

ADUK QUICK GUIDE



Welcoming Guests with Assistance Dogs in Holiday Accommodation

www.assistancedogs.org.uk | Registered Charity 1119538

Assistance Dogs UK

Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK) is a coalition of assistance dog charities that have been accredited by one of the two leading global authorities in the assistance dog industry, namely Assistance Dogs International and The International Guide Dog Federation.

Assistance dogs are dogs that have been highly trained to carry out a range of tasks and alerts in order to support a disabled person or person with a long term medical condition.

Over 7000 people rely on ADUK member-trained assistance dogs in the UK.

Each one of these could be a potential customer so it is important that holiday accommodation owners and agencies understand their legal obligations so that they can be welcoming, inclusive, and accessible.



The Law

In the UK disabled people have important rights under the Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Northern Ireland). It is unlawful for service providers to treat disabled people less favourably, e.g. refusing services or offering a lesser service because a disabled person has an assistance dog.

The law states that anyone offering a service, must make reasonable adjustments for disabled people, so that they can access their venue, goods and services. Except in the most exceptional circumstance e.g. a surgical or hospital ward, this would mean allowing access to a disabled person and their assistance dog, even if you do not normally accept pet dogs.

Reasonable Adjustments

Holiday accommodation owners or agencies are required to make reasonable adjustments to enable a disabled person, or person with a long term medical condition who uses an assistance dog to stay in their property.

This could include:

- making changes to any 'no dog' policy to include 'except assistance dogs' as without the changes a disabled person who relies on an assistance dog would be disadvantaged.
- if no garden is available, allocating a dedicated outside space or 'spending area' where the dog can relieve itself.

It is important to remember that not every person with an assistance dog has a visible disability. Unless the information is needed in order to make reasonable adjustments, it is not appropriate to question someone about the nature of their disability or medical condition.

People who rely on an assistance dog may need their dogs with them at all times in order to be alerted to a medical event, a sound or for physical assistance. It is not reasonable to dictate where the assistance dog can and cannot go in the property e.g. not allowing the assistance dog upstairs or in certain rooms or limiting which room in a holiday home the assistance dog and owner can occupy.



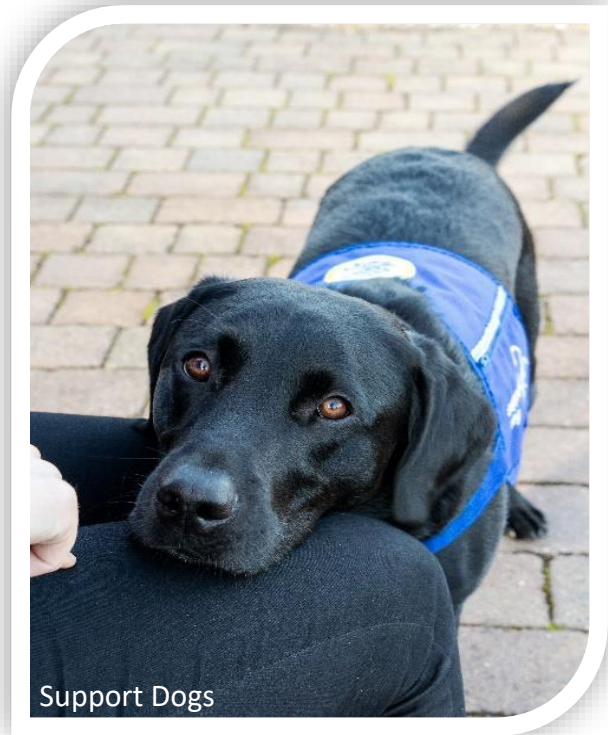
Allergies and Cleaning

It is not reasonable to refuse someone access to renting holiday accommodation because future guests 'may' have an allergy to dogs. If a regular guest is known to suffer from a dog allergy, the accommodation owner or agency will have to ensure that the appropriate cleaning takes place before they arrive.

What to Expect

Assistance dogs should have been prepared and trained in a variety of environments and situations so that they are capable and confident both in and outside of the home.

Not all assistance dogs are trained by an ADUK member charity, but the Equality and Human Rights Commission state that all assistance dogs should be **highly trained**. This is regardless of who trains the dog e.g. a non-accredited charity, an independent professional trainer or individual.



