

## ACCOMMODATION SERVICES DISABLED STUDENTS POLICY

Accommodation Services is committed to providing a positive, supportive and inclusive environment within our halls of residence for students who have a disability or long term health condition.

We work closely with the Disability Support Team and the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team (hereafter referred to as student support teams) to ensure your requirements are met to enable you to live independently whilst studying at the University.

We recognise that leaving home for the first time can be a stressful experience for all students and this may affect you more if you have a disability or long/short-term health condition, which could be affected by the type of accommodation that best suits your requirements. If there are medical or mobility factors which have a bearing on your accommodation needs, it is essential you provide full details and supporting evidence at the time of application to enable us to offer you appropriate accommodation. We can only make you a room offer once we are able to confirm that appropriate accommodation is available and reasonable adjustments can be made.

We guarantee that if you have a physical or sensory disability or a long-term health condition, which causes you significant difficulties in your day-to-day life you will be offered accommodation for the duration of your course but due to possible changes in the portfolio please note that this may not be the same accommodation each year. If you accept an offer of a course through insurance or clearing we may be unable to meet all your requirements by the start of your Licence Agreement. The majority of our accessible accommodation is provided at University Locks and here we can provide parking for blue badge holders.

We will require any information about the specific adaptations or support that you will require as soon as possible. You may already have provided this information to the relevant student support team, in which case, we will require your permission to talk to them about your specific requirements. A letter or email giving us permission to share information about your individual requirements with other appropriate University staff to ensure that we meet your accommodation requirements appropriately would be required.

If you have not previously informed us of a disability or long-term health condition, we will require a medical certificate/letter from your own Doctor. If your accommodation requirements are supported by a medical report and any additional supporting documentation it would avoid unnecessary delays and help when processing your room offer. This must be on letter headed paper or a supporting letter from the Disability Support Team or the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team giving an explanation as to why specific University accommodation will be required.

You must also complete an Online Application Form by the deadline 31 July 2021 indicating that you have a disability or long/short-term health condition and your choice of accommodation if your application is successful.

If you have any questions regarding suitable accommodation, please contact us by email at [accommodation@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:accommodation@bcu.ac.uk)

It is important that you receive the appropriate advice/help in respect of additional requirements you may have. Please contact the Disability Support Team at [disability@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:disability@bcu.ac.uk) or the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team at [sa.wellbeing@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:sa.wellbeing@bcu.ac.uk). This will enable you to get the full advice and guidance you may need before commencing your course.

### **Personal care support**

If you require a Personal Support Worker to enable you to live independently at university, we can also provide a room for them. The local authority in your home town where you are 'ordinarily resident' remains responsible for assessing and paying for any social or personal care support whilst you are living away from home at university. They can assist with completing applications for financial support through the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) or for Personal Independence Payments (PIP), which can help with some of the extra (non-study related) costs caused by a disability. Further information about state benefits assistance is available from Disability Rights UK <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/how-we-can-help/individuals/education/frequently-asked-questions-students> and the Disabled Students Helpline at Disability Rights UK <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/how-we-can-help/helplines/disabled-students-helpline>

It can take a long time (up to twelve months) to make arrangements for personal care so it is important that you start to make plans as soon as you have received your offer (even if it is conditional).

International students are not normally eligible for financial assistance with care costs from the British government, and the University is unable to fund personal care support. Therefore it is essential that you have included these additional costs in your budget, and that you have sufficient funding in place for the duration of your course before you come to the UK.

### **Equipment required to live safely and independently**

If you require equipment in your accommodation to live independently and safely, it is important that you tell us what you need when you apply for accommodation. The University's accessible accommodation includes a range of fittings to assist with independent living, such as hoists and wet rooms. However, there are some types of equipment, which you will need to bring with you. For example, if you need a device such as an alarm or smartwatch to call for help in the event of a seizure. If you are unsure, please contact us for advice.

### **Pet as a disability aid**

Occasionally students living in halls of residence would benefit from having a pet as an aid to their disability. Permission is strictly regulated and consideration will only be given if it is fully supported by the relevant student support team..

The student has to take responsibility for the welfare, cleanliness and safety/security of the animal and if this is not fulfilled the University reserves the right to request the animal is removed from the halls of residence. Written confirmation of this will be required from the student.

The student will be required to give the University permission to advise other students allocated to the same flat that an animal will be in the accommodation. This will give the

University the opportunity to relocate students before arrival if they are not comfortable with the arrangement. The University will not divulge the nature of the disability but advise that the animal is permitted as an aid to a disability in accordance with the Licence Agreement. We will request written consent from the other students.

Depending on the type of animal, the University may stipulate the type/location of the accommodation. For example, for a rabbit or a rat we would suggest an accessible room, which has an en-suite wet room with plenty of floor space for a cage rather than a standard room where floor space is limited. For a small caged animal, such as a hamster, a standard room would be suitable.

Assistance dogs are permitted however further discussion would be required to ensure appropriate exercise and toilet facilities are available. Assistance dogs living in University accommodation must have been trained by a member organisation of Assistance Dogs UK, have a formal identification in the form of branded jackets or lead slips and have the yellow ID booklet from the AD(UK) member organisation. This ID book contains information about the owner and their dog, and the training organisation who trained the dog and its owner.

### **Equality and Diversity**

The University operates an Equal Opportunities Policy and, accordingly, Accommodation Services offers accommodation to students regardless of race, gender, religion, disability or sexuality. It is expected that students in University accommodation will uphold the principles of this policy and be tolerant towards each other.