



## Your Co-op Accessibility and Vulnerability Policy

### Introduction

At Your Co-op we're committed to providing best in class service to all our customers, including those with vulnerabilities and disabilities. We want to make it as easy as possible for our customers to get the most out of the services we provide. This policy outlines our approach so that we can continue to ensure that we are able to look after the needs of everyone.

### Identifying Vulnerable Customers

We know that there are lots of different factors and life events which may cause vulnerability, whether it be long-term or on a temporary basis. It could be because of age, a physical or learning disability, or difficulty in communicating. We also understand that challenging events like bereavement or separating from a partner can mean that you need extra support, to help keep you connected while you get back on your feet.

We encourage you to let us know at the earliest opportunity if you or anyone in your household may need additional support from us for you to use and make the most of the services we offer.

Depending on the service you are purchasing from us, you may be able to indicate you need additional support during our online order process. If you were not asked this question, or your circumstances have changed since your order, you can let us know about any additional support you may need by calling 01608 434000. We have a simple phone menu which will then get you quickly to the most relevant department. If you would prefer, you can email [yourcoophello@midcounties.coop](mailto:yourcoophello@midcounties.coop) or use the [form available on our website](#).

Vulnerability can impact everyone in different ways and the required support will vary upon individual circumstances. We ask our agents to pay that extra level of care, attention and sensitivity when communicating with vulnerable and disabled customers and this means we:

- allow people to take their time, and are patient.
- actively listen, play back your understanding, paraphrase, etc.
- check understanding.
- avoid jargon and think about the language we use.
- are prepared to repeat information and explanations.

At the same time, we ask you to respect our agents and refrain from any abusive behaviour.

### How We Record This Information

We will only record information about a vulnerability or disability which is relevant to the services that we provide. We may need to ask for your permission to keep a record of any personal information about your disability and any alternative formats you require for your personal circumstances. Likewise, we may need to keep a record of aspects of vulnerability where we need to





provide you with additional support or adapt our services. This information will be recorded on our Customer Relationship Management systems and / or recorded on system notes for internal use. This information will be stored and used to help ensure we provide you with the right services and support to meet your needs.

For more information about how we hold or use your data please refer to our privacy policy. Rest assured that we'll treat any information you provide in confidence and in accordance with data protection law.

### **How we support our Vulnerable and Disabled Customers**

Where we are made aware someone is vulnerable we will make reasonable adjustments. Below are some examples of how we may adapt our service.

#### *1. Low literacy (including dyslexia), numeracy skills:*

- We will check understanding and your requirements.
- We will be clear and concise with selling terms.
- We will repeat information if needed.

#### *2. Severe or long term illness:*

- You can nominate someone to speak on your behalf or whether you need us to consider your illness in our decisions.

#### *3. Mental health problems:*

- You can ask us for additional time to help you understand or process information,
- Tell us how you would prefer to communicate with us. You can contact us by email or by letter if you don't want to talk to us over the phone.

#### *4. Caring responsibilities (including having Power of Attorney)*

- Caring for someone can be challenging and we understand that Carers may require additional support. We understand that they might need added as a contact on to someone's account. We will explain our processes on how to do this

#### *5. Bereavement:*

- We understand how difficult it can be when a friend or family member has passed away. Our Customer Services team are here to make the process of changing owner or closing an account as easy as possible for you. Our team will talk you through the next steps.

#### *6. Financial hardship*

- We recognise that customers may experience issues that make paying on time difficult sometimes. We are always willing to work with you to agree a payment plan to reduce any debt you may have built up. We can advise on other organisations who can provide debt





advice. We can provide a free account review to ensure you are on the best value service for your circumstances. We can set up limits on your account to prevent unexpected charges.

We are happy to share that our agents are not targeted to limit call duration and have only limited scripts to follow. This allows our agents to focus on providing you an excellent service and allow you the time to discuss any issues comfortably.

You should expect our agents to give you clear timescales on issue resolution should it not be possible to resolve during the call. Our agents will follow up phone conversations with an email if this would be a benefit to you.

### **Services for customers with disabilities and vulnerabilities**

#### *1. Communications in Accessible Formats*

We want to make sure you always get the information you need in a way that's easy for you to use and understand. If you need your bills and other important documents in an alternative format we can provide them in large print or Braille.

