

## **Reasonable Adjustments Policy**

- **Objective:** To improve and record methods of communication with the Practice for all patients with learning disabilities or impairments recognised under the Equality Act (2010)
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- **Date Created:** 14<sup>th</sup> October 2026

### **Introduction**

The Bridges Medical Practice endeavours to provide high-quality patient services. This policy details what a reasonable adjustment is and our responsibility and considerations when reviewing your request.

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure we are compliant with the Equality & Diversity regulations and legislation.

This policy confirms our process for considering patient requests for reasonable adjustments and our commitment to improving accessibility for all our patients. In addition to detailing some of the basic principles of our legal duties to provide reasonable adjustments.

### **What is a reasonable adjustment?**

A reasonable adjustment is a change to the way we usually do things to ensure all patients have access to our services. For example:

- Providing longer appointment time to support patients with learning disabilities or neurodivergence to give more time for discussion and understanding.
- Providing an interpreter to overcome language barriers
- Providing alternative methods of communication, i.e. email or text.
- Providing appropriate environments to support patients with sensory issues.

We will discuss requirements with patients with the intention of reaching agreement on what reasonable adjustments can be implemented.

### **Legal duties in relation to disabled people**

The Equality Act 2010 requires us to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled patients – defined by the Act as those with 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.

### **Duty to make reasonable adjustments as a service provider**

As a service provider, we have a duty to make reasonable adjustments if the services we provide places a disabled person at a "substantial disadvantage" compared to a person with no disabilities. Our aim is to consider what reasonable adjustments can be made to remove any disadvantage.

### **Requesting reasonable adjustments**

To request a reasonable adjustment, please request a form from reception. It is also possible to complete an online request using System Connect. To ensure patients are aware we can provide reasonable adjustments, we will:

- Publish this policy on our website.
- Ask patients opportunistically during consultations.
- Inform patients via posters/screens displayed at the practice.
- When patients are invited for their annual learning disability review, they will be sent a reasonable adjustments form to bring with them to their appointment

- Continue to use our new patient registration questionnaire to gather information about patients' reasonable adjustments.

### **What types of reasonable adjustments can we offer**

Reasonable adjustment requests will be considered individually. There are already reasonable adjustments in place to support patients:

- Online consultation requests– patients are able to complete a request for clinical and non- clinical issues online using Systm Connect
- Offering longer appointment time for those with learning disability or mental health problems
- Offering preferred appointment time of day
- Providing an interpreter / sign language
- Communicating via email (consent required)
- Communicating via text (consent required)
- Providing documents with larger font size

### **Responding to reasonable adjustment requests**

We will endeavour to respond to reasonable requests as soon as possible. With regards to complex requests, we will aim to work with you to agree a reasonable adjustment to overcome the issue.

### **How to decide what is reasonable**

We will consider if the request will overcome the difficulty. How practical it is to implement the adjustment and whether there are resources available in terms of cost.

### **Recording and monitoring**

Reasonable Adjustments will be recorded in patient records to trigger alert flags reminding staff of the patient's reasonable adjustments. Disabilities and conditions that require reasonable adjustments will be recorded in the patient's "Major Active Problems" so they are clearly visible to all staff. All staff are responsible for asking patients if they have any reasonable adjustments and updating the records accordingly. This applies to new patients and monitoring of existing patients.

### **Sharing your reasonable adjustments with other healthcare providers**

The NHS has introduced the Reasonable Adjustments Digital Flag tool. This enables practices to record patients' reasonable adjustments using an approved NHS template with the option to share with other healthcare providers with consent from the patient. Your consent will enable other healthcare providers to offer the agreed reasonable adjustment when you attend other health-related appointments, for example at the hospital.

### **Staff Awareness and Training**

All staff will be notified of the process for recording and reviewing reasonable adjustments. All staff will complete the online Oliver McGowan training, and clinical staff will attend the face-to-face training day. This will raise awareness of reasonable adjustments and how they can help staff to provide good accessible care to all patients.