

Providing goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities

The Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo & Stratford Perth (HSKWSP) is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination.

The HSKWSP 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.

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

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

Our accessible customer service policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for 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. This may include the following:

- Speaking clearly and in a normal voice – not raising our voices unless specifically requested to do so

- Looking directly at the person while speaking and not speaking too fast or too slow
- Making sure our mouths are visible – not covering them with our hands or other objects as we talk and better positioning ourselves so that our mouths can be seen
- Writing down information for people when appropriate
- Reading information for people when appropriate

We will work with the person with a disability to determine what method of communication 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.

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.

In certain cases, the HSKWSP might require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for the health or safety reasons of:

- the person with a disability
- others on the premises

Before making a decision, the HSKWSP will:

- consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs
- consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence
- determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises

Notice of temporary disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities, the HSKWSP 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.

Services/Facilities include:

- Closure of our animal centres
- Cancellation of our events and programs such as birthday programs, yoga, etc.
- Cancellation of any of our services offered

The notice will be made publicly available in the following ways:

- A sign posted at our entrance
- A notice posted on our website and/or on our social media channels
- Telephones will be answered by a third-party answering service

Training

The HSKWSP will provide accessible customer service training to:

- all employees and volunteers as it relates to their specific role
- 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 as soon as practicable after being hired.

Training will include:

- purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the customer service standard
- the HSKWSP's policies 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 the HSKWSP's goods, services or facilities

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

We maintain records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

Feedback process

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

Customers will be notified of how to provide feedback in the following ways:

- In the reception area of our facilities
- In this policy, available on our website

Customers who wish to provide feedback on the way the HSKWSP provides goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities can provide feedback in the following way(s):

- Calling our animal centres and asking for our Human Resources department
- Visiting our animal centres and asking for our Human Resources department
- Emailing our Human Resources department at hr@kwsphumane.ca

If the customer is unsatisfied with the result or response, then the feedback can be referred to the President of the Board of Directors. Correspondence is to be addressed to President of the Board of Directors, 250 Riverbend Drive, Kitchener, ON N2B 2E9 or by email to President@kwsphumane.ca.

All feedback, including complaints, will be handled in accordance with our Public Code of Conduct and Complaint Policy, available on our website.

Customers can expect to be acknowledged within two business days. We strive to resolve all feedback within fourteen days; however, individuals will be given an approximate timeframe of resolution at the time that they provide their feedback. They will also be informed of the progress of their feedback on a regular basis, especially if there are any delays or changes to what has been agreed.

The HSKWSP will make sure our feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request.

Information and Communications

We communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. When asked, we will provide information about our organization and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports:

- a) in a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability; and
- b) at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. If the organization determines that information or communications are unconvertible, the organization shall provide the requestor with:

- a) an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and
- b) a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

We notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports by posting a notice in the following location(s)/way(s):

- In the reception area of our facilities
- In this policy, available on our website

We will also meet internationally-recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.

Employment

We notify employees, job applicants and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring. We notify job applicants when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request. We consult with the applicants and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation.

Modifications to this or other policies



TITLE: Accessibility Policy

Date of Last Revision: November 2022

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