

# Access for Dogs to Trust Premises

(Guide Dogs, Hearing Dogs, Assistance Dogs; PAT (Pets as Therapy))



***‘Delivering Excellence in Healthcare through Innovation and Collaboration’***

***Please be advised that the Trust discourages the retention of hard copies of policies and procedures and can only guarantee that the policy on the Trust Intranet is the most up to date version***

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<b>Post Responsible for Update:</b>	<b>Patient Experience Manager</b>
<b>Approval Committee:</b>	<b>Equality and Diversity Steering Group</b>
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**Contents:**

<b>Heading Number</b>	<b>Guidance on Access for Dogs to Trust Premises – Guide Dogs, Hearing Dogs, Assistance Dogs; Pat Dogs (Pets as Therapy)</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
	<b>Contents / Risk rating</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction / Purpose</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>General Document (Insert title)</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Definitions</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Associated Documents</b>	
<b>5</b>	<b>Duties</b>	
<b>6</b>	<b>Consultation and Communication with Stakeholders</b>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Implementation</b>	
<b>8</b>	<b>Education and training</b>	
<b>9</b>	<b>Monitoring and review</b>	
<b>10</b>	<b>References / Bibliography</b>	
<b>11</b>	<b>Appendices</b>	

## 1 Introduction / Purpose

This policy aims to ensure that all people who need access with assistance dogs such as guide dogs or hearing dogs are welcomed to the Trust and that staff have a clear understanding of the requirements for such dogs entering the premises and the areas where they are allowed. It also aims to clarify the requirements for Pat A Dogs visiting the Trust with their owners.

Disabled people including guide dog owners and other blind or partially sighted people have important rights under the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act 2010 consolidates and replaces previous discrimination legislation including the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in England, Wales and Scotland. The Equality Act provides for blind and partially sighted people to have the same right to services as everyone else, for example GP surgeries, hospitals and walk-in centres. This includes a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled people can access services.

The Equality Act and DDA permits guide and other assistance dogs to accompany their owners into most areas of the hospital or medical facilities.

It is the policy of the Trust that no-one will be discriminated against on grounds of age, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, marital status, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion, belief or sexual orientation. The Trust will provide interpretation services or documentation in other mediums as requested and necessary to ensure natural justice and equality of access.

## 2 Process

Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust believe in providing equal access to all who use its services. Dogs can be used by people who have sight, hearing or other disabilities thus giving a greater independence therefore a person may have to be accompanied by a dog as, part of their mobility.

### 2.1 Planned Admissions

Owners generally do not expect their dogs to stay with them in the restricted environment of the hospital. For planned admissions, prior arrangement for the Assistance Dog's care may be made by the owner wherever possible. 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.

### 2.2 Emergencies and Unplanned Admissions

If a patient is admitted as an emergency and unplanned admission, the relatives or friends of the patient should be encouraged to look after the dog. If the owner is admitted as an emergency and is suffering from shock or is unconscious, it is likely that the Assistance Dog will also be showing signs of distress. All guide dog users are issued with an identity card encased in a yellow plastic cover which contains contact details of their guide dog centre. If further assistance is required it is legitimate to contact the Guide Dogs Liverpool mobility team. Contact during office hours Monday to Friday – Liverpool team (covers Cheshire and Merseyside) Tel: 0345 143 0211. Out of hours standard emergency phone number is Tel: 0345 143 0217.

<http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/aboutus/local-to-you/mobility-teams/liverpool/>

In the event of an unexpected admission to hospital the Guide Dogs North West Team based in Liverpool will act as the point of contact for the guide dog owner and can assist and advise in relation to equipment, food and boarding for the dog. If necessary they will remove the Assistance Dog to a place of care and safety whilst the owner is receives medical care.

The Guide Dogs Liverpool Mobility Team can be contacted on 0345 143 0211 Monday to Friday 9am-5pm. Outside of these hours there is an answering facility that will be picked up the next working day. Should the matter require urgent attention there is also the out of hours hotline 0345 143 0217.

### **2.3 Responsibilities of Assistance Dog Owners**

People with dogs requiring access to wards should liaise with the nurse in charge. The nurse in charge can seek advice from infection prevention and control if they are unsure about admitting a dog to an area within the Trust.

