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ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Community Living-Central Huron (CL-CH) is committed to conforming to all aspects of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*, *Ontario Regulation 429/07* (Accessibility Standards for Customer Service) and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. The Agency will strive to ensure all locations, owned or operated by CL-CH which are accessed by the public, provide barrier-free services, supports, environments and employment. This policy does not apply to the homes or apartments/units where people supported live, as these are not areas the public will be accessing for service. The Agency recognizes the key principals of accessibility are independence, dignity, integration and equality. All employees and volunteers are expected to actively support this policy and its procedures; non-compliance is subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal.

Definitions:

Assistive Devices – as defined in the Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, is a technical aide, communication device, or medical aid modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Examples include, but are not limited to walkers, canes, wheelchairs, hearing aids or oxygen tanks.

Barrier – as defined in the Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act is anything that prevents a person 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 a practice.

Disability – as defined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Human Rights Code is:

- 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 coordination, 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;
- a condition of mental impairment or developmental disability;
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- a mental disorder; or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Guide Dog – as defined in Ontario Regulation 429/07 and section one (1) of the Blind Persons Rights Act is a dog trained as a guide for a person who is blind and having qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the Blind Persons Rights Act.

Premises – all locations owned and operated by Community Living-Central Huron where the public has access.

Service Animal – as defined in Ontario Regulation 429/07 is a service animal for a person with a disability:

- if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Support Person – as defined in Ontario Regulation 429/07 in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

Procedures:

Providing Services to People with Disabilities:

Community Living-Central Huron is committed to excellence in providing supports and services to people with disabilities and will carry out all functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

- The services must be provided in a manner that respects and promotes dignity, independence and integration of persons with disabilities.
- The provision of services to persons with disabilities and others must be inclusive unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the services.
- Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the services.

Communication with Persons with Disabilities:

When communicating with people with disabilities, Community Living-Central Huron will do so in a manner that will take into account their disability.

Assistive Devices:

The use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from Community Living-Central Huron’s services will be recognized unless otherwise prohibited due to health and safety or privacy issues. In these situations, Community Living-Central Huron may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures to assist him or her in obtaining and using Community Living-Central Huron’s services where applicable.

It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her assistive device is operating in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals:

Community Living-Central Huron is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a guide dog or service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. Community Living-Central Huron will ensure that all employees and volunteers dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a guide dog or service animal.

Use of Support Persons:

Community Living-Central Huron is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person and will be allowed to enter Community Living-Central Huron's premises with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on the premises. Fees will not be charged for the support person for admission to programs or services. Where admission fees for the support person are applicable, Community Living-Central Huron will provide advance notice of the fee.

Service Disruptions:

Community Living-Central Huron will provide notice to people with disabilities in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be placed at applicable premises or by such other method as it is reasonable under the circumstances. In the event of an unexpected disruption, notice will be provided as soon as possible.

Feedback Process:

The goal of Community Living-Central Huron is to meet expectations of people who are supported while welcoming family members and other visitors. Comments on CL-CH's 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 people with disabilities can be made in person, by phone, e-mail, in writing or through the mail. A form for feedback or suggestions is attached as to this policy for reference and is available on the Agency's website (www.clch.ca), and at the Central Administration Office (267 Suncoast Drive, East, Goderich). All feedback may be addressed to Central Administration, Community Living-Central Huron; the Agency will respond to all feedback received.

Training for Employees:

Community Living-Central Huron will provide training to all employees and volunteers who support people with disabilities or come in contact with any other person who may access the Agency's premises, and all those who are involved in the in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedure.

New and current employees will be trained by completing the **Serve-ability: Transforming Ontario's Customer Service on-line training** by accessing www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/serve-ability/splash.html with employees signing off to indicate the training is understood and complete.

Questions Regarding the Policy:

This policy exists to achieve service excellent to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of the policy is not understood, an explanation will be provided upon request. Community Living-Central Huron will provide a copy of the policy, practices and procedures required under Ontario Regulation 429/07 upon request and a copy is also available on the Agency's website, www.clch.ca

If Community Living-Central Huron is requested to provide a person with a disability a document or information, Community Living-Central Huron will take into consideration the communication needs of the person with a disability and endeavour to provide the information to the person in a format that takes into account the person's disability.