Holiday accommodation providers can be confident that highly trained assistance dogs from one of ADUK's member organisations will

- be trained to behave well in public
- have safe and reliable temperaments
- be fully toilet-trained
- be recognisable by the harness, organisation branded coat, lead slip or ID (though this is not a legal requirement)

Unexpected Behaviour

No assistance dog, no matter how highly trained and experienced is going to be perfect 100% of the time. Whilst they are trained to focus on their partner, from time to time they may be distracted. However, there are some behaviours that you would not expect to see from a highly trained assistance dog such as;

- dogs that have not been trained to behave well in public e.g. barking, lunging, or jumping up or pulling strongly on a lead
- dogs with aggressive or fearful temperaments e.g. cowering or growling
- dogs that are not toilet trained and constitute a hygiene risk

Identifying Assistance Dogs

Although most assistance dogs are recognisable by their jacket, harness, lead slip or bandana there is no legal requirement for them to wear these. Some people may choose not to use these visual cues and legally, they are within their rights.

This lack of visible identification can create challenges in easily distinguishing assistance dogs from pet dogs.

All assistance dogs trained by an ADUK member organisation are issued with an ADUK ID Booklet and/or an Assistance Dogs International App containing details about the dog and the charity that trained it.

Not all assistance dog owners have trained their dog through a charity or carry specific ID, nor are they required to by law. There is no official register or certification process for assistance dogs in the UK so there is no legal 'proof' that you can ask for.

It may be unlawful to refuse a tenancy to a disabled person with an assistance dog because it has not been trained by an ADUK member. However, it could be considered reasonable, to seek reassurance that an assistance dog is highly trained and appropriately insured.



Additional Charges

A holiday accommodation owner or agency cannot increase rent or charge additional fees to assistance dog owners, even if a contract states they charge extra for guests with pets.

Asking an assistance dog user to pay additional fees or deposit to cover any damage that 'may' happen to the property as a result of owning an assistance dog, could be deemed unreasonable and/or discriminatory.

Charges for actual damage caused by the dog could be pursued.

Assistance Dogs in Training

In order to prepare a dog for life working as an assistance dog, it is vital that they are exposed to a range of different environments and situations.

Assistance Dogs in training are not referenced in legislation. As such, it is ADUK's understanding that service providers are not legally obliged to give access to someone with an assistance dog in training/puppy. Some disabled people will train their own assistance dog and holiday accommodation providers can consider such requests on a case by case basis.

ADUK member organisations can take up to 2 years to prepare and train an assistance dog. Whilst there is nothing in law about the age a highly trained assistance dog must be, it would be unlikely that a dog under one year old would be adequately prepared for the role.



Emotional Support Dogs

An assistance dog is a highly trained dog that is trained to carry out tasks and alerts to mitigate a person's disabilities or life threatening health condition. An emotional support dog is a dog that offers comfort and companionship by being present, which requires no specialist training.

Emotional support dogs are not referenced in law, so it is ADUK's understanding that service providers are not legally obliged to allow access to someone with an emotional support dog in the same way that they would do a disabled person with a highly trained assistance dog.

Emotional support dogs and highly trained psychiatric assistance dogs are not the same thing. A disabled person who relies on a highly trained assistance dog to mitigate a mental health condition should be given access in the same way that a physically disabled person with an assistance dog would.

Additional Sources of Information

For more details about welcoming disabled people who rely on assistance dogs see The Equality and Human Rights Commission's [Assistance dogs: a guide for all businesses](#).

Other ADUK Quick Guides and Resources.

- Welcoming Customers with Assistance Dogs
- Welcoming Employees with Assistance Dogs in the Workplace
- Welcoming Tenants with Assistance Dogs in Rented Accommodation
- Welcoming Assistance Dogs in Schools
- Welcoming Students with Assistance Dogs in Further & Higher Education
- ADUK Member Trained Dogs Poster
- 'What is an Assistance Dog' Animation
- 'Service Providers & Employers Guide to Assistance Dogs' Animation

Find out more about ADUK, and its members and watch our animation at www.assistedogs.org.uk



Contact Assistance Dogs UK

Email: info@assistedogs.org.uk

Web: www.assistedogs.org.uk

Write to us: Assistance Dogs (UK), c/o Hearing Dogs, The Grange, Wycombe Road, Saunderton, Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire, HP27 9NS.