

ST. LEONARD'S COMMUNITY SERVICES LONDON & REGION
POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

 St. Leonard's community services LONDON & REGION	Section: Organizational Planning and Performance	Policy: 2.13
	Subject: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)	Page 1 of 5
	Original Approval Date July 8, 2019	Last Review Date June 11, 2020
	Approval Body SLCS Executive Director	Last Revision Date n/a

PREAMBLE

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) was passed by the Ontario legislature with the goal of creating a barrier-free Ontario by 2025. Under the AODA, the government will develop and enforce specific standards to improve accessibility across the province. The standards will set requirements in a number of key areas. Five sets of standards are planned, including:

- Customer Service – regulation now in force
- Transportation
- Information and Communication
- Built Environment
- Employment

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 (O. Reg 429/07) is the first standard that has been developed and officially made law. It sets out specific and general requirements to ensure goods and services are provided in ways that are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

The objective of this policy is to meet the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and Ontario Regulation 429/07 entitled “Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.” This policy applies to all St. Leonard’s Community Services (SLCS) Employees, Volunteers, Students and Board Members.

POLICY

SLCS endeavors to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures for the provision of its services are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity as outlined in the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

Our services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of individuals with disabilities.

The provision of our services to individuals with disabilities and others must be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable an individual with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from SLCS services.

Individuals with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from SLCS services.

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Definitions

“Alternative format” shall mean any other ways of publishing information beyond traditional printing (i.e. large print, audio format, etc.).

“Assistive devices” shall mean a technical aid, communication device or medical aid modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional abilities of individuals with disabilities. Examples include, but are not limited to walkers, canes, wheelchairs, hearing aids, or oxygen tanks.

“Barrier” shall mean anything that prevents an individual with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or practice.

“Customers” shall mean any individual who receives goods or services.

“Disabilities” shall mean the same as the definition of disability found in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*:

- a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c) A learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) A mental disorder, or
- e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

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“Employees” shall mean every individual who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Association, whether the individual does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.

“Persons with Disabilities” shall mean those individuals that are afflicted with a disability as defined under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

“Service Animals” shall mean any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.

“Support persons” shall mean any individual, whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend, who accompanies an individual with a disability in order to help with communications, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

PROCEDURE

Use of Assistive Devices

SLCS recognizes that some individuals use assistive devices (such as wheelchairs, mobility aids, hearing aids, etc.) to access services. SLCS shall support individuals in the use of their assistive devices to obtain or receive services unless otherwise prohibited due to health and safety or privacy issue. In these situations, SLCS may offer an individual with a disability other reasonable measures to assist in obtaining and using SLCS's services where applicable. It is the responsibility of the individual with the disability to ensure that their assistive device is operating in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

Communication

SLCS shall communicate in a manner that takes into account the individual's disability.

- Communication shall be respectful and individualized (i.e. in person, by phone, written or on-line).
- Requested documents shall be in a format that takes into account the individual's disability and supports shall be provided to ensure the individual is able to understand and use the documents.
- SLCS shall ensure that any areas of the premises that are not open to the public are marked “Employees only.”

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Service Animals

SLCS recognizes that some individuals may require the use of guide dogs or other service animals to access services. Individuals who are accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal shall be permitted to enter SLCS' premises and to keep the animal with them, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.

If the animal is legally excluded from the premises, SLCS shall provide alternative measures to enable the individual to obtain or receive services.

Support Persons

SLCS recognizes that some individuals rely on support persons for assistance while accessing service and that these support persons may accompany them on the premises. As well, individuals shall have access to their support person while on the premises.

If SLCS charges an admission fee in connection with a support person's presence at an event or function, advance notice shall be given regarding the amount, if any, that is to be paid by the support person.

Disruptions to Service

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to SLCS' facilities or services (i.e. temporary closure of a ramp, etc.), notice of the disruption shall be provided to the public including the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services that may be available. Notice of such disruption shall normally be posted on SLCS' website and may be posted on the physical premises by the Manager or designate.

Employees shall inform their supervisor of any physical barriers, architectural barriers, information/communication barriers, technological barriers or a policy or practice that poses a barrier for people with disabilities. SLCS shall consider the impact on individuals with disabilities when planning new initiatives, when purchasing new equipment or technology, or undergoing facility repairs or renovations.

Training

SLCS provides training to its Employees, Volunteers and Students about the provision of services for people who have a disability. The training includes a review of this policy, the purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, as well as the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

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The training shall also include:

- How to interact and communicate with individuals who have various types of disabilities, including those who use assistive devices, services animals or support persons;
- How to use any equipment or device available to SLCS that may help with the provision of services to individuals who have a disability; and
- What to do if an individual who has a disability is having difficulty accessing SLCS' services.

Training shall be done on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures. New employees shall be trained upon commencement of employment. Human Resources shall keep a record of all training.

Feedback Process

The goal of SLCS is to meet expectations of individuals who are supported while welcoming family members and other visitors. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcomed and appreciated. Feedback may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvements. Feedback regarding the provision of services to individuals with disabilities can be made in person, by phone, e-mail, in writing or through the mail and shall be dealt with in accordance with the Complaints Policy.

Feedback regarding SLCS' Accessibility Standards for Customer Service can be made to any Manager, Director or designate.

Copies of the Policy

SLCS shall make available copies of this policy, as well as the Complaints Policy, on the SLCS website. SLCS recognizes that individuals who have a disability use methods other than standard print to access information. Every effort shall be made to provide this policy, or the information contained in the policy, in a format that takes into account the individual's disability.

References: *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

Authorized by: _____
Executive Director

Date: June 11, 2020