



GUIDANCE ON ACCESS FOR DOGS ON TRUST PREMISES

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QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

This policy must be followed in full when developing or reviewing and amending Trust procedural documents.

For quick reference the guide below is a summary of actions required. This does not negate the need for the document author and others involved in the process to be aware of and follow the detail of this policy.

1. The purpose of the guidance is to ensure that Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust (PHT) provides a safe environment for patients, staff and visitors allowing appropriate access under the Equality Act 2010.
2. It aims to minimize the restriction of access to guide dogs, hearing dogs, Pet as Therapy (PAT) dogs and assistance dogs on Trust premises. This also includes any of these dogs which are in training. If the Dog is unwell or being treated for a veterinary condition they should not be given access to the hospital as a precautionary measure.
3. The guidance applies to staff and patients.
4. Dogs referred to in this guidance as Assistance dogs that support their disabled owners with a specific Disability, and dogs that provide therapy to patients within the Trust
5. It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of the guidance and to ensure where permissible, dogs are made welcome in the areas. The dogs should be provided with water if required.
6. The main reason for an assistance dog to require access to the hospital is because they act as a mobility tool to support their owner to access PHT's services as a patient. The main reason for a therapy dog to require access to the hospital is because they act as a therapy tool to aid recovery and patient experience for patients using PHT's services. There are occasions where it is not appropriate for a dog to be permitted. PHT can prevent an assistance or therapy dog from entering the area within the hospital on the grounds of Health and Safety.
7. The guidance will be made available from PHT's intranet.

1. INTRODUCTION

Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust (PHT) believes in providing equal access to all those using its services. Assistance dogs can be used by people who have sight, hearing and other disabilities to give greater independence and part of that independence is that a person may have to bring a dog onto the hospital site. Therapy dogs are also used as part of a patients' recovery plan whilst they are in hospital.

Guide Dogs, Hearing Dogs and Assistance Dogs are working dogs that have been trained as a mobility aid for people with visual or other disabilities. PAT Dogs have also been trained to provide therapy for patients recovering in hospital. The dogs are vaccinated, are checked by vets every six months, and groomed daily.

Under the Equality Act 2010, PHT is legally obliged to make reasonable adjustments to ensure equal access to services. Additionally the Equality Act 2010 requires that all reasonable efforts be made to accommodate people's needs as long as patient and staff safety is not compromised

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that PHT provides a safe environment for patients, staff and visitors allowing appropriate access under the Equality Act 2010. Its aim is to minimise the restriction of access to assistance and therapy dogs, reduce distress to the person, dog, staff and other patients and where necessary minimise the time that the dog and owner have to be separated. This will also include any of these working dogs which are in the process of training in their individual roles. Should the dog be unwell or being treated for a veterinary condition, access to the hospital will be denied as a precautionary measure.

3. SCOPE

The guidance applies to staff and patients. It ensures that staff are fully aware of the content and the measures required for promoting access for the benefit of patients and reducing the risk of cross infection.

'In the event of an infection outbreak, flu pandemic or major incident, the Trust recognises that it may not be possible to adhere to all aspects of this document. In such circumstances, staff should take advice from their manager and all possible action must be taken to maintain ongoing patient and staff safety'

4. DEFINITIONS

5. Dogs referred to in this guidance are Assistance dogs that support their disabled owners with their specific Disability.
- 4.2 Assistance dogs - an assistance dog is one which has been specifically trained to assist a person with a specific disability, and which has been qualified by one of the organisations registered as a member of the Assistance Dog UK (Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, Dogs for the Disabled, Canine Partners, Support Dogs, Dog A.I.D.
- 4.3 Guide dogs are dogs that assist people who are blind or are visually impaired. Hearing dogs are dogs that assist deaf people and people who are hard of hearing.

