

## GOOD SHEPHERD NON-PROFIT HOMES INC. HAMILTON POLICY MANUAL

**DEPARTMENT:** ADMINISTRATION

**NUMBER:** ADM-09

**TOPIC:** Accessibility of Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

**PURPOSE:** To establish the responsibilities of Good Shepherd and its employees and volunteers when providing goods and service to clients and visitors.

**POLICY:** All employees and volunteers of Good Shepherd must show just regard for the dignity of all who come to us seeking assistance and support. Consistent with our *Faith in People* approach to the delivery of goods and services, all employees and volunteers must accept and respond to the uniqueness of all people and be open to evaluation, new ideas and to adapt to the needs of people with disabilities. All employees and volunteers, therefore, will receive values based training on how to meet the accessibility needs of clients and visitors as required by our mission and the Customer Service Standard for people with disabilities as outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

### MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

Guide Accessibility in the Workplace

Feedback Form

Follow up to Feedback form

TTY/Relay Service instructions

#### 1.0 Procedure

##### 1.1 Our Mission

Energized by Charity Unlimitedō . Never Stop Loving, The Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd, the Board of Directors, Staff and Volunteers of Good Shepherd, strive to enhance the quality of life for all who seek assistance and support. Respectful of life, as a Catholic organization, we commit ourselves to respond to our brothers and sisters in need with: Availability . . . Flexibility . . . Adaptabilityō .Hospitality . . . Dignity.

##### 1.2 Our commitment

In fulfilling our mission, Good Shepherd strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our

goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other clients.

### **1.3 Definitions**

#### **Assistive Device**

An assistive device is a tool, technology or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities such as moving, communicating or lifting. It helps the person to maintain their independence at home, at work and in the community.

#### **Barrier**

Any policy, practice or procedure, or part of the built environment, that prevents someone with a disability from participating fully in Good Shepherd programs or services because of his or her disability.

#### **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 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) mental disorder,

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

#### **Reasonable Efforts**

The Customer Service Standard requires organizations to make reasonable efforts to meet the needs of people with disabilities. The library defines reasonable efforts as providing the best possible service within the context of: available resources, balancing the needs of people with disabilities with others who may encounter barriers to access and with the community at large, the health and safety of library staff and volunteers, the security of library property and existing laws and contracts.

### **Support Person**

A support person is an individual hired or chosen to accompany a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods or services.

### **Service Animal**

Any animal used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to the disability where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or where the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that he or she requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability; or 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.

### **Guide Dog**

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 refers to the definition of guide dog under the Blind Persons Rights Act, which states that: a guide dog is a dog that has been trained as a guide for a blind person at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the Blind Persons Rights Act. The Ministry of the Attorney General may issue identification cards to identify a person who is blind and his or her guide dog.

## **1.4 Providing goods and services to people with disabilities**

Good Shepherd is committed to excellence in serving all clients and visitors including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

### **1.4.1 Communication**

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. We will train staff who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

### **1.4.2 Telephone services**

We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers. We will train staff to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

We will offer to communicate with customers by email, TTY, relay services or fax if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

### **1.4.3 Assistive devices**

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. We will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by clients with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.

We will also ensure that staff know how to use the following assistive devices available on our premises for clients and visitors: TTY and Bell Relay Service (1-800-855-0511).

### **1.4.4 Billing**

We are committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers. For this reason, invoices will be provided in the following formats upon request: hard copy, large print and email.

We will answer any questions clients may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or email.

## **1.5 Use of 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 public and other third parties. We will also ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

## **1.6 Use of support persons**

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter Good Shepherd's premises with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises.

Fees will not be charged to support persons for admission to services or to access our premises. Clients will be informed of this by a notice that will be posted in Good Shepherd's premises and on the website.

## **1.7 Notice of temporary disruption**

Good Shepherd will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information

about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be placed at all public entrances and service counters on our premises.

### **1.8 Training for staff**

Good Shepherd will provide training to all employees, (including, full-time, part time, relief and contract staff), volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures. Individuals in the following positions will be trained:

This training will be provided to all new hires and new volunteers along with the orientation within the first month of hire, after staff commence their duties.

Training will include the following:

- 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 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 assistive devices such TTY and wheelchair lifts. Training will be provided at the program level. Each program will have established procedures on using site specific assistive devices.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Good Shepherd's goods and services
- Good Shepherd's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Applicable staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

### **1.9 Feedback process**

The ultimate goal of Good Shepherd is to meet and surpass client expectations while serving clients with disabilities. Comments on our services and service expectation are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way Good Shepherd provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by email, verbally, suggestion box where available or feedback form. Feedback forms are located at all Good Shepherd locations and on our website. All feedback will be directed to **Human Resources**. Clients and visitors can expect to hear back within 10 business days.

Complaints will be addressed according to complaint categories already established in our agency's complaint management procedures.

#### **1.10 Requests for Accommodation under the *Ontario Human Rights Code***

The Good Shepherd will continue to meet the standards set by the *Ontario Human Rights Code* (Code). Where a request for accommodation is made, the Good shepherd will strive to provide accommodation in a way that most respects the dignity of the person. We recognize that people with disabilities may require individualized accommodation and that each person's needs are unique. Reasonable accommodation will be provided up to the point of undue hardship as defined in the Code.

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

We are committed to developing client service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

All policies of the Good Shepherd shall be developed and/or reviewed with an assessment of how the policy impacts people with disabilities while preserving the dignity of all persons.

#### **1.12 Questions about this policy**

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to clients and visitors with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by, or referred to, Human Resources, Good Shepherd.

## **2.0 Documentation**

### 3.0 Reference Sources:

3.1 **Good Shepherd Mission** . %to enhance the quality of life for all who seek assistance and support+.

#### 3.2 **Good Shepherd Values**

- a) **Adaptability** - to %accept and respond to the uniqueness of all people. ò to be open to evaluation, new ideas and be able to adapt to constantly changing conditions+.
- b) **Dignity** - to %show just regard for the dignity of all+.
- c) **Availability** – %we must be present at all times to those who come to us seeking acceptance and assistance including those with the most challenging needs+.
- d) **Flexibility:** “to prioritize our activities and find creative ways to respond to the needs of those we serve+.
- e) **Hospitality** - to %welcome with sincerity, kindness, generosity and compassion all those who come to us seeking assistance+.

3.2 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

3.3 [www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario)

3.4 <http://www.accesson.ca/ado/splash.htm>



Executive Director: \_\_\_\_\_

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 31, 2011

DATE OF LAST REVIEW/REVISION:

IMPLEMENTATION: December 31, 2011

SUPERCEDES: New