#### *2. Free Directory Enquiries Service*

If you're not able to read or hold a printed directory, you can apply for free 195 Directory Enquiries. To sign up for this service, you'll need to complete an application form, which will need to be counter signed by a medical professional. To request a form, call 0800 587 0195 and ask to speak with the registration team, whose opening hours are 9am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday. Once signed up, you'll be given a PIN number and can start using the 195 service. Please note: this service is not provided by Your Co-op

#### *3. Text Relay Service*

A text relay service, called Relay UK can help customers use a phone when they have difficulty hearing or speaking. It's effectively a translation service, which converts voice-to-text or text-to-voice.

If you have difficulties with hearing, a relay assistant will type what the other person is saying, so that you can read their words in real time. If you have difficulty speaking on the phone, a relay assistant will speak the words you type, so the other person can hear your words in real time.

Relay UK is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

You can use a text phone for Relay UK, but a free app is also available, which works with smartphones, tablets, laptops and PCs, so that you can use Relay UK wherever you have an internet connection.

Relay UK is not a service provided directly by Your Co-op. To find out lots more about the options available and how to use Relay UK we recommend that you visit their website:

<https://www.relayuk.bt.com/>





The cost of a text relay call is the same as if you made the call without text relay. We know that text relay calls can take longer than a voice call, so we make adjustments to your call charges to make sure that you aren't out of pocket.

#### *4. Emergency SMS*

The emergency SMS service is there for people with hearing or speech impairments, so they can alert the emergency services without needing to call them.

The emergency SMS service lets deaf, hard of hearing and speech-impaired people in the UK send an SMS text message to the UK 999 service where it will be passed to the police, ambulance, fire rescue, or coastguard.

It's a two-way service, allowing users to receive messages from the emergency services (for example, advice on how to care for a person who has been injured).

#### *5. Emergency Video Relay*

Emergency video relay enables deaf British Sign Language (BSL) users to contact the emergency services in their first language. It is an addition to the existing means of contacting the emergency services (voice 999, text relay 999 and SMS 999).

Emergency video relay can be accessed 24/7 via a smartphone app or web browser and enables deaf BSL users in the UK to make calls to emergency authorities such as the police, ambulance, fire and coastguard services via BSL video relay interpreters.

A deaf person will be able to make a video call to a qualified and experienced interpreter who is in a call centre. The interpreter will translate what the deaf person is signing into spoken English for the emergency services to hear, and sign what the emergency services are saying to the deaf person.

Any data that customers use to make the video call will be 'zero rated' and the service will be free for the user – just as other emergency calls are.

For more information, and to download the app, please visit <https://999bsl.co.uk/>

#### *6. Assigning a nominated contact and Power of Attorney*

Appointing a Nominated contact enables someone you trust or one of your employees to discuss various aspects of your account including balance enquires and call charges. They can also make payments on your behalf. Your Nominated User is not directly liable for any charges on your account, as the Account Holder remains the same.

There may be times when you need someone to manage your affairs for you. A Power of Attorney (PoA) is a legal document which gives someone else (known as the attorney) legal authority to make decisions and act on your behalf. If you have a PoA we'll treat them as the account holder, which means you'll no longer be able to manage your account. You can find out more information on PoA including other types of PoA on Ofcom's website.





## 7. Priority Fault Repair

We provide priority fault repair for customers who depend on the telephone service because of illness or disability (landline phones only). Priority fault repair is a free service for customers who rely on their Your Co-op services for health and mobility reasons. If you're eligible, you'll get priority when you report a fault to us. The service is only available to you if your household includes someone at risk, or you have accessibility requirements such as:

- Renal Dialysis Machine.
- Artificial Ventilator.
- Unable to move around the house unaided due to chronic long-term illness or disability.

The priority fault repair service doesn't cover:

- lines is supplied by another service provider.
- any warden-controlled, residential nursing, care homes or similar type of property.
- alarm monitoring stations, control rooms or other types of alarm lines or installations.

### Policy Review

We strive to continually improve our service to you. We welcome any feedback, good or bad, on the service you have received to enable us to review our policies and training, and to reward our agents who have provided an excellent service.

We have an active working group - consisting of senior leaders, team leaders and agents - who meet regularly to discuss how we can improve our service to customers who need additional support.

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it effectively supports the fair and appropriate treatment and meets the needs of Vulnerable Customers or End Users with Disabilities. The review will include an assessment of customer complaints and feedback received regarding this policy.

### How to obtain additional copies of this Accessibility and Vulnerability Policy

You can obtain additional copies of this Vulnerability Policy in the following ways:

#### *By Writing*

Your Co-op  
5 The Millhouse  
Elmsfield Business Park  
Chipping Norton  
OX7 5XL

Alternatively you can download and print off additional copies from our website at:

<https://broadband.yourcoop.coop/help-resources/contact-us/>

Last Review: 14 May 2024.