It is the owner's responsibility to ensure that the Assistance Dog's toileting and feeding requirements are met. In the event that the owner becomes medically unable to continue with this responsibility, the Guide Dogs Liverpool Mobility Team should be contacted as above.

The owner should take responsibility cleaning any soiling. If due to physical impairment or illness the owner is not able to deal with soiling then assistance can be sought from site services. Any soiling would not only present an infection risk particular in relation to any pregnant ladies, but additionally may present a slip/ trip hazard.

The owner must present the pet well groomed, clean claws, nails neat and trimmed and in good health. All registered guide dogs are maintained and supported. The guide dog owner has a service agreement with Guide Dogs to keep the dog vaccinated and well maintained. Guide Dogs do an annual aftercare visit to the owner and guide dog partnership to check all of these details. The owner has a yellow identity booklet which confirms all of these details.

Owners of registered dogs will provide records of vaccination, boosters, worming and flea controls. In cases of unplanned emergency the owner may have the yellow identity booklet to hand, usually in a wallet or purse.

The dog is controlled and its behaviour is acceptable whilst on the premises. It must be kept on a lead and not allowed to roam. Staff should not touch, distract or feed the dog without the owner's permission, whether the dog is working or resting.

## **3 Definitions**

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 Assistance Dogs (UK).

Assistance Dogs are trained by members of Assistance Dogs (UK), 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). Certification is granted by the Department of Health.

The following organisations 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

### 3.1 Types of Assistance Dogs:

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

**Hearing Dogs** assist people who are deaf or 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
- Fetching the telephone and other items.
- The organisation - Support Dog, 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 as if the dog is misbehaving. Dogs can also be trained, to alert owners of an imminent epileptic seizure. See the 'Canine Partners' website link for more information about assistance dogs <http://www.caninepartners.co.uk/>

### 3.2 Pat A Dog Schemes

Research has shown that pets can often enhance the quality of life for the elderly and the ill. Dogs on these schemes must:

- be house-trained
- be up to date with all vaccinations
- be free from infestation and have had no recent illness
- have their claws kept trimmed to reduce the risk of scratches
- have veterinary records and their owners must be able to produce these at any time
- along with their owners, have insurance liability
- be kept under control whilst visiting.

#### **Pets As Therapy Registration and Insurance**

MCHFT Volunteers providing Therapy Dog services must submit yearly updates on their dog vaccinations and provide up to date records to Pets as Therapy organisation. Any changes in the animals health status must be updated with Pets as Therapy as should notification of withdrawing their animals from visiting. As a priority Pets As Therapy ensure that the animals do regularly have vaccination against Leptospirosis as this is a zoonotic disease. It is in their policy that the animals are vaccinated against Leptospirosis, especially as in the majority of instances the visits are made to individuals that are immune-compromised.

All of the animals joining MCHFT as a PAT Team with their owner or designated handler, undergo an assessment test and must meet specific criteria i.e. continent and house trained, do not mind being touched or are not affected by sudden loud noise. They must also not paw, jump up or mouth. We do not accept any animals that are raw fed and issue guidelines accordingly. Pets As Therapy home page <https://petsastherapy.org/> and <https://petsastherapy.org/what-we-do/faqs-2/> details Pets As Therapy policies and fact sheets.

#### 4 **Associated Documents**

Access to medical facilities for guide dog owners and other blind and partially sighted people  
– Published by Guide Dogs for the Blind.

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

#### 5 **Duties within the Organisation**

**5.1 Chief Executive** has overall responsibility for the provision of a safe environment for patients, the general public and staff.

**5.2 Director of Nursing** is the designated Executive Officer to lead responsible for patient experience.

#### **5.3 Voluntary Services Manager**

The Voluntary Services Manager will ensure;

- Pat A Dog owners are registered with Pets As Therapy organisation for insurance purposes, and that annual subscriptions are renewed.
- Pat a Dog volunteers will have up to date DBS checks in place and renewal will be monitored.
- Mandatory training requirements for Pat A Dog volunteers, including Information Governance training and fire safety training assessments will be up to date and renewed in line with Trust requirements.
- Pat A Dog owners will be aware of the Guidance on Access for Dogs to Trust Premises policy and their requirements on entering Trust premises, including reporting to ward and department receptions at each visit to ensure permission and any areas of restriction in place.

