

## Governance Means Policy

**Subject:** Accessibility for Library Users with Disabilities

**Issuing Date:** 11/21/2007

**Revision Date:**

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### PURPOSE

This Policy has been developed to ensure that all library facilities, services and resources are accessible to library customers with disabilities. It provides guidelines for the training of staff, taking into account disability access issues and assistance for individuals with a disability.

This Policy also outlines a process for managing staff expectations and staff training and a feedback process and promotion strategy with a view to making people with disabilities aware of the services the library offers and how to access them and provide feedback on them.

### SCOPE

The *Accessibility for Library Users with Disabilities Policy* applies to all services, facilities, and resources provided by the London Public Library. The principles that guide the policy include the following:

- Library services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- When communicating with a person with a disability, we shall do so in a manner that takes into account and is sensitive to the person's disability.
- Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit library services.
- The provision of library services to persons with disabilities and others will be integrated into our overall service model.
- Library facilities will meet the City of London accessibility requirements for the design and construction of new facilities and the retrofit, alteration or addition to existing library facilities.

### DEFINITIONS

*Disability*, in relation to a person, means:

- 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, including diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide or service dog or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- an intellectual development disability,
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- a mental disorder, or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

*Accessibility* includes such areas as access into the library building; accessible reference and circulation desks; glare-free, tactile, colour-contrasted signage; clear, easy-to-read labels, instructions,

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and signs for services and collections; sufficient lighting; audible and visual emergency alarm systems; collections which include alternate format materials; and access to the library's catalogue.

*Barrier* is anything that keeps someone with a disability from participating fully in society because of his or her disability. A barrier can be visible or invisible. An example of a visible barrier is a building with steps but no ramp.

*Guide Dog* is an assistance dog trained to lead blind or visually impaired people around obstacles.

*Service Dog* is a type of assistance dog, specifically trained to help people who have disabilities other than visual or hearing impairment. Examples include psychiatric service dogs, mobility assistance dogs, and seizure response or medical response dogs.

*Facility Accessibility Design Standards (City of London)* addresses accessibility requirements for the design and construction of new facilities, as well as the retrofit, alteration or addition to existing facilities. This standard particularly addresses the needs of persons with disabilities.

## POLICY

### *Library Buildings and Facilities*

Within the limitations of the existing library buildings, the London Public Library will strive to ensure where practicable facilities are physically accessible to users with disabilities, as per City of London Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS). Problem areas in library buildings will be identified and resolutions sought.

Continue to improve access to the London Public Library website for people with disabilities, focusing on readability, web content, navigation, clear language and page design and presentation.

Within the limitations of the existing library building, the London Public Library will strive to accommodate any adaptive technology possessed by individuals with disabilities.

An appropriate quantity of adaptive technology will be provided by the library to assist individuals who have difficulty accessing library resources and information using conventional hardware and software.

Adaptive technology will be updated, as required, to assist users who have difficulty accessing library resources and information using conventional hardware and software.

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide or service dog, London Public Library will ensure that the person is permitted to enter the library premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.

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London Public Library will provide notice when accessibility to services or facilities for customers with disabilities is temporarily disrupted (for example, posting signs at the entrance of a branch to let customers know that one or more elevators is temporarily out of service or that the branch is closed for renovations).

***Library Services***

Standard library services that are available to all readers will be made available to persons with disabilities. These include: lending services, reader advisory services, reference, user education and orientation, community information services, and interlibrary loans.

Information services assistance will be available from library staff either in person, via email or by phone. Help will be provided in using the catalogues and electronic resources and in locating appropriate information to meet the individual's needs.

Assistance will also be provided in using adaptive technology available within the library for individuals with disabilities.

Library staff will provide assistance in collection of items from the shelves, in advance via holds placed or at time of visit. Held items will be available for collection at the selected branch location.

Library technology assistance will be provided upon request.

Library lending services will be available to residents in their homes who, for reasons of restricted mobility, physical or visual disability, or long-term illness, are unable to visit or use regular library facilities, in accordance with our Visiting Library Service guidelines.

Planning services for people with disabilities will be integrated into our planning process, and prioritized for planning and implementation.

Services and collections for persons with disabilities are treated, during the budgeting process, as essential core services.

***Library Resources***

Library collections policies will reflect the needs and priorities of persons with disabilities.

Where practicable, the library will provide alternative formatting of library information upon request. This could include large print, audio books, closed-captioned and described videos and DVDs, books in Braille, etc.

London Public Library will ensure that non-discriminatory terminology regarding persons with disabilities is used in all of our publications and services: for promotional and marketing materials; bibliographies and other publications; training and orientation of staff and users; public meetings; and one-to-one interviews.

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### ***Library Staff and Volunteer Awareness and Training***

A Disability Awareness & Sensitivity Training Program will be delivered to all library staff and volunteers. This will include an initial presentation to educate staff and volunteers on the *Accessibility for Library Users with Disabilities Policy*, and ongoing training to raise awareness of the needs of unique groups of users with disabilities and how to effectively serve individuals with disabilities.

Employees and Volunteers will be trained in the following:

- How to communicate with persons with cognitive disabilities, utilizing such tools as communication boards which are available in all libraries for patrons who cannot talk or who have speech that is difficult to understand.
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide or service dog or the assistance of a support person.
- How to use library assistive equipment or devices that may help with the provision of library services to a person with a disability.
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing library services.

User manuals and instructions will be available for both staff and patrons. Training will also be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of library services to persons with disabilities.

### ***Feedback Process for Persons with Disabilities***

London Public Library will have an established process for receiving and responding to feedback about the manner in which we provide library services to persons with disabilities. We will make information about the process readily available to the public.

The feedback process permits persons to provide their feedback in person, by telephone, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text by email or on diskette or otherwise. The feedback process also specifies the actions that London Public Library will take if a complaint is received.

### ***Promotion of the Library Disability Policy***

London Public Library will promote the availability of our services to people with disabilities. This will include information, a webpage within the library's website, and signage.

London Public Library will evaluate our outreach programs to ensure that all potential users are made aware of the services available to them.

### ***Responsibilities***

All London Public Library employees have a responsibility to be aware of and to comply with this policy. Management is responsible for developing, implementing and evaluating services to users with disabilities.

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**INQUIRIES**

Direct inquiries to Senior Director, Customer Services & Branch Operations

**Bibliography**

*Ministry of Community & Social Services, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities, Accessibility Standards*

*Ontario Human Rights Commission, Human Rights Code*

*City of London, 2006 Facility Accessibility Design Standards*

*Canadian Library Association, Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities*

*Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*

*United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*