

Advisory Committee Member Inquiry Form
Demande de renseignement d'un membre du Comité consultatif

Submitted at: Accessibility Advisory Committee

Présenté au: Comité consultatif sur l'accessibilité

From/Exp.: Vice-Chair Turcotte	Date: February 21, 2018 Date: le 21 février 2018	File/Dossier : AAC 01-18
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To/Dest.: General Manager, Service Innovation and Performance Department

Subject/Objet: Employees living with addictions

Inquiry:

Background

The Ontario Human Rights Commission's "[Policy on preventing discrimination based on mental health disabilities and addictions](#)" recognizes that addictions are disabilities and thus that persons living with addictions are protected against disability-based discrimination under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

Inquiry:

1. Does the City of Ottawa recognize that it has a duty to accommodate persons living with addictions as persons living with disabilities under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*?

The City recognizes its duty to accommodate persons living with addictions as persons living with disabilities. Human Resources and Labour Relations practices comply with the **Workplace Accommodation Policy**.

With respect to the process of accommodation, the employee is not obligated to provide diagnosis of disability but is required to provide information regarding any limitations or restrictions and duration in order to determine necessary workplace accommodations. Employees in safety sensitive positions may be accommodated outside of their substantive position until fit to perform to ensure the protection of the employee and others, including the public. Fit to perform (work) references the City's Drugs and Alcohol in the Workplace Procedure and legislative requirements under subsection 25(2)(h) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, which requires the City to take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker. On a case-by-case basis, depending on the nature of the job, other legislation may apply including regulations imposed by the Ministry of Transportation Ontario and Transport Canada, especially for drivers of vehicles governed by the City's Commercial Vehicle Operator's Registration (CVOR). Assessment of fitness to perform work is case specific. For example, for an employee who discloses that they have an addiction to alcohol or drugs and they hold a safety sensitive position, the threshold of fitness may need to be

provided through the employees' health care practitioner or an Independent Medical Assessment by a specialist.

2. Does the City of Ottawa's working definition of disability include addictions?
 - a. If not, why not?

The **Workplace Accommodation Policy** includes a definition of disability that includes addictions as follows:

Disability – an on-going impairment that restricts or impedes an individual in their daily living activities and may be characterized by one of the following:

- Physical Disability – this includes but is not limited to:
 - an illness or infirmity;
 - malformation or disfigurement such as diabetes mellitus, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis or amputation,
 - lack of physical co-ordination;
 - blindness or visual impairment;
 - deafness or hearing impairment;
 - muteness or speech impairment;
 - physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
 - Other related mobility issues.
- Mental Disability – impairment or developmental disability.
- Learning Disability or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involve in understanding or using symbols or spoken language, i.e., dyslexia.
- Dependence on alcohol or drugs.
- Any condition for which benefits were claimed or received under a statutory insurance plan.

3. What is the City of Ottawa doing to accommodate and reduce accessibility barriers for :
 - a. Its employees living with addiction-based disabilities?

Employees are encouraged to speak to their supervisor or manager regarding any challenges that may require support or intervention to allow the employee to be productive. As with other disabilities, employees may not wish to discuss their disability with their manager or supervisor and would prefer to seek information and support through the Employee Health and Wellness team, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or an external source such as their Health Care practitioner, clinic, union, etc. The Disability Management Consultant (DMC) and EAP Counsellor will assess the situation and provide direction with respect to assessment and treatment or support options, if required.

An employee guide to workplace accommodation and return to work is available on Ozone, the City of Ottawa's intranet site.

b. Members of the public living with addiction-based disabilities?

The Community and Social Services Department offers programs and services in collaboration with our partners, to enrich people's well-being. This includes child care and early-years services; employment and financial assistance; housing and homelessness services; long-term care; community funding; engagement and capacity building.

The department supports members of the public living with addiction through various programs and services. Here are a few examples:

Addiction Services Initiative (Ontario Works Program)

We deliver the Ontario Works program on behalf of the Province of Ontario. Ontario Works helps people who are in financial need. It offers financial and employment assistance.

The Addiction Services Initiative (ASI) is a targeted employment assistance activity to help Ontario Works participants whose substance abuse is a barrier to participation in employment. The three components of the ASI are:

- A screening test for substance abuse;
- Participation in an assessment of substance abuse; and
- Participation in a program for the treatment of substance abuse.

The ASI case worker has specialized training and offers intensive case management to support persons living with addictions. Based on their individual needs, participants are referred to community-based programs for assessment, treatment, counselling and other supports.