- 4.4 Support dogs/dogs for people with disabilities are dogs that can be trained to do many tasks which the owner may find difficult or impossible, eg opening doors, picking up objects, carrying items, raising an alarm.
- 4.5 PAT Dogs - Pets as Therapy are dogs that are trained to be used as patient therapy.
- 4.6 Seizure Alert dogs are dogs that are trained to behave differently when they detect a potential seizure, which may appear to be misbehaving.
- 4.7 Dogs in Training are any working dog which is undertaking their training in their individual roles

5. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Heads of Department/Ward Managers

It is the responsibility of the Head of Department or the Ward Manager to ensure that dog users are made welcome within their area. Whenever it is not permissible, the hospital needs to justify grounds for failing to make the suggested reasonable adjustment.

5.2 Staff

All hospital staff have a responsibility to be aware of the guidance and ensure that a dog user feels welcome upon arriving at the hospital.

5.3 Dog owners

It is appropriate to ask the owner of the dog to report to each department/reception area upon arrival. There should not be restriction for the dog in accompanying its owner in corridors, common or waiting areas, consulting rooms, and treatment rooms other than specified areas and wards.

5.4 Infection Control Team

The team has a responsibility to inform PHT of any changes to infection control legislation which may affect this guidance.

6. PROCESS

All Assistance dogs:

- Are instantly recognised by the harness they wear and the identification tag on their collar.
- Handlers should carry an identification card that will display the name of the relevant assistance dog charity they are associated with.
- Undergo rigorous health checks on a regular basis, have a strict set diet and are monitored regularly to ensure they meet the criteria of an assistance dog.
- Will not wander freely throughout premises and its movement should be restricted by keeping it on a lead and in harness;
- Are working whenever the harness is in place, when removed this would indicate a rest period for the dog.

6.2 The main reason for an assistance dog to require access to the hospital is because they act as a mobility tool to support their owner to access PHT's services as a patient. Occasionally, they may accompany their owner because there is no one to care for the dog at home. The owner and dog will both prefer to remain together as much as possible.

6.3 Owners generally do not expect their dogs to stay with them in hospital, however, if separation causes an undue amount of distress to the owner or the dog, the dog could be allowed into these areas if appropriate steps are then taken to clean the area. Alternatively, when appointments are made for minor invasive procedures for known guide dog users, the last appointment of the day may be offered so that the area will be cleaned afterwards and no further procedures carried out in the area.

In addition, if sterile or invasive procedures are to be carried out, it might be precautionary to exclude the dog, as there may be a slight shedding of hair.

6.4 There are occasions where it is not appropriate for a dog to be permitted. PHT can prevent an assistance dog from entering the area within the hospital on the ground of Health and Safety by proving:

- They genuinely believe that there is a risk of endangering the disabled person or others, eg infection control risk, if other patients have an allergy to dogs.
- The belief is 'reasonable', eg it is not appropriate for a Guide Dog belonging to a patient to stay overnight in the hospital, or if the patient is critically ill.
- The risk cannot be overcome by a 'reasonable adjustment', which the service provider has to consider making, eg no side room or visitors' room for the patient or visitor to use while the dog is present and a patient on the same ward has an allergy to dogs.

However there are specific exclusions to which animals including working dogs will have prohibited access: -

- Operating theatres
- Intensive Therapy Unit
- Wards containing High Dependency Units
- Cardiac Care Units
- Haematology/Oncology
- Resuscitation rooms

6.5 Hygiene and Cleanliness

All staff must ensure good hand washing practice as per the hand hygiene policy prior to and after contact with an Assistance Dog. All patients who come into contact with or handle an assistance dog should be encouraged to wash their hands. All areas where an Assistance Dog has been should be cleaned on a daily basis as part of the usual schedule. Any equipment that has come into contact with the Assistance Dog should be cleaned as per the Decontamination of Reusable Medical Devices Trust Policy. If necessary all animal body fluids should be treated as human waste.

6.6 Justifiable Separation

In the event that it is necessary that the owner and the dog have to be separated, that period should be kept to the shortest time possible. The dog should be left as near as possible to the owner.

6.7 Moving around the hospital

When the owner is being transported on a trolley or wheelchair and the dog is not needed for mobility, they could still accompany the owner; the harness should be removed to indicate to the dog that it is not being worked.

6.8 Emergencies and unplanned admissions

If the owner is admitted as an emergency case and is suffering from shock or is unconscious, it is likely that the dog will show signs of distress. In such cases Guide Dogs for the Blind Association should be contacted and they would arrange for the dog to be looked after.

