

Policies and regulations are often written in complex legal language. This series explains what key policies mean in plain terms — what they require, what they protect, and what you can do if they are not followed.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Each section below covers one policy area. Read the summary first, then the key points. The 'What this means for you' note explains the practical impact. If a policy is not being followed, you have the right to raise a formal complaint.

POLICY AREAS EXPLAINED

DISABILITY DISCLOSURE

EMPLOYMENT & SERVICES

You are not legally required to disclose that you are autistic in most civic and employment contexts. Disclosure is a personal decision. However, disclosing may be necessary to access certain adjustments or support.

KEY POINTS:

- You cannot be penalised for disclosing a disability.
- Disclosure to one person does not mean all staff are informed.
- You may disclose at any time — before, during, or after an interaction.
- Asking about your disability without a legitimate reason may be unlawful.

What this means for you: You choose if, when, and to whom you disclose. You do not owe anyone an explanation.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

DISABILITY RIGHTS

Public bodies and employers are generally required to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people are not substantially disadvantaged compared to non-disabled people.

KEY POINTS:

- Adjustments must be practical and proportionate — not unlimited.
- You can request adjustments in writing; keep a copy.
- Refusal of a reasonable request may constitute discrimination.
- Examples: extra time, written instructions, quieter space, support person.

What this means for you: You can ask for adjustments. If refused without good reason, you may have grounds to complain.

DATA AND PRIVACY RIGHTS

DATA PROTECTION

Organisations that hold information about you — including disability status — must handle it lawfully, fairly, and transparently. You have rights over your personal data.

KEY POINTS:

- You can request a copy of data held about you (subject access request).
- Data about your disability is 'special category' data — higher protection applies.
- You can ask for inaccurate data to be corrected.
- Data cannot be shared without a lawful basis.

What this means for you: You can ask what data is held about you and request corrections. This is free in most cases.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION RIGHTS

DEMOCRACY & ACCESS

Autistic people have the same right to participate in civic life as anyone else — including voting, attending public meetings, accessing government services, and making formal complaints.

KEY POINTS:

- Polling stations must be accessible; assistance is available on request.
- Public meetings must accommodate reasonable access needs.
- You have the right to make a formal complaint about any public body.
- Plain-language versions of public documents can be requested.

What this means for you: Your civic rights are the same as everyone else's. Barriers to participation can be formally challenged.

IF A POLICY IS NOT FOLLOWED: Ask for the organisation's complaints procedure in writing. You have the right to escalate to an independent body.