

Accessible Customer Service Standards Policy

Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) was passed by the Ontario legislature with the goal of creating standards of accessibility across the province. The AODA requires the government to develop standards of accessibility that are designed to help make Ontario more accessible. One of the specific standards that has been developed and made law is the Accessible Customer Service Standard. This standard details specific requirements for all service users. In general, providers must deliver service in a way that preserves the independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity of people with disabilities.

The purpose of this Customer Service Standards Policy is to fulfill the requirements set out in regulation 429/07 to establish a policy for Shalom Manor Long Term Care Home that governs the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities.

This policy applies to all full-time, part-time, relief employees, those individuals working under contract, as well as volunteers.

2.0 STATEMENT

Shalom Manor Long Term Care Home shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- The goods or services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities and others, will be integrated 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 goods or services.
- Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services.
- Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices and/or support persons in the access of goods and services.
- Persons with disabilities and their service animals will be accommodated in all aspects of service provisions unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.
- Shalom Manor Long Term Care Home employees, when communicating with a person with a disability, shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

"Assistive Devices" shall mean an auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (i.e., canes, crutches, wheelchairs, hearing aids, oxygen tank, etc.)

“Disabilities” and “Person with a Disability” shall mean the same as the definition of “disability” found in the Ontario Human Rights Code. Therefore “disability” means:

- (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 development 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.

“Employees” are staff who are full-time, part time, relief, and/or working under a contract as well as volunteers.

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

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

4.0 NON-COMPLIANCE

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

5.0 BEST PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

Accessible Customer Service follows four basic principles:

- Dignity
- Independence
- Integration
- Equal Opportunity

Employees can achieve the standard by following these steps in relation to consumers, clients and customers:

- Ask how you can help
- Offer a variety of methods of communication
- Understand the nature and scope of the services you offer

6.0 SPECIFICS

6.1 SERVICE ANIMALS

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the provision of program and service delivery, recognizing that we must adhere with the legislated requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. We will ensure that all staff are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

For the purposes of this section an animal 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 their disability. It is “readily apparent” that an animal is a service animal, when it is obvious by its appearance or by what the service animal is doing. For example, it may be readily apparent that an animal is a service animal if it is wearing a harness that assists the service animal guide the person with the disability with their mobility; has a sign on its saddle bags or the clothing it is wearing which states it is a service animal, or has a certificate or identification card from a service animal training school or an identification card from the Attorney General of Ontario. It may also be readily apparent if a person is using the animal to assist them in doing things, such as opening doors or retrieving items.

A “guide dog” is a dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the Blind Person’s Rights Act to act as a guide dog for people who are blind.

The customer service standard’s provisions also apply to other service animals, including animals used by people with autism, mental health disabilities, those with physical or dexterity disabilities as well as others.

If it is not readily apparent the person with a disability must be prepared to show a letter from a doctor or nurse confirming that the service animal is required for reasons relating to their disability.

6.2 SUPPORT PERSON(S)

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person or who use assistive devices while accessing goods and/or services. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter Shalom Manor Long Term Care Home with their support person.

A support person is any person whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member, friend who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communications, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods and services.

Before discussing confidential information in front of the support person, staff will seek the consent of the person with the disability for the support person to remain. In some cases, the support person will need to remain because they assist the person with the disability with their communication. When a support person remains with the person with the disability, the support person may be asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement.

6.3 ADMISSION FEES – ADVANCE NOTICE

To the extent that there is a fee for services provided by Shalom Manor Long Term Care Home, the normal fee will be charged for the support person, unless otherwise organized with the management of Shalom Manor Long Term Care Home.

6.4 TEMPORARY SERVICE DISRUPTION – NOTICE

It is possible that from time to time there will be disruptions in service, such as an elevator lift being inspected or under repair, renovations that limit access to an area, or technology that is temporarily unavailable. People with

disabilities may often go to a lot of trouble to access services, such as booking accessible transit or arranging a ride. Notice will be provided over the phone or in writing where applicable.

6.5 UNEXPECTED DISRUPTION IN SERVICE – NOTICE

In the event of an unexpected disruption in service, such as loss of power, Shalom Manor Long Term Care Home may have to make some changes to protect the health and safety of residents and staff, as well as prohibit any visitors from coming in to the Home to protect their health and safety as well. Notice may be provided in a variety of ways and will be done as quickly as possible. In the event of a service disruption, alternative methods of service may be considered and those impacted by service disruption shall be informed of any alternative methods.

7.0 TRAINING

The following individuals will receive training:

All current employees and volunteers, including the Board of Directors, shall receive training by January 31, 2012.

New employees and volunteers shall receive training as soon as “practical” after being hired.

The contents of the training program will include the following:

- A review of the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard.
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disability.
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
- How to use equipment or devices that may help with the provision of goods and services to a person with a disability.
- Shalom Manor Long Term Care Home customer service policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard
- Provide ongoing training in connection with any changes to our policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

7.1 TRAINING RECORDS

Training records shall be kept for individuals, including the dates when the training was taken.

8.0 FEEDBACK PROCESS

Comments relating to our programs and services with regard to customer service are welcomed and appreciated. Feedback regarding the way Shalom Manor Long Term Care Home provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made in person, by telephone, in writing, by e-mail or otherwise. When communicating with the person with the disability who is providing feedback, staff shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person’s disability. All feedback will be reviewed by the Manager for the specific program or unit.

If the feedback is a complaint, then the Client Complaint Process Policy and Procedure should be utilized.

9.0 DOCUMENTATION

Shalom Manor Long Term Care Home shall upon request, give a copy of the policies and procedures required under the Ontario Regulation 429/07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service to any person.

When providing the person with the disability the document, or information contained in the document, it will be given in a format that takes into account the person's disability.