

## **TalkTalk Accessibility and Vulnerable Customer Policy**

### **1.0 Introduction**

At TalkTalk we believe in affordable, fair connectivity for everyone. We recognise that individuals with accessibility requirements or people who, as a result of circumstances, may be vulnerable, may have particular service needs. This policy sets out the services and working practices that we offer to help meet these needs.

### **2.0 Who does this policy apply to?**

This policy applies to;

- (a) Customers;
- (b) Prospective customers;
- (c) Former customers and;
- (d) Nominated users or individuals acting under a Power of Attorney

### **2.1 Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy Vulnerable Customers are Customers who, as a result of their personal circumstances may be particularly susceptible to harm or detriment. This includes circumstances which impact their ability to make an informed decision, access services or take appropriate action.

We won't judge a person's capacity simply on the basis of age, an aspect of behaviour or circumstance, but we recognise that the following circumstances can make a customer more vulnerable:

- Age
- Physical or learning disability
- Physical or mental illness
- Low Literacy Levels
- Communication Difficulties
- Significant changes in circumstances such as bereavement

This policy also considers specific needs of individuals with additional accessibility requirements. Whilst not all people with disabilities are vulnerable, we recognise that we may need to make adjustments to enable access to our services.

### **3.0 TalkTalk Accessibility and Vulnerable Customer Practices**

#### **3.1 Our commitment**

We commit to ensuring the fair and appropriate treatment of our Vulnerable Customers.

As vulnerability does not impact everyone in the same way, we believe each vulnerable customer's needs should be assessed on an individual basis. We use the following principles as a guide to help determine appropriate support measures:

1. Customers should be supported in making informed decisions about TalkTalk's products and services.
2. We will never assume that a customer's vulnerability means that they do not have the mental capacity to make a decision and we won't discriminate against someone because of their vulnerability. We will treat vulnerable customers with respect and be understanding and be empathetic to their situation, providing practical support.
3. We may sometimes need to take steps to safeguard customers where their welfare is a concern, or in immediate or imminent danger.

#### **3.2. Vulnerability**

There are many reasons which may cause a customer to be vulnerable and required support will vary based upon an individual's circumstances. Where we are made aware a customer is vulnerable, we will consider reasonable adjustments. Below are some examples of how we may adapt our service.

Low literacy (including dyslexia), numeracy skills:

- We will check understanding and the customer's requirements
- We will be clear and concise with selling terms
- We will repeat information if needed Severe or long term illness:
- We will consider if the customer needs to nominate someone to speak on their behalf or need us to consider their illness in our decisions Mental health problems:
- We may recommend a suitable channel of communication to support the customers preferred communication method
- Dependent upon the customer circumstances, we may consider signposting to external support Caring responsibilities (including having Power of Attorney)
- Caring for someone can be challenging and Carers may require signposting to additional support

- They might need to set up or operate a Power of Attorney or be a Nominated User on the customer's accounts. We will explain our processes where they are needed

## Bereavement

- A bereaved customer is likely to require an empathetic approach. They may also need guidance on processes or may require information to be repeated

Other ways we will support include:

Changing how we act:

- We will allow people to take their time and be patient
  - Actively listen, play back your understanding, paraphrase, etc.
  - Check understanding
  - Avoid jargon and think about the language we use
  - Be prepared to repeat information and explanations
- Third Party Support
- We will support the customer to set up a Nominated User on their behalf and sign post how to do this

## 3.3 Services we offer

TalkTalk has a number of different services to support customers with accessibility requirements which may also be helpful for some vulnerable customers, these can all be found within our [Accessibility section](#) on our website. These services include:

3.3.1. Alternative format - We can provide bills, contracts and letters in formats such as large print, Braille and audio CD or coloured paper upon request.

3.3.2 Priority Fault Repair - We provide priority fault repair for customers who medically depend on the telephone service because of illness or disability. Eligibility criteria and limitations apply to this service.

3.3.3 Free 195 Directory Enquiries - If you're not able to read or hold a printed directory, you can apply for free 195 Directory Enquiries. Registration is required to access this service.

3.3.4. Next Generation Text Relay Service - If you are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired, the Text Relay Service can help you make the most of your phone.

3.3.5 Third Party Bill Management - Appointing a Nominated User or Power of Attorney on your account enables someone you trust to discuss all aspects of your account, make payments and changes to your account. Your Nominated

User is not directly liable for any charges on your account, as these remain the Account Holders responsibility.

3.3.6 Mobile SMS access to emergency organisations - Customers with hearing or speech impairments can use Mobile SMS to access to emergency organisations by using the emergency call numbers “112” and “999”

3.3.7 The Video Relay Service allows deaf and hearing people to communicate from separate locations via the telephone, in their own respective languages. A deaf person can use various endpoints (smart phone, tablets and web-based) to make a call to the emergency services, through a BSL (British Sign Language) interpreter appearing on their screen. A hearing operator will then receive a call from the remote BSL interpreter, who then relays the conversation by seeing and communicating with the deaf person on screen. This service is free to all users and no registration is required. For more information, please visit <https://999bsl.co.uk>.

#### **4.0 How to make us aware of your circumstances and accessibility requirements**

To make us aware of your circumstances or accessibility needs you can get in touch via our main contact channels including live chat, by email, by phone or in writing.

We may need to ask for your permission to keep a record of any personal information about your disability, 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 privacy policy online at [Privacy Policy](#).

#### **5.0 Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it effectively supports the fair and appropriate treatment needs of our customers with accessibility requirements and vulnerable customers. The review will include an assessment of customer feedback and internal analysis regarding this policy.

#### **6.0 Contact Us**

If you would like to speak to our team, you can [contact us](#).