

Policy on Assistance Dogs

1. Introduction

CCCU values the diversity of its workforce and student body and is committed to providing an environment which is welcoming for all. The University provides information for disabled staff and students and this policy has been developed to address specific issues relating to assistance dogs on University campuses and in Student Residences. It is also intended to raise awareness for staff, students and visitors of the issues relating to assistance dogs.

This policy aims to outline:

- the arrangements made to provide a welcoming and safe environment for assistance dogs and their owners
- the roles and responsibilities within the University in relation to assistance dogs
- the responsibilities of the owners of assistance dogs on University property
- a process for dealing with issues and complaints if they arise

More information on the definition of an assistance dog, as used in this policy, can be found in **Appendix 1**.

2. The University: Arrangements

The University makes the following arrangements in order to allow staff, students and visitors with assistance dogs to enjoy the best possible experience:

- Spending pens are provided for the toilet needs of assistance dogs (for further information contact: facilities-helpdesk@canterbury.ac.uk).
- Water bowls are provided for assistance dogs (for further information contact: facilities-helpdesk@canterbury.ac.uk).
- On request, the University will provide familiarisation with and orientation on campus as part of induction.
- The University provides guidelines for staff and students on how to interact with assistance dogs. This information can be found in **Appendix 2**.
- The University is happy to listen to the suggestions of assistance dog owners as to how University provision for assistance dogs could be improved.

The University: Roles and responsibilities:

2.1 Facilities (Accommodation Services)

When a resident student has an assistance dog, the Accommodation Office is responsible for informing other students in Halls, who are likely to come into contact with the assistance dog and for asking them to confirm that they would not be adversely affected by the presence of the dog.

The University will ensure that staff in Accommodation and Residences will be provided with training, so that they can respond appropriately to individual needs.

2.2 Facilities (Estates and Infrastructure and Housekeeping Services)

Estates and Infrastructure (Grounds & Gardens) staff will ensure the upkeep of Spending Pens for is sufficient to ensure the health of the dog and the safety of the owner, including the provision of bins for dog refuse and the disposal of the refuse.

2.3 Student Support Services

Student Support Services will advise students with assistance dogs and signpost them to this policy to make them aware of the help provided by the University and their rights and responsibilities. If required, the disability team will liaise with the student's academic department and accommodation to ensure that any reasonable adjustments needed have been made.

2.4 Line Managers

Line Managers will ensure that staff with an assistance dog are aware of this policy, including their own responsibilities and will work together with the member of staff to arrange any reasonable adjustments required. Line Managers will also ensure that other members of staff respond appropriately to the member of staff and the assistance dog. HR&OD Department will provide support to Line Managers in addressing any issues that arise.

3. The Owner: Roles and responsibilities:

The assistance dog is the responsibility of its owner who must ensure that the assistance dog:

- i. is kept on a lead at all times when walking around the University premises;
- ii. uses the Spending Pens provided by the University and does not allow it to foul the University paths or grounds;
- iii. has its requirements in relation to toileting and feeding requirements met;
- iv. does not enter other students' bedrooms, the shared toilets or shower rooms in Halls of Residence and University Accommodation;
- v. behaves in an appropriate manner at all times and does not disrupt others.

The following action must be taken in the event of fouling:

- i. In the unlikely event that the dog does foul inside University buildings, the owner must report this to an appropriate member of staff to make arrangements with Facilities Management to clean and sanitize the area.

4. Process for dealing with complaints and/or breaches of the policy

4.1 Complaints by assistance dogs owners

If a student or member of staff with an assistance dog wishes to make a complaint about the treatment of themselves or their dog, they should raise this issue with the department in which the problematic treatment occurred. For example if problems occur in Student Accommodation, it should be raised with the Accommodation Department. If the problem occurs in the learning environment it should be raised with the relevant academic department. The department in question will then investigate the issue.

Every attempt will be made to resolve the matter informally, including where appropriate the use of mediation. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the issue will be escalated and dealt with through staff or student disciplinary procedures, with reference to the Equality Act 2010.

4.2 Complaints about assistance dogs

If a student or member of staff wishes to make a complaint about an assistance dog or notices any breaches of this policy, they should also raise the issue with the department in which the problem occurred.

Again, every attempt will be made to resolve the matter informally with the dog's owner, including where appropriate the use of mediation. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, or if the request to resolve the complaint is not complied with, the issue will be escalated and dealt with through staff or student disciplinary procedures.

