



Accessibility Policy

Introduction

Ayrshire Housing is committed to providing high quality services to all sections of the community. We aim to do this in ways which fully comply with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and with our Equalities and Human Rights Policy.

We aim to ensure equal and straightforward access to all facilities and through our communications. This approach mirrors our commitment to lifetime homes in our new housing developments and to provide barrier free working for our employees.

Public facilities at our office

The office is fully wheelchair accessible. Reliance on signage is avoided in favour of personal communication by the receptionist and other members of staff.

Good acoustic characteristics and the avoidance of screens at the reception desk and in interview areas mean that electronic assistance to people with poor hearing (e.g., via induction loops or infra-red receivers) can be avoided.

The provision of computers in interview and meeting areas allows those with specific needs to make use of text to speech and other accessibility aids.

Written Materials

To minimise unnecessary requests for special formats for those with visual or reading impairments, we seek to ensure that our written communications including emails follow certain principles:

- All text should be in simple and direct English. Staff will be expected to be familiar with the guidance provided by the Plain English Campaign.
- Black type on matt white paper will be used on all material subject to general distribution, e.g., the tenant's handbook, application packs, complaints leaflet, etc.
- All text (including emails) should be at a minimum of 12 point in a black san serif typeface, e.g., our corporate letterform, Franklin Gothic Book.
- Emphasis will be achieved with bold rather than italic text.

More detailed guidance is provided in the Staff Handbook. Line managers are expected to ensure compliance through random and recorded checks.

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Created: August 2003
Reviewed: August 2019
Current To: August 2024

Electronic Communication

Our websites are designed to W3C international accessibility standards. The intention is to make them easy to use without unnecessary recourse to accessibility aids.

Increasingly, those with visual or other impairments are making use of text to speech and other accessibility features on their own digital devices. On request, we will provide any document including individual letters as MS Word or PDF files to suit individual requirements. In addition, all key documents are posted on our websites in PDF format. All PDF files are checked for accessibility before publication.

In addition to general accessibility features, the websites have imbedded text to speech and translation facilities.

Other Formats

All general materials (e.g., the tenant's handbook, application packs, complaints handling leaflet, etc) will have the following statement in 14 point:

We can supply this document in a print size to suite. It is also available in Braille, audio and other formats, and in other languages. Our website also has several accessibility features which you may find useful.

Large Print

All documents will be printed to suit individual requests with regard to font size and the paper colour.

We will print any document including individual letters at any requested size and coloured background. We will aim to do this on a same day basis.

Audio versions

Wherever possible, we will provide most documents including letters in audio formats using text to speech software. We will aim to do this on a next day basis.

Longer documents (e.g., the tenant's handbook) will be made available using the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) or other transcription services to ensure professional production. These will be ordered on an individual basis to ensure that specific needs are addressed.

Braille, Moon etc

Documents will be made available on request in Braille, Moon and other formats using the RNIB or other transcription services.

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Other Languages including British Sign Language (BSL)

Translation and interpreting services will be made available on request. We will maintain details of service providers.

Few deaf people use BSL exclusively; most using a combination of signing, phonetic speech, and facial and body language. We will maintain contact details of organisations who are prepared to assist and encourage staff to consider training in communicating with the deaf.

Quality Control

A log will be kept of all general publications produced by Ayrshire Housing. This will cover, for example:

- Text clarity based on an assessment by a manager other than the person responsible for drafting or commissioning the document.
- Compliance with guidance on fonts etc.
- Appropriate paper colour.
- Provision of accessibility statement.
- Accessibility check of PDF version.

The Head of Finance will be responsible for ensuring that the log is completed for each publication prior to printing.



Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment

1. Reasons, responsibilities and monitoring

Title of Policy	Allocations Policy
Relevance to Annual Delivery Plan and 3 Year Business Plan	<p>The policy underpins the following themes and work areas, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing excellent service • Thriving communities • A forward looking and sustainable association • Governance compliance and development.
Name of Lead Person	Jim Whiston
Date EqHRIA completed	August 2019
Review Date and Frequency of Reviews	August 2024 5 years

2. Scoping

What is the purpose of the proposed policy (or changes to be made to the policy)?	The Policy is intended to ensure that our obligations under the Equality Act are met in ways that are convenient to users of our services. It is essentially an update of the current policy to reflect technological developments.
Who is affected by the policy or who is intended to benefit from the proposed policy and how? (stakeholders)	<p>Applicants for housing.</p> <p>Ayrshire Housing tenants.</p> <p>The general public who wish to engage with us.</p>
What human rights are engaged?	<p>The right to be treated with fairness, dignity and respect.</p> <p>The right to not be subjected to discrimination.</p>
How will this policy impact on the equal enjoyment of human rights?	It should support the fair delivery of services.

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In what way is the Equality Duty engaged?	The policy should ensure equality of opportunity and avoid discrimination.
How will this policy impact on compliance with equality duties?	This policy meets our requirements to comply with the “general equality duty” under the Equality Act (2010).

3. Evidence

Do you have information on:	Yes	√	No	
Age	Yes	√	No	
Disability	Yes	√	No	
Sex (including pregnancy and maternity)	Yes	√	No	
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender	Yes		No	√
Race	Yes	√	No	
Religion and Belief	Yes		No	√
Staff	Yes	√	No	
Tenants	Yes	√	No	
Those on Waiting List	Yes	√	No	
The local Community	Yes	√	No	

4. Is this information sufficient? Yes/No

If no, outline when and how it will be sourced before moving to Question 5.

Whilst we do not collect information on LGBT people or on religion and belief, there should be no impact on our human rights or equalities. We aim through an open access policy and our general approach to maximise access to housing opportunities to all sections of the community without reference to these characteristics.

5. Impact

What does the information you have tell you about how this policy might impact positively and/or negatively on your stakeholders?

We would test the impact of the policy by seeking direct user feedback.

6. Please summarise the results of the EqHRIA.

It is suggested that the policy will have a positive impact with regard to equalities and human rights.

7. What is your recommended course of action?

Outcome 1: Proceed – no potential for unlawful discrimination, and no adverse impact or breach of human rights articles has been identified.	√
Outcome 2: Proceed with adjustments to: address discrimination, remove barriers to the advancement of equality of opportunity and fostering good relations, address breaches of human rights.	
Outcome 3: Continue despite having identified some potential for adverse impact or missed opportunity to advance equality and human rights (justification to be clearly set out).	
Outcome 4: Stop and rethink as actual or potential unlawful discrimination or breach of human rights articles has been identified.	

8. Please explain how you will monitor and evaluate this policy to measure progress:

How, Who and When

The application of this policy will be monitored by the Director and Head of Finance no less than annually.

9. Who will you share this EQHRIA with?

The wider public.

10. How will you share this EQHRIA?

By appending this impact assessment to the policy which is available on our website.

AUTHORISATION TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY

Authorisation date:	28.08.2019
Authorisation Manager:	