

Vulnerability & Accessibility Policy



Switch. For good!

01.

Policy Overview

- is committed to understanding the needs and preferences of customers in vulnerable circumstances and those with accessibility requirements. Our aim is to respond to these needs by removing barriers they may face or avoiding creating such barriers in the first place.
- V4 Consumer has adopted the social model of disability which we also apply to our understanding of customers in vulnerable circumstances. This means that we:
 - Look at the effects of the world we live in on an individual's ability to be themselves
 - Consider the effect of the condition or circumstance, and the barriers to accessing our products and services, rather than the condition or circumstance itself
 - Constantly challenge us to find and remove those barriers that get in the way of personal choice and having a memorable customer experience
 - Not make assumptions about disability and vulnerability. These are often not visible, can be acquired, temporary or situational. Not all disabled people are vulnerable.
- Vulnerability comes in many forms. It can be permanent or temporary, constant, or intermittent. Many people in vulnerable circumstances would not regard themselves as 'vulnerable', and two people experiencing the same issue or event might interpret their degree of vulnerability very differently.
- V4 Consumer recognizes that businesses can inadvertently exacerbate the effects of vulnerability or create barriers for disabled customers through poor practices. We seek to mitigate this at each stage a customer interacts with us, from a potential customer engaging with our marketing materials and subsequently joining us, through to accessing, using, and paying for our service.
- V4 Consumer is committed to ensuring its policies and processes support the identification of vulnerable customers and protect them from any detriment.
- V4 Consumer is therefore focused on transforming our workplace, practices, and processes to change the way we support disabled customers and customers in vulnerable circumstances. This means that we seek to:
 - Design inclusive products, services, and processes
 - Equip our people with the confidence and skills to remove barriers for disabled or vulnerable people engage our disabled customers and, working with external experts and organisations including the Ofcom Consumer Panel, make sure we are best informed when it comes to disability and vulnerability
- This policy sets out our approach to supporting disabled and vulnerable customers and the services we provide to remove barriers and protect them.
- In addition to our continual work to ensure that products are inclusive, engaging with relevant stakeholders, and acting on specific feedback to implement appropriate improvements, we also commit to reviewing our policies and procedures on an annual basis to ensure they remain effective and provide the right support.

02.**Identifying and understanding our customers' needs**

- We are committed to ensuring both vulnerable and disabled customers get fair and appropriate treatment.
- To ensure we meet the needs of current and prospective customers, our sales and support teams are trained to identify and support the accessibility and vulnerability needs people may have.
- When joining V4 Consumer, we encourage customers that have specific accessibility needs or are experiencing circumstances which could make them vulnerable, to inform the V4 Consumer sales and support teams. Vulnerability could include age, physical or learning disability, physical or mental illness, low literacy, communication difficulties or bereavement. This information will be logged on our systems, ensuring the V4 Consumer team is fully aware and able to take whatever action is appropriate, in a suitably timely manner.
- At any point during a customer's time with V4 Consumer, our customer service agents can amend this status to reflect any changes to the accessibility need or vulnerability. This can be done by contacting us through any of the options outlined in the 'Contact Us' section of this policy.
- We understand that bereavement can be a difficult time. All our sales and support teams are provided with training to support bereaved customers. V4 Consumer will help to make appropriate changes to a bereaved customer's account or manage the closing of an account. Customers can contact us using any of the channels in the 'Contact Us' section (at the end of this document).

If it is the account holder who has died, an officially elected representative may close the account or transfer the services currently provided. The V4 Consumer Bereavement Guide explains the options that are available. Please request a copy of the same by contacting us via, phone, e-mail or writing into us using the Contact Us methods right at the bottom of this

03.**Joining V4 Consumer**

- Personal information
- At V4 Consumer, we take the safeguarding of customer information very seriously. One of the ways we do this is by adhering to the requirements of UK data protection legislation, as part of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in force from May 2018.
- The V4 Consumer privacy policy details how, when, and why personal data is used.
- Customers can manage their marketing preferences at any time by contacting us.

