

Category: Employee		REF.: EMP #52		
Subject: Accessible Customer Service		Page: Page 1 of 8		
Original Date: December 7, 2009				
Date: Nov.11, 2013	Date: Jan.22, 2014	Date	Date	Date
Reviewed	Revised	Revised/Reviewed	Revised/Reviewed	Revised/Reviewed

SUBJECT: Accessible Customer Service

#### Intent

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and applies to the provision of goods and services to the public or other third parties, not to the goods themselves. Our conduct will demonstrate our belief in the strength that diversity brings to our communities.

All goods and services provided by Five Counties Children's Centre shall follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

#### Scope

- a) This policy applies to the provision of goods and services at provided by Five Counties Children's Centre
- b) This policy applies to employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of Five Counties Children's Centre, including when the provision of goods and services occurs off the premises of Five Counties Children's Centre, such as in schools, child care programs and homes or community settings. It is the responsibility of all staff/volunteers and students to be familiar with this policy.
- c) The section of this policy that addresses the use of guide dogs, service animals and service dogs only applies to the provision of goods and services that take place at premises owned or operated by Five Counties Children's Centre.
- d) This policy shall also apply to all persons who participate in the development of the Five Counties Children's Centre's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or third parties.

#### Definitions

Assistive Device – is a technical aid, communication device or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that customers bring with them such as a wheelchair, walker or a personal oxygen tank that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

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Disability – the term disability as defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, refers to:

- 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;
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- a learning disability, or 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 – is a highly-trained working dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*, to provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people who are blind.

Service Animal – as reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, 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 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.

Service Dog – as reflected in *Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562* a dog other than a guide dog for the blind is a service dog if:

- it is readily apparent to an average person that the dog functions as a service dog for a person with a medical disability;
- or the person who requires the dog can provide on request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires a service dog.

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

### General Principles

In accordance with the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*, this policy addresses the following:

- A. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities;
- B. The Use of Assistive Devices (staff to be familiar with supports, assistive devices, etc.)
- C. The Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs
- D. The Use of Support Persons
- E. Notice of Service Disruptions
- F. Customer Feedback
- G. Training
- H. Notice of Availability and Format of Required Documents

#### A. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

Five Counties Children's Centre will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity by:

- ensuring that all clients receive the same value and quality;
- allowing clients with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace when accessing goods and services as long as this does not present a safety risk;
- using alternative methods when possible to ensure that clients with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner;
- taking into account individual needs when providing goods and services; and
- communicating in a manner that takes into account the client's disability.

#### B. The Use of Assistive Devices

Client's own assistive device(s):

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing goods or services provided by Five Counties Children's Centre.

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In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of goods and services. For example, open flames and oxygen tanks cannot be near one another. Therefore, the accommodation of a customer with an oxygen tank may involve ensuring the customer is in a location that would be considered safe for both the customer and business. Or, where elevators are not present and where an individual requires assistive devices for the purposes of mobility, service will be provided in a location that meets the needs of the customer.

Assistive devices provided by Five Counties Children's Centre:

Five Counties Children's Centre provides many devices to clients requiring them. Please speak to your therapist or the intake coordinator with regards to the availability of devices that you may require specific to your needs or your child's needs.

### C. The Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs

A customer with a disability that is accompanied by a guide dog, service animal or service dog will be allowed access to premises that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law. "No pet" policies do not apply to guide dogs, service animals and/or service dogs.

#### Recognizing a Guide Dog, Service Dog and/or Service Animal:

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is being used by the customer for reasons relating to his or her disability, Five Counties may request verification from the customer. Verification may include:

- a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons related to the disability;
- a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada; or,
- a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

#### Care and Control of the Animal:

The customer that is accompanied by a guide dog, service dog and/or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all times.

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Allergies:

If a health and safety concern presents itself, for example in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, Five Counties Children's Centre will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

D. The Use of Support Persons

People with a disability who are accompanied by a support person have the right to have access to that support person while accessing goods and services of Five Counties Children's Centre. If discussing confidential information and a support person (other than a parent or guardian) is present, ask if they prefer their support person to stay present. (Employees are to ensure compliance with confidentiality policies: CHNS 07 and CHNS 06.)

E. Notice of Service Disruptions

Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of Five Counties Children's Centre. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that customers with disabilities rely on to access or use Five Counties Children's Centre's goods or services, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice. In some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible.

Notifications may include:

In the event that a notification needs to be posted, the following information may be included unless it is not readily available or known:

- goods or services that are disrupted or unavailable
- reason for the disruption
- anticipated duration
- a description of alternative services or options

Notifications Options:

When disruptions occur Five Counties Children's Centre will provide notice by:

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- posting notices in conspicuous places including at the point of disruption, at the main entrance and the nearest accessible entrance to the service disruption and/or on the Five Counties Children's Centre website;
- contacting customers with appointments, if deemed necessary;
- verbally notifying customers when they are making an appointment; or
- by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

F. Customer Feedback

Five Counties Children's Centre shall provide customers with the opportunity to provide feedback on the service provided to customers with disabilities. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to all customers and notice of the process will be made available by:

- verbally (in person or by telephone)
- written (handwritten, delivered, website or email)

If you have a complaint, we recommend following our complaint process. Contact the Program Manager at the location where you encountered the concern, or at our head office in Peterborough.

Submitting Feedback:

Customers can submit feedback to:  
Program Manager or designate at each location

***Peterborough:***

872 Dutton Rd. Phone: 705-748-2337  
Peterborough, Ontario K9H 7G1

***City of Kawartha Lakes/Haliburton:***

9 Russell St. Phone: 705-324-9320  
Lindsay, Ontario K9V 1Z7

***Cobourg/ Campbellford***

700 D'Arcy St.  
Cobourg, ON K9A 5T3

E-Mail: [info@fivecounties.on.ca](mailto:info@fivecounties.on.ca)

Web Page: [www.fivecounties.on.ca](http://www.fivecounties.on.ca)

Customers that provide formal feedback will receive acknowledgement of their feedback, along with any resulting actions based on concerns or complaints that were submitted.

