fair to disabled people. This may involve:

- doing something in a different way such as allowing more time than we usually would for an interview or arranging a home visit;
- making sure our office is accessible, for instance by providing accessible meeting rooms.

We will always try to ensure we discuss their requirements with the person concerned and try to reach agreement on what might be reasonable in the circumstances.

## **What are our legal duties?**

The Equality Act 2010 requires us to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled people, defined by the Act as those who have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This could, in some cases, mean that disabled people receive more favourable treatment than non-disabled people, which is lawful in the context of disability.

One of the ways we are working towards meeting our disability equality duty is by regularly reviewing our policies and practices to identify possible barriers for disabled people so that we can minimise those barriers and anticipate the reasonable adjustments that we may need to make.

## **How to request reasonable adjustments**

If you wish to request an adjustment to be made, please ask when you make contact with us.

## **Types of reasonable adjustment we can offer**

Whilst we will consider each request for reasonable adjustments individually, there are some common adjustments which we will offer as a matter of course and some other adjustments that we can make particular arrangements to provide. The adjustments will always be agreed with the person concerned to avoid making incorrect assumptions about a person's needs.

The following are the types of reasonable adjustment we can make:

- providing documents or correspondence in a larger font size;
- providing documents on coloured paper or with a specific colour contrast which can make them more readable for people with conditions such as dyslexia;
- allowing a person who has a learning disability or mental health problems more time than would usually be allotted;
- using email or telephone in preference to paper letters where appropriate, which may assist those with a vision impairment;
- speaking clearly to the people who we deal with and offering additional time to cover the issues they need to discuss—this will help everyone understand our processes and procedures;
- using plain English appropriate to the person we are dealing with and avoiding jargon;
- holding meetings in places which have appropriate facilities;
- communicating with people through their representative (whether or not this is a legal representative) or advocate, if requested and approved by them;
- helping someone who has mental health problems to understand and manage the actions we are taking by arranging a single point of contact with us;
- arranging a face to face meeting to provide more tailored support and assistance;
- arranging home visits for those who have particular mobility difficulties.

## **How we will respond to requests for reasonable adjustment**

In the majority of cases we will be able to agree and deliver the required reasonable adjustments with a minimum of delay. In some cases, we may need to consider in more detail how best to overcome the difficulty a disabled person may be experiencing.

## **What is "reasonable" and how practical is it to provide the adjustment?**

For example it may not be practical for a solicitor at our office to visit a disabled person who lives in Cornwall, but we may be able to arrange for someone else to carry out the visit for us. Larger organisation will be expected to be more able to finance a costly or resource intensive adjustment than a small organisation, so cost will be a factor to take into account. Additionally it may not be reasonable for us to drop all other cases and devote all our time to one person, as others would inevitably suffer. The amount of extra time that will be needed must therefore be part of the "reasonableness" test.

## **Monitoring how we make reasonable adjustments**

We will record and monitor the reasonable adjustments that have been requested and made, which enables us to review how we have met any needs and whether we can improve our services.

## **Any questions?**

Any questions on this Policy and any suggestions for improvement can be made to Sahida Patel who can be contacted on [sahida.patel@mintonmorrill.co.uk](mailto:sahida.patel@mintonmorrill.co.uk).