04.**Using V4 Consumer products and services**

- Home phone
- We think everybody should be able to benefit from a home phone service, helping you live an independent life.

- Additional features
- Additional features are available to customers who
 - Experience: Limited mobility
 - Limited speech and
 - Language Limited dexterity
 - Cognitive or learning
 - Disabilities Blindness or
 - Poor sight
 - Deafness or hard of hearing
- These features are available to customers taking V4 Consumer home phone only. They are not available to customers taking home phone and broadband together. Also available are billing formats to meet our customers' needs, such as large print bills
- The Emergency SMS Service allows deaf, hard of hearing and speech-impaired people in the UK to send text messages via SMS to UK 999 and 112 emergency services. Messages are passed to the police, ambulance, fire and rescue or coastguard, who can reply by text message via SMS.
- Directory enquiries
- We know not all customers are able to access telephone contact information using the telephone book or online listing.
- To help customers contact local companies and services by phone, V4 Consumer offers a directory enquiries service, which is free of charge to all customers (up to 10 enquiries per day).
- Text Relay Service & Next Generation Text Relay
- The Text Relay service is available to customers that cannot speak on the phone or prefer not to.
- The conversation is typed using a textphone's keypad, and then connected with the person being contacted. It doesn't matter whether the other person has a telephone or a textphone because a relay assistant will connect the customer and the person being called.
- Next Generation Text Relay differs from Text Relay as it enables access to the telephone system through a range of connected devices such as smartphones, tablets and personal computers. By downloading an app to your device, you can conduct your conversation as text. For more details on Text Relay Services and Next Generation Text Relay, visit ngts.org.uk/.
- Priority fault repair home phone services.
- We understand how important it is to stay in touch. Therefore, we provide priority repairs to customers with an impairment or disability and are experiencing disruption to their V4 Consumer service.



- To make use of V4 Consumer's priority repair service, customers with an impairment, health condition or disability should pre-register by contacting either the Onstream sales or support team.
- Please note we'll prioritize repair over standard care levels but there may be circumstances beyond our control that mean we cannot provide an immediate response. For example, weather conditions like floods or storms can stop our engineers carrying out repairs or undertaking line installations.
- Priority fault repair service is available where a customer has no dial tone or cannot receive or make calls on the landline phone.
- Account protect scheme
- For customers that may find it hard to pay their bill or worry that their bill may go unpaid due to things beyond their control, our scheme provides peace of mind.
- The scheme allows a nominated friend or family member to manage a customer's account, taking care of things like paying bills, making changes to the Onstream services required and reporting technical issues.
- The nominated representative must agree to act for the customer, be registered with V4 Consumer (as a nominated representative) and understand they may be contacted by V4 Consumer about the customer's account.
- If for some reason the friend or family member does not pay the bill on time, a reminder will be sent. If the bill isn't paid after 30 days, we'll contact them to make arrangements for payment.
- If a bill cannot be paid, a payment plan can be arranged with our customer accounts team to clear any outstanding amount(s). Please know that if this happens, we may downgrade services until a payment plan is agreed.

05.

Paying for our services

- Financial difficulties
- If financial difficulties lead to issues with paying a bill, a specific process exists to support V4 Consumer customers. A specialist team will review the customer's account, considering their circumstances at the time, and contact them directly to agree a mutually acceptable action plan.
- If no contact can be made, a letter will be sent notifying the customer that their services may be restricted if they do not contact V4 Consumer. A further review of the account and payment status is then made five days later. A further attempt to contact the customer will be made.
- If there is no response, the customer's services will be restricted and a letter sent, confirming what action will be taken to protect the interests of both the customer and V4 Consumer. At all times customers will be able to make calls to UK emergency services.



06.

Contact us

■ **Call**

0330 118 8871

■ **Email**

support@v4consumer.co.uk