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G. Training

Training will be provided to:

- a) all employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of Five Counties Children's Centre; for example: drivers, vendors, third party marketing agents;
- b) those who are involved in the development and approval of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

Training Provisions:

As reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, regardless of the format, training will cover the following:

- A review of the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.
- A review of the requirements of the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*.
- Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- Instructions on how to interact with people with disabilities who:
  - use assistive devices;
  - require the assistance of a guide dog, service dog or other service animal; or
  - require the use of a support person (including the handling of admission fees).
- Instructions on how to use equipment or devices that are available at our premises or that we provide that may help people with disabilities.
- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services.
- Five Counties Children's Centre's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible customer service to customers with disabilities.

Training Schedule:

Five Counties Children's Centre will provide training as soon as practical. Training will be provided to new employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or act on our behalf during orientation. Revised training will be provided in the event of changes to legislation, procedures and/or practices.

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Record of Training:

Five Counties Children's Centre will keep a record of training that includes the dates training was provided and the number of employees who attended the training. A copy of this will be kept in each employee's personnel file.

H. Notice of Availability and Format of Documents

Five Counties Children's Centre shall notify customers that the documents related to the *Accessibility Standard for Customer Service* are available upon request and in a format that takes into account the customer's disability. Notification will be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place owned and operated by Five Counties Children's Centre, the Five Counties Children's Centre's website and/or any other reasonable method.

This policy and its related procedures will be reviewed as required in the event of legislative changes.

Referenced Documents:

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07
- Blind Person's Rights Act, 1990
- Dog Owners' Liability Act, Ontario
- Food Safety and Quality Act 2001, Ontario Regulation 31/05
- Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562
- Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990

Employee Guidelines and information:

<http://sharepoint/PPF/Forms/Disruption%20in%20Service%20Notification%20to%20customers.doc>

Relay instructions:

<http://sharepoint/Bus/HR/Shared%20Documents/Relay%20System.docx>

Training:

<http://sharepoint/Committees/OccHealth/Publications/Accessibility%20Customer%20Service%20Standard%20Training/Accessibility%20Customer%20Service%20Training%20-January%206,%202010.ppt>



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Revised/Reviewed	Revised/Reviewed	Revised/Reviewed	Revised/Reviewed	Revised/Reviewed

SUBJECT: Accessibility

**POLICY:**

Five Counties Children’s Centre is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely fashion, consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity. This policy also outlines how the Centre will achieve accessibility in general, as well as in employment, information and communications, and public spaces.

**APPLICATION:**

This policy applies to all employees and customers/clients of Five Counties Children’s Centre.

**Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

The multi-year accessibility plan outlines the Centre’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers and to meet the requirements under the *Integrated Accessibility Standards* (Ontario Regulation 191/11) of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (“AODA”)*.

The multi-year accessibility plan is posted on the Centre’s website, and is available in accessible format upon request. The multi-year plan is reviewed and updated at least every five years.

The plan will include accessibility strategies in the following areas:

**General Accessibility**

Five Counties Children’s Centre will have regard to accessibility for persons with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.

The Centre trains all employees and volunteers on Ontario’s accessibility standards and on the Ontario Human Rights Code as it applies to persons with disabilities. The training is appropriate to the duties and responsibilities of individuals being trained, and is provided as soon as possible when any changes occur to the accessibility policies.

**Information and Communications**

Five Counties Children’s Centre applies strategies to meet the communications needs of people with disabilities. These include:

- provision of information and communication in accessible formats or with communication supports upon request, including emergency procedure plans or public safety information

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- upon request, provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities in a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs, and at no additional cost than the cost charged to other persons
- consultation with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communications support
- notification of the public regarding the availability of accessible formats and communication supports
- development of accessible processes for receiving and responding to feedback

Five Counties Children's Centre strives to make its websites and web content conform with the World Wide Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) Level AA.

### **Employment**

The Centre values all its employees and an inclusive and accessible workplace. In keeping with this commitment, and in accordance with AODA compliance timelines, the Centre implements the following strategies:

- notification to employees, job applicants, and members of the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in the recruitment, assessment and selection processes
- notification of applicants selected to continue in the selection process that the Centre will consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation in a manner which takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs
- notification to successful applicants of the Centre's employee accommodation policies
- notification of employees as soon as possible after starting employment of policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability
- notification to employees of changes in policies supporting employees with disabilities, including job accommodation
- consultation with employees to provide or arrange to provide accessible formats and communication supports for information needed to perform the job, and information that is generally available to employees in the workplace
- consultation with employees on the suitability of an accessible format or communication support
- provision of individualized workplace emergency response information if needed
- obtaining consent of the employee with a disability to give emergency response information to a person designated by the Centre to provide assistance to the employee

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- review of the individualized workplace emergency response information when an employee moves to another work location, when overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed, and when the Centre reviews its emergency response policies
- documentation of individual employee accommodation plans
- development and implementation of a documented return to work process for employees absent due to disability and who require accommodation
- consideration of the accessibility needs and individual accommodation plans of employees during the performance management, career development and advancement, and *redeployment* processes

**Built Environment – Design of Public Spaces**

The Centre is committed to incorporating barrier-free design principles in the newly constructed and redeveloped public spaces set out in the Integrated Accessibility Standards.

**Availability**

This policy is posted on the Centre’s website and is available in alternate format upon request.