4.3 Complaints about this policy

Complaints about the operation of the Policy should be made using the procedures set out in the relevant staff or student complaints procedure.

Appendix 1

Definition of Assistance Dog

For the purpose of this policy, an assistance dog is one which has been specifically trained to assist disabled people and which has been qualified by one of the organisations registered as a member of Assistance Dogs (UK) or an equivalent organisation in another country.

Assistance dogs trained by members of Assistance Dogs (UK) or by an equivalent organisation in another country, have formal identification and are permitted to accompany their owners at all times and in all places within the United Kingdom (unless there is a genuine health and safety risk).

On the grounds of Health and Safety responsibilities to its staff, students and visitors, the University reserves the right to refuse access for a dog that:

- i. Is not qualified by one of the five membership organisations of Assistance Dogs (UK).
- ii. Dogs from other nations, which do not meet the full membership criteria of the established international assistance dog organisations – Assistance Dogs International, Assistance Dogs Europe, International Guide Dog Federation – or other such international bodies as may from time to time be recognised.

Types of Assistance Dogs:

Guide Dogs assist people who are blind or are visually impaired.

Hearing Dogs assist people who are deaf or are hearing impaired.

Support Dogs/Dogs for the Disabled A Support Dog can be trained to do many other tasks, which their owner may find difficult or impossible for example:

- Opening and closing doors,
- Calling an ambulance
- Picking up objects
- Assisting with dressing and undressing.
- Accompanying their owner whilst shopping etc.
- Acting as a physical support
- Raising the alarm
- Operating control buttons
- Switching lights on and off
- Carrying items
- Loading and unloading the washing machine
- Fetching the telephone and other items

Support Dogs also train dogs for people with disabilities and Seizure Alert dogs for people with Epilepsy. Seizure Alert dogs are trained to behave differently when they detect a potential seizure, which may appear to be misbehaving.

Members of Assistance Dogs (UK)

The following are registered members of Assistance Dogs (UK):

- Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (GDBA)
- Hearing Dogs for Deaf People
- Support Dogs
- Dogs for the Disabled
- Canine Partners

Additional sources of information and guidance

Assistance Dogs UK

Assistance Dogs (UK) is a coalition of assistance dog organisations that encourages the exchange of ideas and best practice amongst its members, raises awareness amongst the general public and promotes behavioural and legislative changes to ensure the freedom, independence and rights of its clients. This policy* refers to the definitions and types of assistance dogs provided on its website.

<http://www.assistedogs.org.uk/>

Appendix 2

Interacting With Assistance Dogs

When interacting with assistance dogs or with people who have assistance dogs, please bear the following points in mind:

- **Talk to the handler, not the dog!**

It is very frustrating for a person to have to interrupt your conversation with their dog. Likewise, if you are helping a person with a dog guide to get somewhere, give the person directions or talk with the person as they follow you. They will give the dog the correct commands for following you. Please do not call the dog. The dog is used to working for the disabled owner. If it is responding to you, it is no longer focused on their needs but on you.

- **Do not pet or praise the dog without asking first, please!**

It can be very dangerous for the handler if their dog is distracted and not doing its job. It is important to remember that while they are extremely intelligent, devoted, and highly trained, service dogs are still capable of acting upon natural instincts and may display the same behaviours as other dogs from time to time. Dog guides sometimes scavenge for food, get distracted by other animals, experience fear, and forget about their work when tempted by things they like. People's attention can be especially alluring. Praise is a reward for service animals, and people who work with the dogs provide it when it is appropriate. Sometimes it is given quietly in small doses; and at other times it is given lavishly. If another person says, "What a good dog," in passing, the person may have just rewarded the dog, without knowing it, for something the dog did just before the person arrived that was dangerous to the user. When admiring a service dog, it is best to keep eyes averted, comments directed to the user, and voice modulated appropriately (e.g. do not speak as if addressing a child or use an especially sweet-sounding voice, as this will draw the dog's attention).

- **Don't get angry at the handler if he or she does not want to stop to talk about their dog.**

Please keep in mind that they hear the same questions many times a day and often would just like to get home. Nice comments are always welcome, however!

- **Don't feed the service dog.**

Many – not all – service dogs are on strict, healthy diets to keep their working lives long, and they may also have allergies that you are not aware of. It also can break the dog's training if they learn that they get food in a public place.
