

## TRUST-WIDE NON-CLINICAL

# ASSISTANCE DOG PROCEDURE

<b>Policy Number:</b>	SA37
<b>Scope of this Document:</b>	All Staff
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<b>Lead Author(s):</b>	Equality and Human Rights Lead

## TRUST-WIDE NON-CLINICAL POLICY DOCUMENT

2015 – Version 2

Striving for perfect care  
and a just culture

## TRUST-WIDE NON-CLINICAL POLICY DOCUMENT

# ASSISTANCE DOG PROCEDURE

### Further information about this document:

Document name	<b>ASSISTANCE DOG PROCEDURE SA37</b>
Document summary	<b>To ensure all our staff aware of the importance and how to provide the necessary help for some one with Assistance dog when accessing Mersey Care services.</b>
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To be read in conjunction with	<b>Equality and Human Rights Policy HR10</b>
<b>This document can be made available in a range of alternative formats including various languages, large print and braille etc</b>	
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### Version Control:

		Version History:
Version 1	Document Ratified	1/11/2012
Version 2	Reviewed document presented to Trust	AO Approved 23/12/15
Version 2	Executive Committee approved	February 2020

**SUPPORTING STATEMENTS** – this document should be read in conjunction with the following statements:

### **SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS**

All Mersey Care NHS Trust employees have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, including:

- being alert to the possibility of child/vulnerable adult abuse and neglect through their observation of abuse, or by professional judgement made as a result of information gathered about the child/vulnerable adult;
- knowing how to deal with a disclosure or allegation of child/adult abuse;
- undertaking training as appropriate for their role and keeping themselves updated;
- being aware of and following the local policies and procedures they need to follow if they have a child/vulnerable adult concern;
- ensuring appropriate advice and support is accessed either from managers, *Safeguarding Ambassadors* or the trust's safeguarding team;
- participating in multi-agency working to safeguard the child or vulnerable adult (if appropriate to your role);
- ensuring contemporaneous records are kept at all times and record keeping is in strict adherence to Mersey Care NHS Trust policy and procedures and professional guidelines. Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities, will differ depending on the post you hold within the organisation;
- ensuring that all staff and their managers discuss and record any safeguarding issues that arise at each supervision session

### **EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

Mersey Care NHS Trust recognises that some sections of society experience prejudice and discrimination. The Equality Act 2010 specifically recognises the *protected characteristics* of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and transgender. The Equality Act also requires regard to socio-economic factors including pregnancy /maternity and marriage/civil partnership.

The trust is committed to equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice both in the provision of services and in our role as a major employer. The trust believes that all people have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and is committed to the elimination of unfair and unlawful discriminatory practices.

Mersey Care NHS Trust also is aware of its legal duties under the Human Rights Act 1998. Section 6 of the Human Rights Act requires all public authorities to uphold and promote Human Rights in everything they do. It is unlawful for a public authority to perform any act which contravenes the Human Rights Act.

Mersey Care NHS Trust is committed to carrying out its functions and service delivery in line with a Human Rights based approach and the FRED A principles of **F**airness, **R**espect, **E**quality **D**ignity, and **A**utonomy

## CONTENTS

		<b>Page</b>
1	Purpose and Rationale	3
2	Scope	3
3	Definitions	3
4	Duties	4
5	Procedure	5
6	Monitoring	6
7	Supporting Documents	6
9	Appendix A	7
10	Appendix B	8
11	Equality and Human Rights Analysis	9

## 1 PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

- 1.1 **Purpose** – To ensure all our staff aware of the importance and how to provide the necessary help for some one with Assistance dog when accessing Mersey Care services.
- 1.2 **Rationale** - The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) introduced measures aimed at eliminating the discrimination often faced by disabled people. In 2006 the Disability Equality Duty became law.(Equality Act 2010). This policy sets out requirements under Disability Legislation relating to access to services by disabled people who have specially trained dogs to assist with day to day activities.
- 1.3 The Assistance Dog policy sets out the requirements of Mersey Care to support access for patients with assistance dogs. The policy applies to all employees of Mersey Care in all locations, patients, carers and visitors.

### OUTCOME FOCUSED AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.4 For the ASSISTANCE DOG PROCEDURE the aims and objectives are as follows.
- 1.5 To ensure that there is a consistent trust wide approach supporting people with assistance dog.
- 1.6 To ensure information in relation to Assistance Dogs are widely disseminated across the Trust.

