

# ADUK QUICK GUIDE



## Welcoming Assistance Dogs in Schools

[www.assistancedogs.org.uk](http://www.assistancedogs.org.uk) | Registered Charity 1119538

## Assistance Dogs UK

Assistance Dogs UK 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 that support a disabled person or person with a long-term medical condition.

Examples include a guide dog that guides a visually impaired person, and a medical alert dog that alerts a person to an oncoming medical episode so that they can get to a safe environment to take medication.



It is important to remember that not every person with an assistance dog has a visible disability and not all assistance dogs will look the same.

## 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 any service provider, including local authorities, hospitals and schools, 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 all service providers 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 disease control hospital ward, this would mean allowing access to a disabled person and their assistance dog, even if you do not normally accept pet dogs.

## Children with Assistance Dogs

Placing an assistance dog in a school setting with a child is a complex situation that requires a lot of assessment to ensure that it is suitable for the child and the dog.

When ADUK members place a dog with a child who will routinely take the dog to school, it is the result of a detailed and considered process that requires a realistic assessment from everyone involved.



Alongside meeting the needs of an individual student, schools also have a duty of care to all students, staff and people visiting the school.

It is not possible for someone under the age of 16 to be legally responsible for a dog in a public setting. This means that if a disabled student with an assistance dog is going to be welcomed at a school, there must be a dedicated adult that is responsible for supervising and meeting the needs of the dog. In some instances, this may be a teaching assistant or a 1:1 support worker.

## Educational Health Care Plans

If a student has requested that they be accompanied by an assistance dog, then it is likely that this would be part of their Education Health Care Plan.

If a student's Education Health Care Plan 'requires' that they be supported by an assistance dog, then a school has a statutory obligation to make reasonable adjustments to meet that student's needs.

If a school does not believe that it can meet the needs of the student, it would need to state why. If it is a 'recommendation' or the student has no plan in place, then the school should explore and assess how they can best meet the student's needs, and if reasonable and possible, consider accommodating their highly trained assistance dog.

## Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments might be different for each student and might not always result in full access for a student with an assistance dog but may include:

- Having a dedicated member of staff be responsible for the dog at all times.
- Arranging for the assistance dog to accompany the student on a part-time basis.
- Allocating a dedicated outside space or 'toileting area' where the dog can relieve itself (ADUK has additional resources on this).
- Meeting the student's needs in a different way
- Finding an alternative school that can reasonably accommodate a child with an assistance dog

## Parents/carers with Assistance Dogs

Some parents/carers may rely on an assistance dog and need to bring that dog into the school grounds when arriving with or collecting a child.

ADUK members encourage anyone with a trained assistance dog to talk to the school in advance and discuss access. If the dog has been trained by an ADUK member, then schools can be confident that it will be highly trained and well behaved.

If you are unsure about the training the dog has received or have any concerns about the dog's behaviour you should talk through the issues with the person and explain to them that you may need to carry out a risk assessment to determine how to proceed.

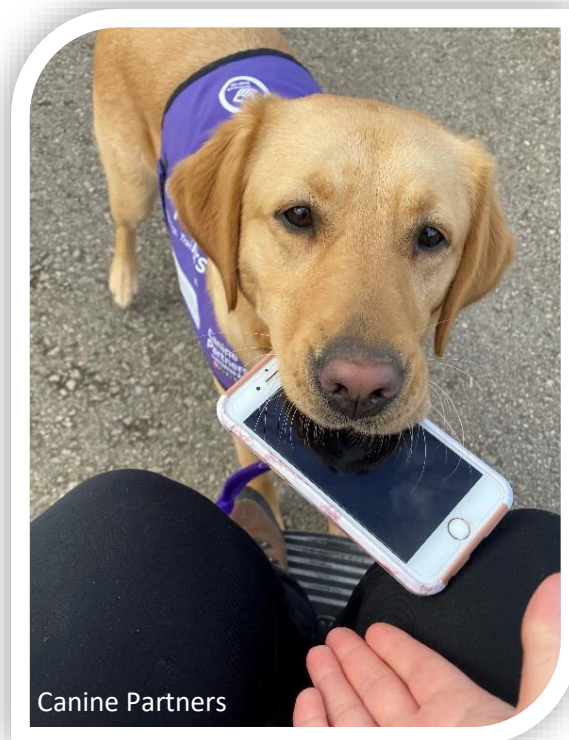
ADUK recommends treating each person as an individual and if they assert that they are disabled and that their dog is a highly trained assistance dog, and the dog acts as expected, it may be unlawful to deny them access.

If it becomes evident that the dog is not behaving in line with the list of expected behaviours outlined by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, then refusing, or revoking access may be justifiable.

## 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 when out and about.

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



Schools 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 healthy and not constitute a hygiene risk and 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 settle or 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. Regrettably, some individuals may use this to falsely claim that their pet dogs are assistance dogs.

All assistance dogs trained by an ADUK member organisation are issued with an ADUK ID Booklet containing details of the dog and the charity that trained it, and some owners may have the Assistance Dogs International App.



Not all assistance dog owners have trained their dog through a charity or carry specific ID, nor are they required to by law.

If it becomes evident that a dog is not behaving in line with the list of expected behaviours, then refusing or revoking access may be justifiable.

## Assistance Dogs Around Food

Highly trained assistance dogs are recognised by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, which states that assistance dogs should be allowed access to premises where food is available.

Due to the very specific training and health tests that highly trained assistance dogs will go through, certainly by dogs trained by ADUK members, they are unlikely to be a risk to hygiene in such premises.

This would not include areas where food is prepared for sale such as professional or commercial kitchens.

## Assistance Dogs in Training

In order to prepare a dog for life working as an assistance dog, it's 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.

## Therapy Dogs

A therapy dog is a general term to describe a dog that is used to benefit a range of people in a therapeutic way. Some pets take part in visiting programmes, whilst others take part in structured activities as part of a therapeutic programme or practice. Therapy dogs have not been trained to support the needs of an individual person and are not referenced in law.



Julie Morrish: Veterans with Dogs

## 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 are for 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 any disabled person with an assistance dog should.



# Assistance Dogs UK Member Trained Assistance Dogs



Darwin Dogs



Hearing Dogs



Autism Dogs



Canine Partners



Dog A.I.D



Guide Dogs



Service Dogs UK



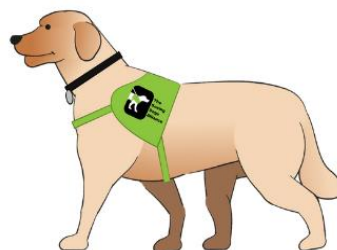
Medical Detection Dogs



Dogs For Good



Veterans With Dogs



Seeing Dog Alliance



Support Dogs

These dogs represent assistance dogs trained by internationally accredited training organisations.

Not all assistance dogs are trained by an ADUK member or by a charity.

Registered charity no: 1119538 | [www.assistedogs.org.uk](http://www.assistedogs.org.uk)



## 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 Resources.

- Welcoming Guests with Assistance Dogs in Holiday Accommodation
- Welcoming Employees Assistance Dogs in the Workplace
- Welcoming Tenants with Assistance Dogs in Rented Accommodation
- Welcoming Customers with Assistance Dogs
- 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, its members and watch our animation at [www.assistedogs.org.uk](http://www.assistedogs.org.uk)



## Contact Assistance Dogs UK

Email: [info@assistedogs.org.uk](mailto:info@assistedogs.org.uk)

Web: [www.assistedogs.org.uk](http://www.assistedogs.org.uk)

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