

Policy on Assistance Dogs

Estates & Facilities Directorate

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Policy Statement

King's College London is committed to ensuring that all students have as equitable an academic experience as possible, and therefore endeavours to work with disabled students to support them during their time on campus and in residences.

Staff and student whose access to work and student services is facilitated by the use of mobility aids should not be refused entry on the basis of their disability or reliance on mobility aids, including assistance dogs.

In partnership with the College's Disability Advisory Service and in line with the Equality Act 2010 (England, Wales and Scotland) and the Disability Discrimination Act (Northern Ireland), Estates & Facilities will work with disabled students to identify support needs and make reasonable adjustments in order to provide a safe and welcoming environment, in which access to study facilities and student programmes & services is equal for all.

Purpose

King's College London recognises that assistance dogs play an important role in the safety and well-being of disabled people and has designed a Policy on Assistance Dogs as set out in this document, with specific guidelines concerning the safe and acceptable use of assistance dogs in campuses and residences for the benefit of all: assistance dogs, the owners of assistance dogs, staff, students, College partners and members of the public.

The College allows access to assistance, working and therapy dogs and is prepared to make reasonable adjustments for their safe access and conduct of duties. Pets and other animals that do not perform a task for the College or are not in aid of members of its community are not allowed in the College premises, including King's Residences and maintained grounds.

The Policy on Assistance Dogs applies within all College premises. This includes but is not limited to King's residences, faculty buildings, administrative offices, and maintained grounds. It applies to all assistance dogs but excludes other animals that they may be permitted on King's premises such as research, clinical and teaching animals.

Under this provision, the College requires that:

- Access requirements involving assistance dogs are legitimate and pre-agreed with the Disability Advisory Service and/or relevant Estates & Facilities management.
- Suitable arrangements for the animals' safe access to and conduct of work in the College are made
- All concerned parties (co-workers, classmates, other residents, etc.) are consulted and advised on safe practice and appropriate behaviour
- The assistance dog owner agrees to the terms and conditions of use of assistance dogs within the College

This policy document addresses:

- Organisational and physical arrangements provided by Estates & Facilities to safely and comfortably accommodate assistance dogs and their owners
- The College's role and responsibilities in relation to assistance dogs
- Assistance Dogs owners' responsibilities
- Processes and procedures in the event of conflict situations

Key Definitions

College premises – Property that is owned, operated, or maintained by King's College London.

Disability – applies to a person if they have a physical or mental impairment which is having a substantial, adverse and long-term (lasting or likely to last 12 months or more) effect on their ability to perform normal day to day activities (Equality Act 2010)

Reasonable adjustments – changes offered at College expense, where needed, and where disabled users would otherwise be at a substantial disadvantage compared with non-disabled people without. What is reasonable will be decided on a case by case basis.

Assistance dog – an animal specially trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability. Guide dogs are the most common type of assistance dog, used by individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Other medical conditions may require the use of assistance dogs: hearing loss, mental health conditions, physical impairments, epilepsy or seizure-related disorders, autism spectrum conditions. A pet or a therapy/emotional support animal is not an assistance dog.

Therapy animal – an animal prescribed to an individual as part of a treatment process for a physical or mental condition. Unlike an assistance dog, a therapy animal does not facilitate mobility for its owner or user or assist on daily tasks, and need not accompany its owner at all times.

Working animal – an animal, usually a dog, that provides other services within the College, such as assisting in law enforcement.

For the purposes of this policy document, we are looking solely at assistance dogs. Where therapy animals are required in residences a separate protocol applies.

Organisational and Physical Arrangements

King's College London offers the following arrangements to ensure a safe and inclusive environment for assistance dogs, their owners, and other members of the residential and campus community:

1. Support and advisory services from the College's Disability Advisory Service
2. A mutually agreed King's Inclusion Plan (KIP) that sets out any reasonable adjustments required.
3. Pre entry information visit to assess potential works to the estate
4. Arrival or pre-arrival site orientation
5. Visits by the assistance dogs trainer are encouraged in the early settling-in days, and then annually thereafter.
6. Service animal route safety check (for hazards and obstructions)
7. Issuance of Assistance Dog Guidelines for staff and students
8. Provision or identification of designated spending pens or relief area/s for the toilet needs of assistance dogs on the premises or off-site, within (state maximum distance from site perimeter)
9. Within rooms and enclosed spaces on College premises, to ensure there is sufficient space for assistance dogs within reach of owner (under a table or in a corner)
10. Provision of water bowls, if requested
11. Provision of a sighted guide when required, or in circumstances when the assistance dog is unable to carry out its duty

12. Setting out processes and procedures for adverse incidents in relation to the presence or admittance of assistance dogs, such as allergies, fear of animal presence, religious objections, and animal misbehaviour
13. Setting out processes and procedures for the care and handling of assistance dogs and their owners in emergency situations.

Roles and Responsibilities

Compliance, Awareness and Training

- Local management will ensure that staff, students and other members of the College community are provided with adequate training to respond to the needs of the assistance dog, its owner, and all those in contact with the assistance dog.
- Local management to ensure that practice is conformable to current legislation.