## 2 SCOPE

- 2.1 The Assistance Dog policy sets out the requirements of Mersey Care to support access for patients with assistance dogs. The policy applies to all employees of Mersey Care in all locations, patients, carers and visitors.

## 3 DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 The relevant terms and their definitions (within the context of this policy document) are outlined below:

**Table 1: Definitions**

Term	Definition
Assistance dog	Assistance dogs are dogs that are trained by either the International Guide Dogs Federation or Assistance Dogs International member organisations to support a person with a disability.

## 4 DUTIES

- 4.1 **Lead Executive Director** – the lead Executive Director for this procedure Executive Director of Workforce has strategic responsibility for ensuring that the Trust meets all its obligations in relation to Equality and Human Rights. This procedure is a part of the process of ensuring that people within our services are able to receive the appropriate support.

- 4.2 **Procedure Lead** – the procedure lead – Equality and Human Rights Lead has operational responsibility for the monitoring and development of this procedure alongside the support for staff and people using the service in relation to its implementation.
- 4.3 **Responsibility of staff**- All staff should have a clear understanding of the Assistance Dog Procedure. key staff groups include
- Facilities Managers
  - Ward/Department Managers
  - Persons in Charge of areas used by the public
  - Reception Staff
- 4.4 Staff should be aware of the different types of support provided by assistance dogs and the support needs of patients when the patient or visitor has been separated from the assistance dog.
- a. The best way to identify the needs of patients or visitors is to ask.
  - b. It is important that staff recognise the assistance dog is a working dog and should try to minimise distractions.
  - c. Staff are responsible for implementing existing local infection control and cleaning protocols as necessary.
  - d. Staff are asked to consider the care needs of patients, visitors and their dogs as outlined in this document and as appropriate to the situation.
  - e. People in Charge are asked to consider this guidance when determining whether there is any reasonable justification to deny access to an assistance dog.
- 4.5 **Assistance Dog Owner** - The responsibility and care of the assistance dog is at all times that of its owner.
- a. The owner should check with the hospital ward area to be visited prior to arrival if the area is a high risk area and if so take this into account.
  - b. On arrival the patient or visitor should report to the ward or reception area.
  - c. The owner should ensure the dog is fit and well and care regimes follow guidance provided by Assistance Dogs UK.
  - d. The owner should follow the infection control policy of the area to be visited, including the use of hand gel provided for all visitors

## 5 PROCESS / PROCEDURE

### Visitors with Assistance Dogs.

5.1 The visitor with an assistance dog should be greeted on arrival to the clinical area and the Person in Charge will communicate any limitations to the visitor.

## Access

5.2 It is the decision of the Person in Charge as to whether it is appropriate for the dog to be allowed into a particular clinical area. The Person in Charge should carefully consider the guidance set out below when making a decision in relation to access. There are areas where access will not be permitted, for example, areas for preparing food and clinical areas, an example would be the ECT treatment room; if it is not possible to permit the dog into a particular area, the Person in Charge needs justifiable grounds for doing so. The Person in Charge should consider whether the care needs of other patients present a reasonable objection to an assistance dog being present in the area.

Reasonable objections include:

- a. medical conditions or allergies associated with dogs
- b. mental health issues with dogs including reasonable fear of dogs

5.3 Objections under religious beliefs are not considered reasonable. This may be a concern for Muslim patients as within the Muslim faith dogs are generally seen in a negative context. In 2003, the Sharia Council, based in the United Kingdom, ruled that a ban on dogs does not apply to Guide Dogs. Where reasonable objections exist, staff should try and make adjustments. For example, if the patient could be cared for in another area of the ward or side room, if one is available, this should be considered.

## Hygiene and Infection Control-

5.4 Staff, patients and visitors must ensure they follow hand washing and infection control procedures at all times. Assistance dog owners should also be given hand gel and follow the same infection control procedures as all visitors.

Areas where assistance dogs have visited should be cleaned on a daily basis as part of the usual cleaning schedule. If the assistance dog accidentally fouls within the NHS premises blood and body fluid spillage policies should be consulted and followed. Cleaning of the area should be carried out as per existing protocols.

For further assistance or information Staff can contact local Infection Control Teams.

