



## ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines on providing goods and services to persons with disabilities.

Tayside Community Residential & Support Options (Tayside) is committed to providing consistent customer service to persons with disabilities by putting into practice the following four key principles:

- Dignity
- Independence
- Integration
- Equal Opportunity

### *Prescribing Legislation*

This policy has been prepared pursuant to requirements and information provided in Ontario Regulation 429/07 made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

### *Glossary*

- “Guide dog” means a guide dog as defined in Section 1 of the Blind Persons Right’s Act
- “Service animal” means a service animal for a person with a disability
- “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 or medical needs or with access to goods or services
- A dog or 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

## Policy

### 1.1. Use of Service Animal

Tayside is committed to welcoming visiting persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of its premises that are open to the public and other third parties.

- a) If a visiting person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, Tayside shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.
- b) If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises or it is deemed unsafe for a visiting person with a disability to be accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, Tayside shall ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from Tayside's goods and services by bringing goods and services to the person in a part of the premises where the animal is not restricted or by offering a safe location where the service animal can wait, if the person is able to be separated from the animal while obtaining the service, and offering assistance to the person with a disability while they are separated from the service animal.
- c) Tayside shall ensure that all staff, volunteers and other persons dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with visiting persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.
- d) If it is not readily apparent that the animal is used by the visiting person for reasons relating to his or her disability, Tayside has the right to request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.
- e) A visiting person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal must maintain care and control of that animal at all times.
- f) If a customer or a staff member has an allergy to animals, Tayside shall make every reasonable effort to meet the needs of all individuals.

### 1.2. Use of Support Person

Tayside is committed to welcoming visiting persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.

- a) If a visiting person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, Tayside shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.
- b) Tayside may require a visiting person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises.
- c) If an amount is payable by a support person for admission to the premises or in connection with a support person's presence at the premises, Tayside shall ensure that notice is given in advance about the amount, if any, payable in respect of the support person by any other manner deemed appropriate.

- d) In situations where Tayside has obligations under privacy laws or has issues of confidentiality or professional obligations, a support person may be requested to agree to requirements of service just as the person with a disability does.

### 1.3. Notice of Temporary Disruption

Tayside is committed to establishing, implementing and maintaining a process to provide notice of service disruptions.

- a) If, in order to obtain, use or benefit from Tayside's goods and services, persons with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services of Tayside and if there is a temporary disruption in those facilities or services in whole or in part, Tayside shall give notice of the disruption to the public.
- b) Notice of disruption must include the following information:
- The reasons for the disruption.
  - The anticipated duration.
  - A description of what alternative facilities or services are available, if any.
- c) Notice shall be given on the approved Notice of Disruption Form by posting the information at a conspicuous place at the location of the disruption which may include any or all entrances or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances. **(See Appendix A).**

### 1.4. Training

Tayside is committed to establishing, implementing and maintaining a program for training staff on how to provide customer service to persons with disabilities.

- a) Tayside shall ensure that the following persons received training about the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities:
- (i) Every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of Tayside, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.
  - (ii) Every person who participates in developing Tayside's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.
- b) The training must include a review of the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of this regulation and instruction about the following matters:
- (i) How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability.
  - (ii) How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person.
  - (iii) How to use equipment or devices available on Tayside premises or otherwise provided by Tayside, where the person interacts with the public, that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
  - (iv) What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing Tayside's goods or services.

- (v) Tayside's customer service policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.
- c) The training shall be provided to each person as soon as practicable after he or she is assigned the applicable duties.
- d) The training shall also be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.
- e) The training content may vary depending on who is receiving the training and the nature of the service provided and depending on the individual site/program requirements.
- f) Training format may include:
  - A one to three-hour session
  - eLearning session
  - "May I help you" training guide
  - Other format as required
- g) The training provided to staff who deal with the public on a regular basis shall be more focused on person-to-person interaction than the training provided to staff that have less contact with customers. The trainer, in collaboration with site/program managers/supervisors, may choose the particular content of the training and the way each of the topics described above is addressed.
- h) Records shall be kept by the trainer of who was trained, when they were trained and in which format the training was delivered.
- i) The persons in the following areas shall be included in the training:
  - Executive Director
  - Management Team
  - Administration Office
  - Board Members
  - Or any other individuals who interact with the public or other third parties on behalf of Tayside.

### **1.5. Feedback Process**

Tayside is committed to establishing, implementing and maintaining a process for receiving and responding to feedback about how to provide goods or services to persons with disabilities.

- a) Tayside has established a process for receiving and responding to feedback about the manner in which it provides goods or services to persons with disabilities and shall make information about the process readily available to the public.
- b) The feedback process shall permit persons to provide feedback in person, by telephone, by fax, in writing or in electronic format including email.
- c) The feedback process shall include the following:

- (i) The opportunity for the public to provide feedback in person, by telephone, by fax in writing or by delivering an electronic text by email.
- (ii) The opportunity to provide as much information as possible when providing feedback so that the event can be readily identified by the supervisor and/or manager responsible for where the event took place. The information may include dates, times, names, contact information, a description of the event, etc.
- (iii) Feedback may be received by any person who deals with the members of the public or other third parties on behalf of Tayside. A copy of the feedback shall be forwarded to the responsible supervisor/manager for review.
- (iv) An answer to the feedback is not mandatory, however, depending on the situation, the supervisor and/or manager responsible for where the event took place may deem it appropriate to respond to the customer. Should an answer be deemed appropriate and should the customer have chosen to supply his or her contact information, the customer may expect the said answer within 21 business days. **(See Appendix B for sample feedback form).**

#### **1.6. Availability of Document**

Tayside is committed to raising awareness towards accessibility and to breaking down barriers for persons with disabilities in order for them to have the same kind of opportunities as everyone else.

The policy regarding accessible customer service shall be made available at the Administration Office and in all program sites and shall be made available to anyone upon request.

Questions or concerns regarding this policy and its implication should be addressed to the Executive Director.

#### **1.7. Alternate Format**

Tayside is committed to provide individual accommodation to its customers where appropriate by creating its own alternate formats of printed materials. Upon request, alternate formats shall be provided in a manner in which is to be agreed upon by the requestor and Tayside.