6.9 Planned admissions

Generally owners will not wish for the dog to stay with them in the restricted environment of the hospital, and for planned admission most owners will have made arrangements for their dog's care. The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association would be able to arrange for the dog to visit the owner.

6.10 Staff Member Working With an Assistance Dog

In situations where a member of staff is required to have their assistance dog at work to carry out their duties, this should be dealt with sensitivity and all reasonable measures taken to facilitate this. However it is recognised that some high risk clinical areas are not suitable for an animal to be present. In this situation the person in charge of the area should undertake a risk assessment in conjunction with the infection control team to assess the risk associated with clinical activities undertaken and the presence of an assistance dog.

6.11 Religious and Cultural Considerations

The Trust does not consider religious objections as reasonable objections, as the Trust does not consider that an objection on religious grounds would justify its failure to comply with its duty to make reasonable adjustments, in accordance with the limited justification defense set out in the Equality Act 2010.

6.12 Allergies and Phobias

Consideration must be given to the sensitivity some patients may have to dogs, including allergies and any personal anxieties. Actions should be taken to minimize the risk to all patients in the vicinity.

7. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

The guidance will be available on the hospital intranet site. It is the responsibility of all managers/departmental heads to ensure that their staff are made aware of this.

Patients can be made aware of the guidance through the PALS service.

8. REFERENCES AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION

Open your doors to guide dogs <http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/whatwedo/access/accessopendoors/>

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association <http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/>

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People - <http://www.hearingdogs.org.uk/>

Equality Act 2010 - <http://homeoffice.gov.uk/equalities/equality-act/>

Pets as Therapy - <http://www.petsastherapy.org/>

<https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/media/7794422/access-guide-medical-facilities.pdf>

9. EQUALITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust is committed to ensuring that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the way we provide services to the public and the way we treat our staff reflects their individual needs and does not discriminate against individuals or groups on any grounds.

This policy has been assessed accordingly

Our values are the core of what Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust is and what we cherish. They are beliefs that manifest in the behaviours our employees display in the workplace.

Our Values were developed after listening to our staff. They bring the Trust closer to its vision to be the best hospital, providing the best care by the best people and ensure that our patients are at the centre of all we do.

We are committed to promoting a culture founded on these values which form the 'heart' of our Trust:

Respect and dignity

Quality of care

Working together

Efficiency

This policy should be read and implemented with the Trust Values in mind at all times.

10. MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH PROCEDURAL DOCUMENTS

Minimum requirement to be monitored	Lead	Tool	Frequency of Report of Compliance	Reporting arrangements	Lead(s) for acting on Recommendations
<i>Staff are aware of the guidance and how to access it.</i>	Head of Patient Experience	Ward visits by patient representatives	Annual	Policy audit report to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient Experience Steering Group 	Ward/Department managers
<i>Assistance dogs have appropriate access.</i>					
<i>Pets as therapy dogs have appropriate access</i>					

This document will be monitored to ensure it is effective and to assure compliance.

EQUALITY IMPACT SCREENING TOOL

To be completed and attached to any procedural document when submitted to the appropriate committee for consideration and approval for service and policy changes/amendments.

Stage 1 - Screening			
Title of Procedural Document: Guidance on access for dogs on Trust premises			
Date of Assessment	8 May 2017	Responsible Department	Patient Experience
Name of person completing assessment	Sarah Balchin	Job Title	Head of Patient Experience
Does the policy/function affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of :			
	Yes/No	Comments	
• Age	No		
• Disability Learning disability; physical disability; sensory impairment and/or mental health problems e.g. dementia	No		
• Ethnic Origin (including gypsies and travellers)	No		
• Gender reassignment	No		
• Pregnancy or Maternity	No		
• Race	No		
• Sex	No		
• Religion and Belief	No		
• Sexual Orientation	No		
If the answer to all of the above questions is NO, the EIA is complete. If YES, a full impact assessment is required: go on to stage 2, page 2			
More Information can be found be following the link below www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents			