

## **Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation (TSHC) Accessible Customer Service Policy**

**Policy Sponsor:** Director, Strategy and Business Management

**Approver:** Board of Directors

**Initial Approval Date:** May 17, 2022

**Effective Date:** June 1, 2022

### **Policy Statement**

Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation (TSHC) recognizes that accessibility for persons with disabilities is an important issue that needs to be addressed throughout our portfolio. Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation is committed to the principles of accommodation outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 (the Customer Service Standard), and the Ontario Human Rights Code. The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 (the Customer Service Standards) is an accessibility standard created under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation will continue to provide customer service for persons with disabilities in a manner that respects their dignity and independence while allowing them the same opportunity as any other customer to access and benefit from our services.

As additional standards identified in the AODA pass into regulation, this policy will be adjusted to include these new standards.

### **Policy Objectives**

In fulfillment of its obligations under the Customer Service Standards and in keeping with its values, this policy outlines Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation's commitment to provide customer service that is inclusive, barrier free and meets the unique needs of persons with disabilities.

The purpose of this policy is to lay out Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation's commitment to providing accessible customer service. This policy sets out key customer service commitments in several areas relating to accessibility.

Guidelines will set out detailed procedures and protocols that guide Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation in applying this policy. The policy and Guidelines will inform tenants and the public of our commitment and will guide them in requesting accommodation in service and providing feedback about our services.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all persons who interact with tenants, members of the

public or third parties on behalf of Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation, as an employee, contractor, volunteer, member of the Board of Directors or otherwise.

## Key Values

Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation shall provide accessible customer service in accordance with the following key principles:

### Dignity

Service is provided in a respectful manner consistent with the needs of the individual.

### Independence

Services for persons with disabilities shall support their independence while respecting their right to safety and personal privacy. As such, service delivery shall consider the nature of the service and alternative accommodation that may be required.

### Equity/Equality of Outcome

Customers with disabilities will be provided with the same opportunity to access our services as all other customers.

### Integration

Customers with disabilities shall fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as all other customers.

## Definitions

Under the Customer Service Standards (O.Reg. 429/07):

**Assistive Device:** A device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities of daily life or accessing the services provided by Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation including, but not limited to, wheelchairs, walkers, canes, note-taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines, personal oxygen tanks and devices for grasping.

**Barrier:** Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy a practice.

**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) learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language, (d) mental disorder, or (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.

**Service Animal:** An animal trained specifically to assist an individual with a disability, either where it is readily apparent that the animal is a service animal or where a letter has been provided by a doctor or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons related to a disability.

**Support Person:** Someone who accompanies a person with a disability and assists them with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services.

## Customer Service Commitments

### Training

Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation will provide training to all Board Members, employees, volunteers and others who interact with the tenants, the public or other third parties on its behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies and procedures. Training will include the following:

The purposes of the AODA; the requirements of the customer service standard; and any subsequent legislation.

Instruction on Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation's policies, and procedures pertaining to the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, including the customer service standard.

How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.

What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation's goods and services.

New staff will be trained upon their initial orientation. Following initial training, existing staff will receive training on a regular basis and when changes are made to these policies and procedures or regulations.

### Service Animals

Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public.

If a service animal is excluded by law, Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation will suggest appropriate alternatives and provide assistance in order to ensure that the person is able to access, obtain, use or benefit from Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation's services where possible.

## **Support Persons**

Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a Support Person will be allowed to access any services provided by Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation with their Support Person. At no time will Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation prevent a person with a disability who is accompanied by a Support Person from having access to their Support Person.

Where there are barriers to access or attendance by a Support Person at sponsored meetings, consultations or events, Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation will seek to facilitate access so as to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities.

## **Assistive Devices**

Persons with disabilities shall be permitted to obtain, use or benefit from goods or services through the use of their own assistive devices. Staff will be trained so as to be familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing services.

In the event a person with a disability is hindered from accessing any goods or services offered, Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation will seek to accommodate the person by offering the use of another assistive device that is available or an alternative way of delivering the same service.

Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation will ensure that staff know how to use assistive devices available in their various locations for customers and inform customers of the assistive devices that are available.

## **Notice of Temporary Disruptions**

Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation is aware that the operation of its services and facilities is important to its customers. However, temporary disruptions in services and facilities may occur.

Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation will provide its customers with notice of any disruption to its services, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that may be available.

Notice of service disruptions will be provided as soon as staff is aware of the disruption, or in advance in the case of planned disruptions. Notice will be provided by a variety of methods, depending on the circumstances, and may

include postings in conspicuous places at the affected premises, in other Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation facilities, on Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation's website or by any other means that will ensure that the notice reaches those persons potentially affected by the temporary disruption in a manner that is accessible to them.

## **Feedback Policy**

The goal of Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation is to meet and surpass expectations while providing services to customers with disabilities. Feedback on our services and whether expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated. Feedback may be provided by a person with a disability in the manner deemed most convenient to them, such as in person, by telephone, in writing, by email or otherwise. All feedback will be kept in strict confidence and used to improve customer service. In addition, the author of the feedback will be provided a response in the format requested (or the most appropriate format where no request was made) outlining actions taken. Where an individual is not satisfied with Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation's response to their feedback, staff will direct their complaint to the appropriate individual to respond.

## **Related Legislation, Regulations, and TSHC Policies:**

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)
- Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- TSHC Human Rights and Harassment Policy – Tenants
- TSHC Accessibility Policy
- TSHC Multi-year Accessibility Plan
- TSHC Tenant Complaint Procedure
- TSHC Accessibility Customer Service Policy Guidelines (to be reviewed)

## **Amendments (Revision History):**

NA

## **Next Scheduled Review Date: 2025**

This policy will be reviewed once every 5 years.

## **Policy Contact**

Director, Strategy and Business Management