

<b>Standard of Practice</b>	<b>Accessibility</b> Initial Approval Date 10/25/11	<b>Policy 5010</b>
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## PURPOSE

To ensure all Middlesex Community Living programs and services are accessible to everyone in the community in accordance with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service<sup>1</sup>.

## STANDARD OF PRACTICE

Middlesex Community Living is committed to preventing, identifying and removing barriers that impede the ability of persons with disabilities to access care, programs and services. This includes supported persons, their families, employees, Family Home Providers, volunteers and students. We are committed to providing care, programs and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities, integrated to the extent possible with services provided to others, and offered in a way that gives persons with disabilities an opportunity to benefit from these services that is equal to service that is given to others.

These policies and procedures apply to all care, programs and services that are delivered by Middlesex Community Living, by any means including in person, by telephone, electronically, by mail, visually, orally or in print. Further, this policy applies to Middlesex Community Living sponsored events and activities that are open to the public.

Middlesex Community Livings policies and procedures are intended to build an inclusive and accessible work environment free of discrimination and harassment which support persons with disabilities and accommodations during recruitment, assessment, selection and hiring.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.aoda.ca/?page\\_id=13](http://www.aoda.ca/?page_id=13)

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## PROCEDURE

Middlesex Community Living will ensure all persons with disabilities will be given every opportunity to participate in services offered by the agency. Middlesex Community Living is committed to the excellence in serving all persons with disabilities and will carry out its functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

### Customer Service:

Services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. The provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities and others will be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services. Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services.

### Design of Public Spaces

Middlesex Community Living will meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when building or making major modification to public spaces. Public spaces include recreational trails/beach access routes, accessible off street parking, service related elements like service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas and modification to this or other policies.

## Definitions

*Assistive Devices and Measures:* Assistive devices and measures are supports used by persons with disabilities that enable them to carry out the activities of daily living and allow access to care, programs and services. Some examples are power wheelchairs, scooters, wheelchairs, volunteers, real-time captioning services (on-screen typing of what speakers are saying), sign language interpreters or deaf-blind interveners. This may also include, Telephone Teletypes (TTY) to communicate with clients who are deaf, hard of hearing, have speech impairments or are deaf-blind.

*Disability:* According to the Ontario Human Rights Code, a disability is defined as:

- 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

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- d) a 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.

The definition includes disabilities of different severity, visible as well as non-visible disabilities, and disabilities in which the effects are sporadic and transient.

*Service Animals:* Service animals are used by people with many different kinds of disabilities. Examples of service animals include dogs used by people who are blind, hearing alert animals for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, and animals trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure and lead them to safety.

*Support Person:* A support person accompanies a person with a disability, in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services. A support person may be a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend of the person with a disability.

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**Provision of care, programs and services**

Middlesex Community Living will endeavour to provide its care, programs and services in a way that respects the independence and dignity of all persons, and encourages integration and equality of opportunity. For persons with disabilities seeking access to our care, program services, and events this includes:

- a) Providing alternative means for obtaining these services through the use of assistive devices or other assistive measures where available.
- b) Permitting persons who require the use of a guide dog or other service animal to be accompanied by the guide dog or service animal at all Middlesex Community Living locations that are open to the public and third parties (except in those areas where animals are excluded by law). Alternative arrangements will be made for the individual to access any service in those areas that do not permit service animals by law. While at any of our locations, service animals must remain under the care and control of the person with the disability at all times.
- c) Permitting persons to be accompanied by a support person at all Middlesex Community Living locations that are open to the public or third parties. The organization may require that a person who is normally accompanied by a support person be accompanied by a support person if necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others.
- d) Providing advance notice of any admission charges that would be required for a support person of a person with a disability where admission fees are charged.

Middlesex Community Living is committed to serving all customers including people with disabilities and will carry out our function and responsibilities in the following areas:

- We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their ability
- We will train staff who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people of all abilities
- We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service and will offer to communicate by various means, (e.g. in person, e-mail)
- Request for Alternate Format form will be made accessible at all points of contact (Reception, Website, etc.) and reasonable effort will be made to meet the request

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### Service disruptions

Where there is a temporary disruption of services or facilities that are normally used by persons with disabilities, notice will be posted in a conspicuous location at or near the site of the disruption, on the organization’s website, and through any other method that is reasonable in the given circumstances. The notice will contain the reason for the disruption, its duration, and information about alternative services or facilities where available. Wherever possible, Middlesex Community Living will encourage the posting of signage at facilities and services normally used by persons with disabilities to indicate the alternative services and facilities that are available if a disruption were to occur in that area.

### Training

Middlesex Community Living will provide training to employees, Family Home Providers, volunteers, students and others who could reasonably be expected to interact with those we support and the public on behalf of the organization. Training on the organization’s policies and procedures regarding accessible service will be provided in a variety of formats and will include information on:

- a) The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.
- b) The requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service as prescribed under the Act. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.
- c) How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog, service animal or support person.
- d) How to use equipment or devices available at Middlesex Community Living locations (or otherwise provided by the organization) that may help with the provision of care, programs and services to a person with a disability.
- e) What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the organization's programs and services.

New employees, Family Home Providers, volunteers and students will be provided with training and/or awareness literature within a reasonable period of time after commencement of their duties at Middlesex Community Living. Employees, Family Home Providers, volunteers and students will also be trained on an ongoing basis as changes are made to these policies and procedures. Records will be kept of the training provided, indicating the date on which training was provided, the type of training and the name of attendees.

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**Feedback on customer service**

Service recipients and visitors will be notified that Middlesex Community Living welcomes and values their feedback for the continued improvement of care, programs and services so as to avoid inadvertently excluding people with disabilities from activities or services. Individuals are encouraged to provide their feedback directly to the department from which they received the service. Where the feedback is of a more general nature, and is not directed at any particular department, the Director of Human Resources will be responsible for investigating the matter and determining the actions to be taken. Feedback may be provided in person, by telephone, in writing or by electronic text. In all cases, every effort will be made to respond to the feedback in a timely and effective manner.

**Availability of documents on customer service**

All documents that detail Middlesex Community Living’s policies and procedures for the provision of care, programs and services to persons with disabilities will be made available to the public upon written request. The organization will make every effort to make this information available to persons with disabilities in a format that takes their disability into account (e.g. Braille, audio recordings, electronic copies).

Middlesex Community Living will endeavor to provide written materials and publications in an alternate format if requested. The format must be agreed upon between the requester and the organization. All requests for alternative formats shall be communicated in writing to the Administrative Office.

PROCEDURE HISTORY		
Date of Last Action	Action Taken	Authorizing Entity
10/20/11	Reviewed	Sherri Kroll – ED
08/04/12	Reviewed	Sherri Kroll – ED
07/08/13	Revised	Sherri Kroll – ED
06/29/15	Reviewed	Sherri Kroll – ED
09/27/16	Reviewed	Sherri Kroll – ED
09/29/17	Revised	Sherri Kroll – ED
05/05/2018	Revised	Sherri Kroll – ED
10/06/18	Reviewed	Sherri Kroll - ED
10/18/19	Reviewed	Sherri Kroll - ED