Notification

- Student Services and King's Residences will provide prior notice to staff, students and College partners living or working in close proximity to the assistance dog.
- Consultation and advisory services will be offered to all affected parties.

Infrastructure

- Site Managers co-ordinates the identification and, if necessary, installation of appropriate relief areas such as spending pens.
- Housekeeping Services will manage the upkeep of spending pens, including the regular provision of refuse bins.
- Site managers to ensure entrances (including internal passages) are clearly signed for blind and visually impaired.
- Site managers to ensure access routes are clear and easy to navigate and obstructions removed or are identified as a potential hazard.

Emergency Evacuation

- The College sets out a safe and suitable emergency evacuation plan for assistance dogs and their owners.
- Site managers/Department Heads to brief assistance dog owners on emergency evacuation procedures.
- Department Heads to make information on emergency evacuation available for reference in accessible formats.
- Department Heads to ensure that emergency responders are trained to make reasonable efforts to keep assistance dogs with their owners in the event of an emergency situation. However, the emergency responder's priority should be toward the safety of the owner.

Orientation

- Site managers to conduct pre-arrival and arrival site orientation.
- Site managers to organise guided assistance in the event of route variations, relocation, or when access to specific areas are restricted.

Assistance Dogs Owners' Responsibilities

Information

Assistance dog owners must request permission from the College to bring assistance dogs into the estate in advance of arrival on College premises. They should be able to provide information about the animal and its tasks/duties, when requested by College staff.

Identification

Assistance dog owners must ensure that their assistance dogs are clearly identifiable by the use of special collars and/or harnesses when on duty.

Insurance

Owners are responsible for ensuring that their assistance dogs are covered by full liability insurance and provide a copy to the College.

Access restrictions

Assistance dog owners must respect access restrictions established by the College on grounds of health and safety.

Owners must ensure that assistance dogs do not enter staff and students' privately assigned spaces, such as bedrooms and flats within residences, without permission.

Animal misbehaviour

Preventing and correcting assistance dog's misbehaviour is the owner's responsibility. Owners must make sure that their assistance dogs do not cause harm or injury to others and damage to College property.

Cleanliness

Registered blind people are not required to clean up after their guide dogs and these are expected to have received the appropriate training to avoid dog waste on campus. Assistance dog users share responsibility for the clean-up of the animal's waste, consistent with reasonable capacity.

Owners must use the spending pens or designated areas identified by the College. In the unlikely event that the dog does foul outside of these designated areas, the owner must report this to an appropriate staff member to make arrangements for the housekeeping team to clean and sanitize the area.

Animal care and supervision

Animal care is the owner's responsibility. The owner ensures regular health checks, vaccination, adequate standard of grooming, and the supply of food and drink at all times.

Owners must ensure that assistance dogs are kept on a lead at all times when walking around the College estate or safely harnessed when unsupervised for short periods of time.

Owners must ensure the assistance dog has its requirements in relation to toileting and feeding met.

Owners of assistance dogs that are ill, in poor health, excessively unclean or unkempt may be required to remove the animal from College premises.

King's College is not responsible for the loss, ill health, or death of the assistance dog animal.

King's College is happy to listen to the suggestions of assistance dog owners as to how provision for the assistance dog may be improved.

Animal training

Assistance dogs undergo intensive training before commencing duty. They also receive further training throughout their working lives, especially in the event of change in work location or work pattern. Owners are responsible for the training needs of their assistance dogs, for the correct and safe performance of their duties. A copy of the relevant certification should be provided to the College.

Conflict Situations

Removal of assistance dog

The College 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.

Damage

Assistance dog owners are responsible for any damage to persons or College property.

Restricted access

The College may restrict access of assistance dogs to certain areas for health and safety reasons. Restricted areas may include research laboratories, medical facilities, areas where protective clothing is required, boiler rooms, etc. Applications for exceptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Conflicting disabilities

Where an assistance dog poses adverse health risk to an/other student/s, the College will seek medical documentation from the affected party/parties to determine suitable alternative arrangements for either or both parties.

Religious or cultural conflicts

Religious or cultural beliefs cannot be used to prohibit access to assistance dogs and their owners.

Complaints

Any issues in relation to assistance dogs on College premises that cannot be resolved informally should be raised in accordance to the College's standardised complaints procedure.

Additional Information

Guide Dogs

www.guidedogs.org.uk

guidedogs@guidedogs.org.uk

0800 781 1444

Assistance Dogs UK

www.assistancedogs.org.uk

01844 348 100

Canine Partners

www.caninepartners.org.uk

info@caninepartners.org.uk

03456 580 480

Dogs for Good

www.dogsforgood.org

info@dogsforgood.org

01295 252600

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People

www.hearingdogs.org.uk

info@hearingdogs.org.uk

Support Dogs

<https://www.supportdogs.org.uk/>

0114 261 7800

The Royal National Institute of Blind People

www.rnib.org.uk

0303 123 9999