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Executive Director Signature:	Date Approved: 12/08/2016
Responsible Party: Board of Directors	Supersedes: 04/04/2012
Next Review Date: 12/2019	Date Reviewed: 12/08/2016

**Subject: AODA: Customer Service Standard Policy**

**POLICY**

Community Living-West Northumberland (the Organization) is committed to helping people with disabilities achieve accessibility for the provision of services consistent with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (the ‘AODA’) (*Appendix A - Ontario Regulation 429/07 entitled “Accessibility Standards for Customer Service”*).

**PROCEDURE**

**Providing Services to People with Disabilities**

The Organization provides 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 the dignity and independence 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**

The Organization will communicate in a manner that takes into account the person’s disability.

- Communication will be respectful and individualized i.e. in person, by phone, written, or online.

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- Requested documents will be in a format that takes into account the person's disability and supports will be provided to ensure the person is able to understand and use the documents.

### **Assistive Devices**

The Organization recognizes that some people use assistive devices (such as wheelchairs, mobility aids, hearing aids, etc.) to access services. The Organization will support people in the use of their assistive devices to obtain or receive services.

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

### **Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals**

The Organization welcomes 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. The Organization 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. If it is not easy to identify that the animal is a service animal, we will ask the person to provide documentation from a regulated health professional that will confirm the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

### **Support Persons**

The Organization recognizes that some people rely on support persons for assistance while accessing services and that these support people may accompany them. If the Organization charges an admission fee in connection with a support person's presence at an event or function, advance notice will be given regarding the amount, if any, that is to be paid by the support person.

The Organization may deem it necessary to require a support person to be in attendance in order to protect the health and safety of a person with a disability or others on the premises. This will only occur after consultation with the person with a disability and when it's the only means to allow the person to access the Organization's services.

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### **Service Disruptions**

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to any of the Organization's locations or services (e.g., temporary closure of a ramp), the Organization will provide notice of the disruption 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 will be posted on the website, telephone system, radio and the physical premises as determined by the Manager/designate.

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

### **Training**

The Organization will provide training to all employees, Board Members, volunteers, and students about the provision of services for people who have a disability. The training will include 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. The training will also include how to interact and communicate with people who have various types of disabilities.

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

### **Feedback Process**

Employees of the Organization will work to meet the expectations of the Accessibility Standards. 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 processes will be accessible and

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the organization will arrange for accessible formats and communications supports, on request.

Feedback regarding the provision of services to people with disabilities can be made in accordance with the Organization's Complaint Policy and Feedback Policy.

**See Operational Sub-section: 1.9 Complaint Policy**

**See Operational Sub-section: 1.16 Feedback Policy**

### **Questions Regarding the Policy**

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. The Organization will provide a copy of the policy and procedure required under Ontario Regulation 429/07 upon request. The Organization will take into consideration the communication needs of the person and endeavour to provide the information to the person in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

### **APPENDIX A**

#### **Definitions as set out in the O.Reg 429/07**

**“Assistive Devices”** 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”** 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”** also defined in the Human Rights Code as 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

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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 benefit were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

**“Guide Dog”** also defined in 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 public locations owned and operated by Community Living West Northumberland where people have access, including but not limited to, family members of people supported, Board members, volunteers, and employees.

**“Service 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 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”** 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.