



MEMO

The Participation House Project (Durham Region)
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DATE: Saturday, June 8th, 2019
TO: FRONT LINE STAFF
FROM: Michelle Marshall, Executive Director
RE: Labour Disruption – Continuing Obligations

Participation House has long prided itself on the respectful relations we have had with our employees and their union, CUPE.

In that spirit, we have worked hard to try to secure a negotiated renewal of our collective agreement with CUPE since January 2018. Unfortunately, despite our exhaustive efforts to meet CUPE's demands, it now appears that a strike is imminent. CUPE has now publicly communicated their intention to go on strike – this could occur as early as Monday morning at 12:00 a.m.

What happens now?

The priority of our board and management is the continuity of service and the safety and wellbeing of the people and families we support. In the event of a labour disruption next week, PH's office will remain open unless circumstances dictate that it is impractical or unsafe to do so. We will also continue to deliver residential services during any labour disruption, however, our day community support, employment support and respite services will unfortunately be temporarily discontinued.

Your Continuing Obligations

We understand how difficult this uncertainty is for entire PH community – our employees, our partners in the community, and most importantly the people and families that we support. Despite tensions associated with the imminent labour disruption, it is important that we all understand our continuing obligations.

i. Respect and Professionalism

We expect all employees to continue to conduct themselves in a respectful, courteous and professional manner while on duty and to refrain from engaging in conduct while off duty that could jeopardize the PH's reputation and relationships, cause harm to the safety and wellbeing of the people we support, or be threatening, harassing or defamatory to our staff and board members. These expectations continue to apply even during a labour disruption.

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE WHILE INSPIRING GREATNESS

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ii. PH Keys and Property

It has come to our attention that a few weeks ago when the union signaled their intent to strike by seeking a No Board Report, some PH front line staff began making copies of the keys to our premises without PH's permission. While we have provided staff with the opportunity to return these keys anonymously through your CUPE representative, to date we have received only 2 keys, though we understand many more may have been copied.

To be clear, the copying and possession of unauthorized keys to PH property or other items of PH property is a very serious offence as it puts the health and safety of all persons in the PH community at risk. All keys are required to be returned immediately by leaving the key in an envelope at 114 Concession St Unit 17 – staff office. Any employee found to be in possession of an unauthorized copy of PH keys will be subject to serious discipline up to and including termination for just cause.

iii. Trespass and Entry on PH Property

It has come to our attention that since CUPE announced its intention to strike there have been a number of employees coming onto PH properties during their off-duty hours without authorization. Given the tensions and security issues associated with the impending strike, all employees are directed to refrain from entering on PH properties save and except when they are required to do so for the purpose of attending their scheduled shifts. This does not limit your right to picket outside the boundaries of PH properties.

iv. Lawful Strike Activity

We respect your right to be represented by CUPE and your right to strike. We do however, require that if you choose to strike, you do so in lawful manner. Unlawful activities, such as tortious activities (harassment and infliction of mental suffering, interference with contractual relations, and intrusion on seclusion) and criminal activities (such as threats, violence, trespass, vandalism and damage to property) will not be tolerated.

Our Commitment to You

Despite the imminent threat of strike activity we remain committed to reaching a negotiated settlement with CUPE as quickly as possible. At the same time, we are resolved that we can only accept an agreement with CUPE that respects the shared priorities that we developed with you:

- Maintaining our services and jobs.
- Maintaining the quality of our supports.
- Maintaining our ability to meet the needs of the community.

We look forward to these tensions being resolved and to resuming our strong working relationship with our dedicated staff for the benefit of the people we support.

Should you have any questions, please contact Michelle Marshall at mmarshall@phdurham.com.