#### **5.4 Ward Managers/Department Managers are responsible for ensuring this guidance is followed in their area and ensuring**

- Staff are made aware of the need for assistance dogs to accompany their owner
- People who need assistance dogs are made welcome and are treated with courtesy
- The needs of other patients are taken into account i.e. patients with allergies or frightened of dogs (rather than refuse entry, it may be necessary to arrange a visit by the dog to another area of the ward)
- Visiting dogs are kept under control
- All dogs are wearing their designated harnesses, which makes them easily identifiable as a working dog.
- Other patients do not have an allergy or medical phobia to an Assistance Dog being within the area.

Assistance dogs are welcome in all areas, apart from theatres and recovery. People with dogs requiring access to the following areas should liaise with the nurse in charge of the ward:

ICU/HDU (Intensive Care/High Dependency Unit)  
CCU (Coronary Care Unit)  
SCBU (Special Care Baby Unit) or Maternity  
A&E Resuscitation

#### **5.4 Infection Prevention and Control Team**

Where necessary, it is important to seek further advice from the respective Modern Matron and from the Infection Prevention and Control Team. Consideration should be given to issues of privacy and dignity, self care, area of hospital attending and anticipated length of stay.



## 5.5 All Staff

- Staff should ensure that Assistance Dog users are made to feel welcome within their area.
- Never distract or harass the dog. Do not touch the dog. Check with the owner before any contact is to be made.
- Never feed the dog. Guide dogs are working dogs and are fed a strict diet at regular times; any additional food may cause the dog to be sick or adversely affect its health and behaviour in other ways.
- Provide a water bowl for the dog if requested by the guide dog owner.
- To be aware of the "Assistance dog walking area" at the back of the Eye Care Centre.
- In seating areas ensure there is sufficient space for a guide dog so that it can remain with its owner.
- If an Assistance Dog fouls inside Trust buildings, it is the requirement of the Trust for owner's to take responsibility to report this to a member of staff so that arrangements can be made with Hotel Services to clean and sanitize the area. Staff in charge of an area should inform the owner on arrival of this requirement.
- The removal of animal soiling in patient areas is the responsibility of dog owner. Estates and facilities staff will be expected to sanitise the area after removal. Facilities will be responsible for the public corridors and internal entrances ( as in the guidance for body fluid spillages).
- The spillage kit is available from the Cleaners Storeroom by contacting the domestic supervisor ext 2259. Staff must follow the standard operating procedure for the removal of animal products in accordance with the Spillage Removal policy. The spillage will be removed, absorbent fluids and waste removed and disposed of in a clinical waste bag and the area cleaned and the surface sanitized in accordance with infection, prevention and control guidance.
- Nursing staff should on no account be responsible for exercising of the dog.
- 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.
- Staff in wards who are allergic or afraid of dogs should be reassigned to another area of the ward and another member of staff deployed.

## 5.6 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.

## 6 Consultation and Communication with Stakeholders

This Policy has been developed in consultation with:

The following organisations 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

IRIS - Vision Resource Centre Voluntary Services Manager Equality and Diversity Committee

Infection Prevention and Control Team Head of Estates and Facilities

Ward Managers Modern Matrons

Customer Care Manager

Access for Dogs to Trust Premises – Guide Dogs, Hearing Dogs, Assistance Dogs; Pat Dogs (Pets as Therapy)

Version 3 - November 2019:

Page 7 of 12

## 7 Implementation

The Patient Experience Team will issue a flyer to all Lead Nurses, Modern Matrons, Managers, and Ward Managers. Notice will be included within MCHFT team brief available to all staff within the Trust. A copy of the guidelines will also be available on the MCHFT intranet.

## 8 Education and Training

Awareness raising on this subject will be completed during existing training including Customer Care Training and induction.

