

Accessible Customer Service Policy

Issue Date: December 2024

Purpose:

The purpose of this Customer Service Standards Policy is to fulfill the requirements set out in regulation 429/07 and to establish a policy for Connect4Life that governs the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities.

Persons Affected:

This policy applies to every individual who interacts with the public or other third parties on behalf of Connect4Life, whether as an employee, agent, volunteer, or otherwise.

Policy Directives:

1. Introduction/Objective:

Connect4Life is Canada's only service provider for people with disabilities of its kind, focused on improving the lives and livelihoods of people with disabilities and transforming public opinion about their positive contributions and participation.

Our substantial range of accessibility programs, services, and events can be accessed through our Programs and Services web page.

2. Policy Statement:

Connect4Life's Customer Service Policy exceeds the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Every aspect of our mission, vision, and strategic plan extends beyond administrative compliance.

2.1 Application:

This policy applies to employees, volunteers, students, Board Members, contractors, and other third parties acting on behalf of Connect4Life who interact with our service users.

2.2 Non-Compliance:

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment and/or a contract.

Customer Service Commitments:

3.1 Communication with Persons with Disabilities:

Connect4Life will communicate in ways that enable persons with a broad range of disabilities to engage with dignity for the purpose of using, receiving, and requesting our programs, services, and accessing our facilities.

3.2 Service Disruptions – Notice:

A service disruption may include planned or unplanned events or actions related to any of Connect4Life's services, programs, or facilities that may prevent or limit access. Service disruptions will be communicated promptly via our website, over the phone, and/or in writing where applicable. The notice will include:

- The reason for the disruption
- Its anticipated length of time
- A description of alternative services or facilities, if available
- Contact information

3.3 Service Animals, Support Persons, Assistive Devices:

We welcome people with disabilities to bring their own assistive devices, service animals, and support persons when accessing our programs, services, and/or facilities. Additional fees will not be charged for a support person assisting a person with a disability.

Connect4Life's staff is trained on the use of a broad range of assistive devices. For detailed information, see our Accessibility Awareness Toolkit regarding:

- Service Animals
- Support Persons
- Assistive Devices

3.4 Service User Fees – Advance Notice:

Where fees are required to access a Connect4Life service or activity, advance notice will be provided. This information will be communicated clearly through signage, documentation, posters, websites, and other forms of accessible communication.

3.5 Training for Our People:

Employees, students, Board Members, and volunteers complete a range of accessibility training related to accessibility legislation and human rights obligations via our Onboarding Program and throughout their involvement with Connect4Life.

Training may include:

- An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- Detailed information about accessibility-related human rights provisions
- Fostering inclusion when interacting with people who use assistive devices, need alternative communication supports, or require the assistance of a service animal or support person
- Addressing barriers or challenges faced by individuals with disabilities when accessing Connect4Life programs, services, or facilities

3.6 Feedback Process:

Service users are encouraged to provide feedback verbally or in writing. All feedback will be directed to the appropriate person for that business unit and will be responded to as soon as practicable when a response is required.

3.7 Documents:

Upon request, Connect4Life will work with the requestor to provide publicly available documents in an alternative format and/or with communication support to meet their needs in a timely manner, where reasonably possible. Please contact info@connect4life.ca to let us know your needs. We will work with you to provide information in an accessible format.

Where information is determined to be unconvertible, Connect4Life will provide:

- An explanation as to why the information or communication is unconvertible
- A summary of the unconvertible information or communication

3.8 Review and Amendments:

This policy will be reviewed and amended as necessary, in alignment with the AODA Compliance Report Schedule for small, non-profit organizations.

Please contact info@connect4life.ca to let us know your needs. We will work with you to provide the information in a way that is accessible for you in a timely manner.