

Vulnerable customer policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the operations and offerings of Marks Electrical do not negatively impact vulnerable customers. For the purposes of this policy, vulnerable customers are customers whose ability or circumstances require us to take extra precautions in the way that we sell our products and services.

Identifying a vulnerable customer

All our staff are appropriately trained to identify vulnerable customers, enabling the business to take additional steps to assist those customers, outside of our standard procedures. It is not always possible for our employees to identify these characteristics, therefore if you believe you fit the criteria of a vulnerable customer, please notify us of your needs.

Vulnerable customers

In order for us to identify vulnerable customers, we have selected certain groups of customers that may be vulnerable. We appreciate that not all customers that fit into these groups will be vulnerable, and these groups will not pick up all vulnerable customers, however, we will consider customers individual circumstances where a potential vulnerability exists. These groups have been identified below:

- Customers with communication difficulties (including learning difficulties, hearing difficulties, dyslexia and English not being their first language)
- A customer with a reduction in physical or mental capacity
- Customers with health issues - illness, whether physical or mental illness, severe or long term
- A sudden diagnosis of serious illness to the customer or close family member
- Personal circumstances of the customer – factors such as financial difficulties, bereavement, caring responsibilities or redundancy
- The customers age, particularly older and younger people. For example, a younger person may be considered inexperienced and the older person may be less technologically able

Signs we look for from the customer

- Does the customer ask us to speak up or speak slower?
- Does the customer understand what we are saying, or do they miss important bits?
- Does the customer appear confused about what is being offered?
- Does the customer ask any unrelated questions?
- Does the customer struggle to stay on topic during the conversation?
- Does the customer keep repeating themselves?
- Does the customer take a long time to answer questions or say that someone else deals with these things for them?
- Does the customer have a language barrier?
- Does the customer say they don't understand their bank statements, a previous phone conversation, or recent written correspondence?

Engagement with vulnerable customers

If a member of our team believe we are engaging with a vulnerable customer, whether this is through our identification, or advice from the customer, we will:

- Immediately make a record of this and ensure we adhere to this policy
- Provide additional opportunities for the customer to ask questions about the information we have provided
- Show patience and emphasis where appropriate
- Continuously seek confirmation that the customer has understood the information that has been provided
- Ask the customer to explain to us what they understand the agreement to be
- Do not make assumptions about a customer's needs
- Ask the customer to explain to us what they understand the agreement to be
- Always remember that the customer we are speaking to may sometimes be forgetful or overly trusting and believe that a sales representative is always acting in their best interest
- Listen for what is not being said, for example, lack of questions about price, lack of commitment, timing of responses, extended silences
- Ensure the customer is not overextending and buying products surplus to requirements
- Ask if there is anybody with the customer who is able to assist. If not, and we believe this will be beneficial, we will make arrangements to continue with the subject matter at another time
- Offer the customer the opportunity to complete the transaction after a period of further consideration

If we can't assist a customer, we will try and make sure that they understand what alternative options are available to them.