## 9 Monitoring and Review

Standard/process/issue required to be monitored	Monitoring and Audit			
	Process for monitoring e.g. audit	Responsible individual /group	Frequency of monitoring	Responsible committee
The Patient Experience Manager will review users' views with members of IRIS to ensure that the policy is working for users.	Annual audit and spot checks of staff knowledge in wards and departments.	Patient Experience Manager	3 Yearly	Equality and Diversity Group

## 10 References / Bibliography

Access to medical facilities for guide dog owners and other blind and partially sighted people – Guide Dogs

## 11 Appendices

- 1 Version Control Document
- 2 Communication / Training plan
- 3 Equality Impact and Assessment Tool



## APPENDIX A - Control Sheet

This must be completed and form part of the document appendices each time the document is updated and approved.

VERSION CONTROL SHEET			
Date dd/mm/yy	Version	Author	Reason for changes
04/09/12	1	Patient Experience Manager	New guidance
01/10/15	2	Patient Experience Manager	Review
22/11/19	3	Patient Experience Manager	Review

## APPENDIX B - Training needs analysis

<b>Communication/Training Plan</b> (for all new / reviewed documents)	
<b>Goal/purpose of the communication/training plan</b>	
<b>Target groups for the communication/training plan</b>	
<b>Target numbers</b>	
<b>Methodology – how will the communication or training be carried out?</b>	Awareness about the policy will be raised through the existing Customer Care Training and at staff induction.
<b>Communication/training delivery</b>	
<b>Funding</b>	
<b>Measurement of success. Learning outcomes and/or objectives</b>	
<b>Review effectiveness – learning outputs</b>	
<b>Issue date of Document</b>	November 2019
<b>Start and completion date of communication/training plan</b>	From issue date
<b>Support from Learning &amp; Development Services</b>	None required

For assistance in completing the Communication / Training Plan please contact the MCHT Learning and Development Services

## APPENDIX C - Form 1

### Equality Impact Screening Assessment

Please read the Guide to Equality Impact Assessment before completing this form. To be completed and form part of the policy or other document appendices when submitted to [governance-policies@mcht.nhs.uk](mailto:governance-policies@mcht.nhs.uk) for consideration and approval or to be completed and form part of the appendices for proposals/business cases to amend, introduce or discontinue services.

**POLICY/DOCUMENT/SERVICE** - Guidance on Access for Dogs to Trust Premises - Guide Dogs, Hearing Dogs, Assistance Dogs; Pat Dogs (Pets as Therapy)

		Yes/ No	Justification and Data Sources
<b>A</b>	<b>Does the document, proposal or service affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:</b>		
1	Race, ethnic origins (including gypsies and travellers) or nationality	<b>No</b>	No issues identified.'
2	Sex	<b>No</b>	No issues identified.'
3	Transgender	<b>No</b>	No issues identified.'
4	Pregnancy or maternity	<b>No</b>	No issues identified.'
5	Marriage or civil partnership	<b>No</b>	No issues identified.'
6	Sexual orientation including lesbian, gay and bisexual people	<b>No</b>	No issues identified.'
7	Religion or belief	<b>No</b>	No issues identified.'
8	Age	<b>No</b>	No issues identified.'

9	Disability - learning disabilities, physical disability, sensory impairment and mental health problems	<b>Yes</b>	Guide dogs and other assistance dogs are exempt from the rules that prevent other dogs from accompanying their owner to most parts of a medical premises or facility. In practical terms, guide dogs do not disrupt the everyday operation of businesses or premises. They are trained to sit at their owner's feet at all times, not to climb on furniture and not to bother other people. These guidelines help to ensure that patients with guide dogs or assistance dogs are able access our facilities easily and without unnecessary challenge
10	Economic/social background	<b>No</b>	No issues identified.'
<b>B</b>	<b>Human Rights – are there any issues which may affect human rights</b>		
1	Right to Life	<b>No</b>	No issues identified.'
2	Freedom from Degrading Treatment	<b>No</b>	No issues identified.'
3	Right to Privacy or Family Life	<b>No</b>	No issues identified.'
4	Other Human Rights (see guidance note)	<b>No</b>	No issues identified.'

## NOTES

If you have identified a potential discriminatory impact of this document, proposal or service, please complete form 2 or 3 as appropriate.

**Date:** ..... **Name:** .....Sue Pickup.....

**Signature:** .....SPickup..... **Job Title:** Patient Experience Manager

**Date:** ..... **Name:** .....

**Signature:** ..... **Job Title:** .....