

	QP82	Inclusive Service Delivery Policy	Version No.	Date of last version
	Department: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion		1.0	July 2025

1.0 Introduction

Supporting fair access to housing services for older and vulnerable people.

We are committed to providing housing and support services that are fair, inclusive, and compassionate. Everyone deserves to feel safe, respected, and supported in their home – especially those who may face barriers because of disability, health, or life circumstances.

As a specialist provider of housing for older and vulnerable people, we deliver services through strong relationships, service excellence, and a trusted brand.

Our approach reflects our strategic priorities: **People, Places, and Partnerships** – working together to provide excellent services that meet individual needs and strengthen communities.

People – We see residents as individuals with diverse needs, strengths and potential. We tailor our services, make adjustments, and celebrate contributions to create a fair and supportive experience for all.

Places – We promote inclusive environments where communal life thrives through mutual respect, shared effort and equal access to services and information.

Partnerships – We work together with residents, colleagues, carers, and community partners to make our homes safe, inclusive and responsive to changing needs.

This policy explains how we adapt our services for residents who need extra support to manage their tenancy, home or access our services. It outlines how we make reasonable adjustments and how we respond when vulnerability is identified. This policy also supports compliance with Awaab’s Law, ensuring that vulnerability information is recorded and considered when determining property-related risk and setting repair priorities.

Inclusive service delivery also means recognising and enabling residents who actively contribute to scheme life. This approach acknowledges that inclusion is not only about support for those in need, but also about celebrating the skills, effort and generosity of those who help bring community spaces and relationships to life.

2.0 Our housing schemes

We provide a mix of:

- Housing for Older People (HfOP) – where we do not provide on-site support but may refer to external agencies.
- Extra Care Housing – where care is commissioned separately by Lincoln County Council. We are not responsible for care but provide the housing management and tenancy support needed to help people live well and independently.

We recognise that needs may change over time, and we will work flexibly to make sure that no resident is disadvantaged when accessing our services.

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3.0 Legal and regulatory framework

We are committed to making reasonable adjustments to ensure our services are inclusive and fair. While the Equality Act 2010 places a specific legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for those with disabilities, we strive to consider the needs of all residents, particularly those with any protected characteristics, so that no one faces unfair disadvantage when accessing our services.

Equality Act 2010:

We:

- Use the definition of disability under the Act.
- Make reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people can access services without being placed at a disadvantage.

Regulator of Social Housing – Consumer Standards (April 2024):

We will:

- Understand the diverse needs of tenants.
- Ensure services are accessible, safe, and appropriate, particularly for those who may be vulnerable.

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code:

We will:

- Ensure our complaints process is accessible and responsive to vulnerable people.
- Take account of reasonable adjustments when handling issues, disputes, or concerns.

Awaab’s Law – draft guidance for social landlords (25 June 2025)

Our processes identify residents who may need enhanced communication, priority support, or welfare contact once an emergency or significant property hazard is found.

4.0 Definitions

Reasonable adjustments

A reasonable adjustment is a change we make to the way we normally deliver our services to make them more accessible. This might include:

- Large print.
- Extended deadlines.
- Communicating via a nominated contact.

The goal is to remove barriers so all customers can access the same services fairly.

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Vulnerability

We may consider someone vulnerable where they are experiencing difficulties in daily life that:

- Make it harder to meet the terms of their tenancy.
- Puts them at risk of losing their home.
- Affects their ability to access our services independently.

Vulnerability information supports Awaab’s Law assessments but never replaces professional judgement about whether a property hazard is “significant” or “emergency”.

5.0 Identifying and recording needs

We identify support needs or vulnerabilities by:

- Asking as part of the **Tenancy Contract Meeting**.
- Conducting regular updates or a **person-centred risk assessment**, which could include a **personal evacuation plan**.
- **Staff observations** during visits or interactions.
- **Wellbeing Plans** – completed for residents living in our Extra Care Housing.

With the resident’s consent, we record known vulnerabilities or disability flags in Homemaster and update this information regularly. We will explain why vulnerability information is recorded, and how it will be used. All records follow GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 requirements.

6.0 How we adjust our services

We aim to personalise services for residents with additional needs.

This may include:

Communication: Providing large print, plain English, or translated materials, using a nominated contact.

Tenancy Support: Helping residents understand their tenancy, referrals for additional help for external agencies.

Repairs: Priority repairs or support with contractor access.

Complaints: Extra time, verbal submissions, or support in writing.

External Referrals: When we can’t meet a need directly, we refer to care or support agencies.

Aids and adaptations: Property adjustments are addressed through our **Aids and Adaptations Policy**.

Staff training: All frontline staff receive training on recognising vulnerability triggers under Awaab’s Law (e.g., respiratory health, frailty, mobility limitations).

