# Accessible customer service policy

1. **Intent**

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulations 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.

All goods and services provided by Cheshire shall follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

1. **Scope**

This policy applies to the Board and staff of Cheshire, including volunteers, contractors, agents and any other people who interact with the public or other third parties, on behalf of Cheshire.

1. **Assistive Devices**

If a person with a disability requires assistive devices to access goods or services from Cheshire, they are allowed to use such devices. Cheshire does provide some assistive devices (ie. Ceiling track lifts)

1. **Guide Dogs and Service Animals**

Service dogs can assist adults and children who are visually impaired, have autism, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, mobility related disabilities, hearing problems and seizure disorders, amongst other disabilities.

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, Cheshire will permit the person to enter the premises with the animal and keep it with him or her, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. If the service animal or guide dog is excluded by law from the premises, Cheshire will look to other available measures to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from Cheshire’s goods and services.

1. **Support Persons**

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, they are permitted to enter the premises together and are not prevented from having access to each other while on the premises. Cheshire may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on its premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.

Where fees for goods and services are advertised or promoted by Cheshire, it will provide advance notice of the amount payable, if any, in respect of the support person.

1. **Disruption of Services**

If there is a disruption in a particular facility or service used to allow a person with a disability to access goods or services, Cheshire will give notice of the disruption to the public by posting the reason for the disruption. Further, Cheshire will provide notice on the anticipated duration of the disruption and, notify if any alternative facilities or services may be available.

This posting will be in a conspicuous place on the premises of the affected program, or by other reasonable methods in the circumstances. If the disruption is anticipated, Cheshire will provide a reasonable amount of advance notice of the disruption. If the disruption is unexpected, notice will be provided as soon as possible.

1. **Training**

Cheshire will provide training about the provision of its goods and services to persons with disabilities. All Cheshire employees, and others as necessary who deal with the public or other third parties will receive Accessibility Awareness Training (Moodle) within six months of beginning their duties. Cheshire will also provide ongoing training with respect to changes in its policies, practices and procedures to those individuals who require such training as soon as practicable. Lastly, Cheshire will keep records of all staff who have received training.

**7.1 Accessibility Awareness Training will include the following:**

* How to provide goods and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
* How to interact and communicate with persons in a manner that takes into account their disabilities;
* The process for people to provide feedback to Cheshire, its provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities and how Cheshire responds to the feedback and takes action on any complaint;
* How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog, service animal or a support person to access goods or services;
* A review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of the customer service standard;
* How to use equipment or devices available that may help with the provision of goods and services;
* What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing Cheshire’s goods and services.

1. **Feedback**

The public can provide feedback on the accessibility of the provision of goods and services by Cheshire by:

* 1. By mail addressed to: 2-1111 Elias Street, London, ON N5W 5L1
  2. By phone: 519 439 4246 ext. 231
  3. In person at: 2-1111 Elias Street, London, ON N5W 5L1
  4. By email: [cheshire.info@cheshirelondon.ca](mailto:cheshire.info@cheshirelondon.ca)
  5. By survey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/AODA_Cheshire_Feedback>

We can arrange for accessible feedback and alternate formats upon request.

1. **Definitions**

Assistive Devices

Auxiliary aids such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (canes, wheelchairs, etc.)

Disabilities

Disabilities is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations.

Thus disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person’s body and features of the society in which he or she lives.

Support Persons

Any person whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member, or friend who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communications, personal care or medical needs, or with access to goods or services.