As reported in the City of Ottawa 2018 Municipal Accessibility Plan (COMAP) Update Report, on average, 87 Ontario Works clients received ASI intensive case management supports per month. For more information, refer to the Ontario Works Policy Directive, 8.4 Addiction Services Initiative.

ODSP Application Support Project, Centre 454

The Province delivers the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) for people with disabilities who are in financial need. The application process for ODSP is complex; the applicant must attend many appointments, complete forms and provide medical assessments. This can be difficult for someone living with a disability such as addiction. For this reason, the City provides 100% funding to the ODSP Application Support Project.

This program helps individuals with disabilities, including those receiving Ontario Works, navigate the ODSP application process. This may include initial inquiries, referral to medical assessments and medical review. Applicants seeking ODSP present with a variety of health issues including addictions.

Housing Services

The City's Housing Services has a robust housing and homelessness service system that offers flexible and responsive housing supports and housing options to people at risk of or experiencing homelessness or living on low to moderate incomes. Housing Services provides funding and collaborates with many non-profit agencies to ensure the system is responsive, coordinated and flexible to meet people's changing needs as their life circumstances change.

Housing First

The City's Housing First program contracts with 12 agencies and up to 50 case managers to provide supports to adults and youth experiencing chronic homelessness to help transition from emergency shelter into permanent affordable/supportive housing of their choice. Program participants are matched to case management supports to find and move into housing and integrate into their community. Case managers establish person-driven individualized case plans and provide practical supports such as cooking, budgeting, unit maintenance, landlord and neighbour relations. Participants are encouraged and supported to engage in recreational/social activities, part or full time employment, education and training. Housing First brokers participants to other longer term community supports such as physical health, mental health and addictions.

Supports may be mobile or provided on-site through different models of supportive housing.

The Families First program provides wrap around supports to families exiting the family shelter system or families in the community who are vulnerably-housed to address areas of concern that impact their ongoing housing stability.

Residential Services Homes

Residential Services Homes provides long-term permanent supportive housing to vulnerable adults who need some supervision and services to maintain their independence in the residence/community. Residents are typically living with a psychiatric, developmental or physical illness and/or disability. Homes offer a residential living environment that is safe and supportive for all tenants. Services provided include 24-hour urgent response, medication management, meals and snacks, furnished rooms, housekeeping, personal laundry, and opportunities for social and/or recreational activities. The City provides financial subsidies for up to 1,000 eligible residents, through

purchase of service agreements.

Ottawa Public Health

Ottawa residents living with addictions or mental health issues may face discrimination due to prejudicial attitudes, negative stereotyping, and the overall stigma surrounding mental health and substance use. Ottawa Public Health (OPH) seeks to reduce discrimination and barriers for these residents by working with other City of Ottawa departments and community partners to: reduce stigma, address health inequities, and provide support to people with mental health and substance use issues.

Specifically, OPH has worked to reduce stigma through the development and dissemination of *have THAT talk* videos and activity guides as well as delivering workshops to City of Ottawa staff, community partners, workplaces and community agencies. Through this work, OPH has increased awareness of the importance of mental health, increased knowledge of mental health resources, and sought to reduce stigma around mental health and mental illness. Increasing awareness of resources, providing tools and skills to promote positive mental health, and reducing the stigma that surrounds the topic, all contribute to individuals seeking care and support sooner, and increase the support systems to support individuals through challenges and illness.

OPH also provides supports to residents who have substance use and mental health issues, including pregnant or new parents, youth, individuals who use tobacco products and other substances, as well as sex-trade workers and their sexual or drug-sharing partners. In each of these programs, nurses seek to work with the client and their family and/or social network to ensure their safety and the safety of their children, family, friends and partners. This includes providing a wide range of programs and services, from providing nicotine replacement therapy, safer injection and inhalation equipment, supervised consumption services, naloxone and overdose response training, to building youth's resiliency. OPH also employs a peer-to-peer model through local schools and in harm reduction services to better engage clients and youth in the delivery of these services and programs, ultimately increasing and enhancing outreach to these residents. OPH nurses also ensure that clients are referred to, and able to access, appropriate resources if needed. In addition, OPH contributes funding to the Youth Services Bureau's mental health walk-in clinic for youth and their families, as well as funding for addictions counsellors in all four publicly-funded schools boards, through which youth can access mental health and addictions counselling in their school and community.

Finally, OPH seeks to reduce health inequalities in our community by: ensuring our programs and services are inclusive of those who have fewer opportunities to be healthy; monitoring and reporting on mental health and substance use outcomes; collaborating with community partners that work with people facing health inequities; and participating in policy development to address the social determinants of health.

Demande de renseignement:

French to follow.

Response (Date: 2018-Jun-19)

Réponse (Date: le 19 juin 2018)