

**HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE SUPPORT SERVICES**  
**North Simcoe Muskoka**  
**Policy and Procedure Manual**

SECTION:	Not Set	PAGE 1 OF 5
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**SUBJECT: Accessible Customer Service**

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**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Home and Community Care Support Services North Simcoe Muskoka (HCCSS NSM) provides accessible customer service to people with disabilities and ensuring that the customer service is consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

**SCOPE:**

This policy applies to all employees of HCCSS as well as volunteers, agents, students or third party contractors who provide services on behalf of HCCSS.

**POLICY:**

HCCSS is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* respecting non-discrimination.

HCCSS understands that obligations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

HCCSS is committed to complying with both the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *AODA*.

HCCSS is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities.

**Assistive devices**

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our goods, services or facilities.

In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our goods, services or facilities.

We will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices we have on site or that we provide that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods, services or facilities.

### **Communication**

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

We will work with the person with a disability to determine what method of communication that works for them.

### **Service animals**

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public.

When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask a person to provide documentation from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks.

A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Psychologists of Ontario
- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

If service animals are prohibited by another law, we will do the following to ensure people with disabilities can access our goods, services or facilities:

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- explain why the animal is excluded
- discuss with the customer another way of providing goods, services or facilities

### **Support persons**

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

### **Notice of temporary disruption**

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities HCCSS will notify customers promptly. This clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

### **Training**

HCCSS will provide accessible customer service training to:

- all employees and volunteers
- anyone involved in developing our policies
- anyone who provides goods, services or facilities to customers on our behalf

Staff will be trained on accessible customer service within 30 days after being hired.

Training will include:

- the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the customer service standard
- reading HCCSS's policy related to the customer service standard
- how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- how to use the equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities.
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing HCCSS's goods, services or facilities

Staff will also be trained when changes are made to our accessible customer service policy.

### **Feedback process**

HCCSS welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. Customer feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns.

Customers who wish to provide feedback on the way HCCSS provides goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities can provide feedback by emailing HCCSS at [northsimcoemuskoka@lhins.on.ca](mailto:northsimcoemuskoka@lhins.on.ca)

HCCSS will ensure our feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, upon request.

### **Notice of availability of documents**

HCCSS will notify the public that documents related to accessible customer service, are available upon request by posting a notice on <http://www.nsmhins.on.ca/accessibility.aspx>

HCCSS will provide documents in an accessible format or with communication support, on request. We will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the format or communication support. We will provide the accessible format in a timely manner and, at no additional cost.

### **Modifications to this or other policies**

Any policies of HCCSS that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

**Barrier** – means 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, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice; (“obstacle”).

#### **Disability -**

- (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 developmental 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

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- (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*; (“handicap”).

**RELATED DOCUMENTS:**

[Patient Privacy and Confidentiality Policy](#) Patient Privacy and Confidentiality  
Training resources - <https://www.accessforward.ca>

**REFERENCES:**

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c11](#)  
[Ontario Human Rights Code](#)