

## ASSISTANCE DOGS PROCEDURE

### PROCEDURES:

#### 1. Introduction and scope

EKC Group values the diversity of its staff and students and is committed to providing a welcoming and supportive environment for all. This procedure provides information on the steps that the Group will take to facilitate the safe and effective hosting of assistance dogs, specifically:

- Definitions of what an assistance dog is and arrangements for accommodating a dog on EKC Group's premises whether leased or not.
- Measures that the Group will take to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of the dog, the owner and other users of its premises
- Roles and responsibilities within the Group in relation to assistance dogs, including the responsibilities of owners
- Processes for dealing with complaints, should they arise

The procedure does not cover dogs which are used in animal care programmes or as part of a pre-arranged visit for specific purposes such as Police drugs detection dogs.

#### 2. What is an Assistance Dog?

##### 2.1 Types of Assistance Dog:

**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** may also assist people with disabilities or medical conditions such as diabetes or epilepsy.

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

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Assistance dogs are generally dogs that have been trained by accredited member organisations of Assistance Dogs International (ADI) and the International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF).

Because the Group needs to be assured that the assistance dog is appropriately trained and is safe, only dogs accredited by [Assistance Dogs UK](#) (ADUK) or the international assistance dog organisations listed below may be accommodated on EKC Group's premises. Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK) is an alliance of eight assistance dog organisations in the UK. These organisations have gone through an extensive accreditation process that covers all aspects of their training and administration – ensuring they meet the exacting standards set by ADI and IGDF. In short, an organisation that has been accredited by ADI or the IGDF will ensure very high standards of dog and client/recipient training.

Assistance dog clients/recipients who have an assistance dog from an AD (UK) member organisation will have formal identification in the form of branded jackets or lead slip and a yellow ID booklet. This ID book has been designed to support assistance dog owners with their access to goods, facilities and services, as defined in the UK Equality Act 2010. The ID book contains information about the owner and their dog, details of the training organisation who trained the dog and its owner. It also has information about the law (specifically the Equality Act 2010) and the elements which support the rights of assistance dog owners and their dog, especially when accessing goods, facilities and services.

The eight registered charities that form Assistance Dogs (UK) are:

- Canine Partners
- Dog A.I.D. (Assistance in Disability)
- Dogs for Good
- The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
- The Seeing Dogs Alliance
- Hearing Dogs for Deaf People
- Medical Detection Dogs
- Support Dogs

Assistance dogs from other nations, when entering the UK, should 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. This is the equivalent to membership of AD(UK) and therefore a reassurance of high quality standards in all aspects of training.

It should be noted that the Equality and Human Right Commission states that a dog does not need to be formally trained and registered to be considered as an assistance dog. However, because EKC Group has a duty of care to all its staff, students, visitors and contractors, we will continue to request evidence of an assistance dog's eligibility to be on site; the Group reserves the right to refuse access in circumstances where a dog's owner is unable to provide the requisite evidence.

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## **Therapy dogs (or other therapy animals)**

A therapy animal or emotional support animal is one that provides emotional support to help alleviate identified symptoms or effects of a disability or mental health condition. A therapy animal does not necessarily aid with mobility and does not assist with practical daily tasks. Whilst the Group recognises the positive impact animals have on wellbeing and in providing emotional assistance, there is currently no accreditation of emotional support animals to provide sufficient assurances for their inclusion in this procedure. Until such time as accreditation is in place the Group will not accept therapy animals on its sites.