## 6 MONITORING

System for the Monitoring of Compliance with assistance dog policy	
Monitoring of compliance with this policy will be undertaken by: Equality and Human Rights Lead	This will be completed via patient survey/satisfaction information and complaints / compliments to the Trust

## 7 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

### List of Supporting Documents

Ref No	Name	Purpose
HR10	Equality and Human Rights	To outlines the Trust's commitment to creating and sustaining a working environment free from discrimination and bullying and the process for staff and managers and staff to follow if such behaviour arises



## References

1. NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, Dog assistance policy
2. Fair for all-Disability Positive Action – Real Change: Improving NHS services for disabled people: NHS Scotland (2008) Glasgow
3. Guide Dogs for the Blind (2009) accessed March 2009  
[http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/fileadmin/gdba/images/downloads/OpenDoorsInnerLR\\_Dec2008.pdf](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/fileadmin/gdba/images/downloads/OpenDoorsInnerLR_Dec2008.pdf)
4. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995,2005 and Equality Act 2010
5. Canine Partners accessed March 2009 [http://www.caninepartners.co.uk/about\\_us/](http://www.caninepartners.co.uk/about_us/)
6. The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association Magazine - Forward (Spring 2009) p22
7. Hearing Dogs accessed March 2009 <http://www.hearingdogs.org.uk/>
8. Know Your Rights Assistance Dog Owners: Disability Rights Commission
9. Assistance Dog Policy: Central Manchester and Manchester Children's University Hospital NHS Trust
10. Assistance Dog Owners' Policy: Luton and Dunstable Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
11. Guide Dogs, Hearing Dogs and Pat A Dogs Policy: East Cheshire NHS Trust
12. Guide Dogs for the Blind (2009) accessed March 2009  
[http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/PublicWebsite/public\\_howtoguide.hcsp#P4\\_320](http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/PublicWebsite/public_howtoguide.hcsp#P4_320)
13. [http://www.mcb.org.uk/article\\_detail.php?article=announcement-745](http://www.mcb.org.uk/article_detail.php?article=announcement-745)

## Associated Documentation

### Background and Good Practice

#### Role of assistance Dogs

Canine Partners aim to help improve access, mobility, independence and quality of life. Many disabled people rely on an assistance dog as an aid to their mobility and would find day to day living extremely difficult without this help<sup>5</sup>.

Currently, the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association cares for almost 8,000 dogs; nearly 4,500 are working dogs, 350 are breeding stock, over 1,000 are puppies, 500 are in training and 850 are retired. The cost of breeding, training and maintaining a Guide Dog over its lifetime is £35,000.

A Guide Dog is highly trained and its owner will have had specialised training in the safe and effective use of their dog. Assistance dogs are taught how to be well behaved. They sit or lie next to their owners and they are trained to go to the toilet on demand. (The assistance dogs are toileted prior to leaving home and again before entering any buildings.)

As members of the Assistance Dogs UK, Guide dog owners carry a card advising that Guide Dogs should not be a risk to hygiene. The dogs are groomed daily and they are also checked regularly by veterinarians<sup>3</sup>. They comply with strict guidelines and therefore there is no need for staff to ask for vaccination certificates.

Nine million of the UK population experience some degree of hearing loss. Over 650,000 of these people are profoundly deaf and could benefit from Hearing Dogs. These dogs can alert their owners to sounds that hearing people take for granted, for example a fire alarm. They help their owners with safety and provide them with greater independence. To date, The Hearing Dogs for Deaf People have placed more than 1,500 dogs throughout the UK

#### Good Practice

##### Approaching patient and dog

If a Guide Dog harness handle is down, this means the owner may like your help or that the dog is “off duty”. If the person has requested your assistance you should approach the person from the opposite side to where the assistance dog is. Do not take the harness handle or the lead as these are what the owner uses to control the dog.

When being guided, some people like to walk by your side, others may request that you walk in front of the dog and they will follow. **Always ask the person's preference.** Remember to offer clear directions when guiding a disabled person who has requested your assistance.

If the person is deafblind, approach face on and try to speak to them first; if there is no response, gently tap the person on the shoulder or arm, try speech again or if the person uses a deafblind

manual a hand may be raised by the person to indicate you should use the deafblind manual or the block alphabet. If staff are unaware of how to use the deafblind manual, the block alphabet can be easily used by tracing each letter onto the palm of the deafblind person's hand.

