

## **2766137 Ontario Limited d.b.a. Home Instead**

### **AODA Accessibility Policy and Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2023 to 2028)**

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## **1. Statement of Commitment**

Home Instead recognizes the challenges faced by persons with disabilities and participation restrictions. We are committed to meeting the needs of our clients and personnel in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. At Home Instead will strive, at all times, to provide barrier-free services in a manner that ensures equal access and participation for all people. We believe in integration, equal opportunities and focus on enhancement of abilities. We are committed to meeting the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility. Through our renewed focus we are dedicated to meeting or exceeding the accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

## **2. Introduction**

Home Instead understands the importance of providing accessible services to clients and personnel of all ability levels and we respect and uphold the requirement outlined in AODA, passed in 2005. We believe in customer service excellence and are our obligations under the AODA and the related Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (IASR).

AODA requires, effective January 1, 2014, under the IASR, that organizations establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan that outlines how they will meet requirements to prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. The Act applies to every person or organization in the public and private sectors of the Province of Ontario.

Building on Home Instead Accessibility Policy, we are dedicated to treating everyone with dignity and respect. Meeting the needs of people with disabilities is important and we will do so by identifying, preventing, and removing barriers to accessibility in our organization. Our Accessibility Policy outlines our compliance with AODA, current achievements and the strategies and actions that Home Instead is putting in place to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. As part of our commitment to meeting our obligations under the Act, Home Instead has developed a multi-year plan which outlines our strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the AODA.

In accordance with the requirements outlined in the IASR Home Instead will:

- Post the accessibility plan on our websites
- Provide the plan in an accessible format upon request
- Review and update the accessibility plan at a minimum of every five years
- Establish, review and update the accessibility plan in consultation with persons with disabilities
- Prepare status reports as required and post these on our websites

### **3. Measures to Identify, Remove and Prevent Barriers**

#### a) Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

The Customer Service Standards require organizations that provide programs or services to the public or other third parties to create policies, provide training to employees, ensure that premises accessible to third parties are accessible to persons with disabilities and establish a feedback process and steps to notify the public of a temporary disruption to services. Organizations with 20 or more employees were also required to prepare certain documents and file a compliance report with the Ministry by December 2012.

Home Instead has met the requirements set out in the Accessible Customer Service Standard as follows:

Home Instead has reviewed and modified policies, practices and procedures on providing programs and services to people with disabilities. Our policies and procedures are based on the foundation of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity. Our Policy on Accessibility is designed to remove potential barriers with respect to physical and program/service accessibility, to promote employment opportunities, to reduce attitudinal and communication barriers, and to promote access to social, legal or economic advocacy as required and applies to all Home Instead personnel, contractors, students and volunteers.

To promote the recruitment of qualified individuals with disabilities, searches for job candidates and the advertising of available positions will, where feasible, include publications, websites, organizations and community groups where individuals with disabilities may have more ready access to job postings.

Personnel of Home Instead are given equal opportunity to participate in the day to day operation and future direction of the company, through training, professional development and active participation in location/department and regional meetings.

We will review the specific needs of any client or personnel with a disability to make reasonable accommodation so that he/she will be able to participate fully in rehabilitation, receive necessary services or to fulfill the demands of his/her employment.

If a client or personnel requires the use of assistive devices (e.g. hearing aids, wheelchairs, walkers, portable oxygen tank) to access the programs and services provided by Home Instead, or to fulfill his or her job demands, he or she will be encouraged to use their own equipment, or as necessary information may be provided regarding resources to obtain necessary assistive devices. Personnel are familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by persons with disabilities.

Individuals who use service animals or a guide dog may bring the animal into any part of our office as necessary to access the services provided, and personnel.

Personnel providing services to clients may need to accommodate the presence of a support person who is accompanying the client with a disability. Care will be taken to obtain the permission of the client prior to discussing confidential or sensitive information in front of the support person.

If facilities or equipment normally used to access programs and services become temporarily unavailable (e.g. elevators, automatic door opener, handicapped accessible washrooms), individuals with disabilities will be provided with as much prior notice as possible, and if the disruption is not just temporary, it may be necessary to direct the client to an alternate location to receive care.

To reduce communication barriers and to provide the best possible customer services Home Instead will ensure that:

- Communications with clients or personnel with a disability will be in a manner that takes into account the limitations created by the disability, e.g. deafness, visual limitations, acquired brain injury affecting comprehension.
- An effort will be made to recruit staff with the specific language skills to meet the needs of our community's local ethnic population.

If a client is deemed unsuitable for treatment following the initial assessment, or the Home Instead location is unable to accommodate a client, the location is responsible for arranging referral to an alternative local service provider where access is available and for informing the referral source of the action taken.

Information on the client's right to advocacy services is included in the client orientation process, and information on various social service and community agencies are available.

The office's self-evaluation of accessibility to the rehabilitation process and/or delivery of services will be completed annually. This will involve a continuous review of the reasons for delay in treatment/service entry and the specific staffing requirements based on the needs of the clients' services provided by Home Instead. The office will develop and implement a written Accessibility Plan, available on request, using input from clients, personnel, and other stakeholders to address the following areas, as applicable;

- Architectural barriers
- Environmental barriers
- Attitudinal barriers
- Financial barriers
- Employment barriers
- Communication barriers
- Transportation barriers
- Barriers to community integration

**b) Accessibility Feedback**

We welcome feedback and provide a mechanism through use of Accessibility Surveys and through our website, so that individuals with a disability can provide feedback on how Home Instead provided services to people with disabilities. Alternative formats are available upon request.

All feedback can be provided to any member of the JHSC and timely follow up will occur. Home Instead takes its obligation to continuous improvement very seriously and welcomes the opportunity to improve their policies, processes and practices.

**c) Personnel Training**

Key components of the AODA Customer Service Standard are incorporated throughout our Accessibility Policy. To fully comply with the AODA accessible customer service standard all personnel in Ontario must complete the AODA training module soon as practicable. A record of training completed by each personnel is monitored and maintained by the office to ensure that training obligations continue to be met with regard to the Customer Services regulation requirements.

To reduce attitudinal barriers, an open forum or other educational opportunities is provided to Home Instead personnel. These could include discussion on attitudes towards certain client groups, conflict resolution, a psychological/behavioural approach to client treatment etc.

**4. Accessibility Plan 2023-2028**

**a) General Information and Emergency Plans**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Status</b>
Continue to provide new staff with accessible customer service training as part of on-board training	Part of on-going operations	
Staff will continue to communicate with people who have disabilities in a way that take their disability into account	Part of on-going operations	
Review and update policies and standards regularly to ensure high quality, accessible customer service	Review every 5 years	Last completed December 2023