### **3. Arrangements**

The Group undertakes to put the following arrangements in place in order to allow staff, students and visitors with assistance dogs to enjoy the best possible experience:

- A full risk assessment to ensure that the dog's presence does not jeopardise the safety of its owner and other users of the Group's premises. The risk assessment may be combined with a support plan for the dog's owner which outlines any reasonable adjustments that may have to be put in place. This will be coordinated by Additional Learning Support staff. As part of the risk assessment process, evidence will need to be provided by the dog's owner of their dog's accredited status and evidence of full liability insurance
- Where a visitor brings an assistance dog onto campus for a short visit e.g. an Open Day, a full risk assessment will not be needed but the dog must be accredited by Assistance Dogs UK. The visitor will need to be briefed on the arrangements for toileting the dog and other aspects such as fire evacuation, the dog as a potential hazard (trips, health etc) and how to handle the dog in the case of encountering other campus users who may have phobias, allergies etc.
- Arrangements will need to be put in place for toileting. A spending pen is provided at the Broadstairs campus.
- Water bowls are provided for assistance dogs.
- Provision of familiarisation with and orientation on campus as part of induction. This service is provided on request.
- Guidelines for staff and students on how to interact with assistance dogs. This information can be found in **Appendix 1**.

### **4. Roles and responsibilities:**

#### **4.1 Estates**

Estates staff will ensure the upkeep of the spending pen 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. At other campuses, the owner will need to take their dog offsite to accommodate their toileting needs.

#### **4.2 Additional Learning Support**

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Additional Learning Support staff will carry out a risk assessment and put in place any measures that are required to accommodate the assistance dog and its owner. Communication and liaison will be needed with other staff e.g. Student Support Services, Line Manager etc. to ensure that all scenarios and possible risks are considered on a case by case basis. A risk assessment template can be found [here](#).

They will also advise students with assistance dogs and signpost them to this policy to make them aware of the help provided by the Group and their rights and responsibilities. If required, they will liaise with the student's tutor and/or Progression Mentor to ensure that any reasonable adjustments needed have been made.

### **4.3 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 will provide support to Line Managers in addressing any issues that arise.

### **4.4 The Owner**

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

- has the necessary documented accreditation in place including up to date health certification and liability insurance;
- is kept on a lead at all times when walking around the Group's premises;
- uses the spending pen at the Broadstairs campus (or takes their dog off site at other campuses) and does not allow it to foul the Group's premises.
- has its requirements met in relation to toileting, feeding and general wellbeing;
- behaves in an appropriate manner at all times and does not disrupt others.

In the unlikely event that the dog does foul inside one of the Group's buildings, the owner must report this to an appropriate member of staff to make arrangements with Facilities to clean and sanitize the area. Dog owners are responsible for any damage to persons or Group property.

## **5. Removal of Assistance Dog**

The Group reserves the right to remove or bar entry to an Assistance Dog when it poses a direct threat to the health & safety of others. Unresolved animal misbehaviour may also provide grounds for removal, after all reasonable measures have been taken to address this.

## **6. Restricted access**

The Group may restrict access of Assistance Dogs to certain areas for health and safety reasons. Restricted areas may include laboratories, medical facilities, areas where protective

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clothing is required, boiler rooms, kitchens etc. Applications for exceptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## **7. Conflicting disabilities**

Where an Assistance Dog poses adverse health risk to an/other student/s or staff, the Group will seek medical documentation from the affected party/parties to determine suitable alternative and equitable arrangements for either or both parties.

## **8. Religious or cultural conflicts**

Religious or cultural beliefs cannot be used to prohibit access to Assistance Dogs and their owners.

## **9. Process for dealing with complaints and/or breaches of the policy**

### **9.1 Complaints by assistance dogs owners**

If an individual with an assistance dog wishes to make a complaint about the treatment of themselves or their dog, they should firstly raise it informally with the department/area in question.

Every attempt will be made to resolve the matter informally, including where appropriate the use of mediation. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, students and members of the public may raise the matter formally via the Group's Complaints Procedure. Staff may escalate an issue via the Grievance Procedure.

### **9.2 Complaints about assistance dogs**

If a student, a member of the public or staff wishes to make a complaint about an assistance dog or notices any breaches of this policy, they should firstly raise it informally with the department/area in question.

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 students and members of the public may raise the issue formally via the Group's Complaints Procedure. Staff may escalate an issue via the Grievance Procedure

### **9.3 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.

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## **Appendix 1 - 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 its 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, assistance dogs are still capable of acting upon natural instincts and may display the same behaviours as other dogs from time to time. Assistance dogs 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 assistance 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 an assistance 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 assistance 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

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