### **Care of dog on separation from owner**

It is important to remember the dog may show signs of distress if its owner is unwell and if it has to be removed from its owner's side. It may be necessary to house the dog temporarily in the ward duty room, quiet area or an office.

The assistance dog should be kept as near to the owner as possible and it should be separated from its owner for as short a time as possible. This would only be an emergency measure until contact has been made with an Assistance Dog organisation. The dog should not be tethered to a radiator, placed in direct sunlight or near electrical plugs.

The dog should be offered a bowl of water; feeding arrangements will be carried out by the appropriate Assistance Dog organisation.

Assistance dogs are usually toileted by their owners prior to leaving home and again prior to entering buildings. In an emergency admission it may be necessary to take the dog outside for toileting at least once after arrival. If this exceeds a three hour period, the dog should be taken outside again. The faeces should be double bagged, put in a clinical waste bin and removed immediately (or follow local spillage policies).

It is the owner's responsibility to make sure the dog is toileted prior to entering the premises. If the dog fouls within the hospital, the owner is responsible for cleaning up after the dog. However, if the patient is not able to attend to this due to their disability, this should be reported to a member of staff in order that arrangements can be made to clean the area. If this occurs then the local spillage policy should be followed. The incidence of this situation arising will be very rare.

Any staff caring for the dog should follow strict hand washing and infection control policies.

# Equality and Human Rights Analysis

<b>Title:</b> <b>Assistance Dog Procedure</b>
<b>Area covered: Trust wide</b>

<b>What are the intended outcomes of this work?</b> To ensure all our staff are aware of the importance and how to provide the necessary help for some one with Assistance Dog when accessing Mersey Care services
<b>Who will be affected?</b> Staff , volunteers, people using services, carers and visitors

<b>Evidence</b>
<b>What evidence have you considered?</b> Guidance from relevant disability and NHS bodies – see references.
<b>Disability (including learning disability)</b> This procedure seeks to ensure people are supported on Mersey Care premises.
<b>Sex</b> There were no issues identified
<b>Race</b> There were no issues identified
<b>Age</b> There were no issues identified
<b>Gender reassignment (including transgender)</b> There were no issues identified
<b>Sexual orientation</b> There were no issues identified
<b>Religion or belief</b> Noted in section 5.3 re possible conflict between religious /cultural belief about dogs. This needs to be monitored to ensure the issues are addressed appropriately and respectfully
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b> There were no issues identified
<b>Carers</b> There were no issues identified
<b>Other identified</b> There were no issues identified groups

<b>Cross Cutting</b>
There were no issues identified

<b>Human Rights</b>	<b>Is there an impact? How this right could be protected?</b>
<b>Right to life (Article 2)</b>	<i>Not engaged</i>
<b>Right of freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment (Article 3)</b>	<i>Not engaged</i>
<b>Right to liberty (Article 5)</b>	Not engaged
<b>Right to a fair trial (Article 6)</b>	Not engaged
<b>Right to private and family life (Article 8)</b>	Supportive of a HRBA
<b>Right of freedom of religion or belief (Article 9)</b>	Supportive of a HRBA
<b>Right to freedom of expression</b> <b>Note: this does not include insulting language such as racism (Article 10)</b>	Not engaged
<b>Right freedom from discrimination (Article 14)</b>	Not engaged

<b>Engagement and involvement</b>
None indicated.
<b>Summary of Analysis</b>
<b>Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation</b>
This procedure seeks to ensure people who require assistance dogs are treated appropriately and supportively across the Trust
<b>Advance equality of opportunity</b>
This procedure seeks to ensure people who require assistance dogs are treated appropriately and supportively across the Trust

## Promote good relations between groups

This procedure seeks to ensure people who require assistance dogs are treated appropriately and supportively across the Trust

## What is the overall impact?

Supportive measure to tackle where inequalities may occur.

## Addressing the impact on equalities

There needs to be greater consideration re health inequalities and the impact of each individual development /change in relation to the protected characteristics and vulnerable groups

## Action planning for improvement

## For the record

**Name of persons who carried out this assessment:**

Meryl Cuzak

**Date assessment completed:**

22<sup>nd</sup> October 2015

**Name of responsible Director:**

Amanda Oates

**Date assessment was signed:**