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Where a vulnerability is identified, this information will be considered when prioritising responses under Awaab’s Law and other emergency hazards, in line with our Damp and Mould (QP74) and Emergency Repairs (QP83) Policies. Where vulnerability is recorded, we review welfare contact frequency and communication methods to reflect individual needs and support networks.

7.0 Working with others

We work with residents, families, carers, external support services, care providers, and safeguarding partners to ensure residents receive joined-up, person-centred support.

8.0 Safeguarding and Risk

If we believe a resident is at risk of harm, abuse, or neglect, we follow our **Safeguarding Policy** and make appropriate referrals. We follow the principal of “**no decision about me, without me**” – meaning we work with the person affected, listen to their wishes, and support them to make choices on their own terms wherever possible.

9.0 Signs of vulnerability

Signs include:

- Anti-social behaviour linked to mental health.
- Being a victim of abuse.
- Not responding to contact.
- Hoarding.
- Falling into arrears.

10.0 Our commitments in practice

We will:

- Record vulnerabilities in HomeMaster.
- Tailor services to individual needs.
- Offer respectful, fair tenancy enforcement (using our 3 stage warning notices).
- Make referrals for additional support.
- Act on safeguarding concerns reporting to our **Safeguarding Champion**.

11.0 Recognising resident contributions as part of inclusive delivery

Our vision of an inclusive service goes beyond supporting residents facing specific needs or barriers. It includes recognising and valuing the residents who bring their schemes to life by contributing their time, energy, and creativity.

Many residents go the extra mile - organising social events, improving communal gardens, fundraising, or supporting neighbours. These contributions strengthen the sense of community, wellbeing and belonging that underpins our People, Places and Partnerships approach.

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We support this as a fundamental aspect of inclusive delivery, and we are committed to enabling and celebrating this involvement wherever possible – and ensuring it is supported with kindness, respect and care.

12.0 Alignment with legal and regulatory frameworks

Duty under the Act	How the policy aligns
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.	Ensures no customer is disadvantaged due to disability, age, or health.
Advance equality of opportunity.	Reduces disadvantage and addresses barriers.
Make reasonable adjustments (Section 20)	Defines and applies adjustments clearly.
Definition of Disability (Section 6)	Uses the Act's definition in all service contexts.
Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149)	Records and reviews needs with due regard to protected characteristics.
Awaab's Law (Social Housing Regulation Act 2023)	Records vulnerability data used in Awaab Law assessments; supports timely identification of residents at higher health risk; reinforces equality and fairness in emergency responses.

We also align this commitment with the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards – recognising that inclusive environments thrive when residents can influence, shape and enrich community life.

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Standard	Key requirement	How the policy responds
Safety & Quality	Provide safe, well-maintained homes and responsive services.	Prioritises health and safety, supports adaptations and risk-based response.
Transparency, Influence and Accountability	Ensure services are accessible and complaints are fair.	Provides accessible information; records adjustments; supports verbal complaints.
Neighbourhood and Communities	Support safe, supportive communities through partnerships.	Works with safeguarding teams, care agencies, and local partners.
Tenancy	Support vulnerable tenants to maintain homes and prevent eviction.	Makes referrals, adapts delivery and applies fair enforcement.

13.0 Key risks and controls

Ref	The Risk	Responsible Person	Summary of the Control
1	Resident support needs not identified or recorded.	Head of Housing	<p>Pre tenancy and empty home management processes and Task checklists in HomeMaster.</p> <p>Extra Care Housing: Adult Social Care Needs Assessment/ Wellbeing Plan</p> <p>Safeguarding policy and forms.</p> <p>Staff training on Safeguarding (June 2025).</p> <p>Policy training on Inclusive Service Delivery to be rolled out.</p> <p>Regular updates to HomeMaster contact logs and care records.</p>

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2	Unfair treatment of residents with protected characteristics.	Head of Housing	Staff guidance. eLearning on EDI. Resident-facing factsheet and handbook.
3	Failure to comply with legal or regulatory duties.	Director of Operations	Policy aligned with the Equality Act 2010. Consumer Standards. Housing Ombudsman Code.
4	Vulnerability information not used to inform hazard priority under Awaab Law	Head of Housing	Cross-reference with QP74 Damp and Mould Policy and QP83 Emergency Repairs Policy; ensure staff understand that vulnerability affects priority and welfare response, not scope.
5	Inconsistent communication or welfare contact for residents with identified vulnerabilities	Head of Housing	Homemaster workflow to flag enhanced contact needs.

14.0 Reviewing and monitoring

This policy will be reviewed in July 2026 to capture learning from the first year of Awaab’s Law implementation, and then every three years or sooner if there are significant changes to legislation, regulation, or best practice.

During 2025/26 we will begin to work towards **equity reporting** to the Board. Equity reporting refers to the regular review and discussion at Board level of how fairly and consistently services are delivered across different groups of tenants – particularly those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. This isn’t just about collecting data but about using it to assess whether outcomes are equitable – and then acting where they are not.