



Physiological
Measurements Ltd.

Supporting Patients with Assistance Dogs Policy

23





Version Date	Owner	Version	Issue	Comments	Date of Review
30/11/2023	Tracey Jones	1	1	New document	30/11/2024
26/03/2024	CB	1	2	Updated Interface logos	30/11/2024

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1.0 Introduction

Physiological Measurements Ltd (PML) believes in providing equal access to all those using its services. Assistance dogs can be used by people who have sight, hearing and other disabilities to give greater independence, and part of that independence is that a person may have to bring a dog into a clinic setting.

Guide Dogs, Hearing Dogs and Assistance Dogs are working dogs that have been trained as a mobility aid for people with visual or other disabilities.

Under the Equality Act 2010, PML is legally obliged to make reasonable adjustments to ensure equal access to services. Additionally, the Equality Act 2010 requires that all reasonable efforts be made to accommodate people's needs as long as patient and staff safety is not compromised.

The aim of this policy is to minimise the restriction of access to assistance dogs, reduce stress to the person, dog, staff and other patients and where necessary minimise the time that the dog and owner have to be separated.

All staff should have a clear understanding of this policy and 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. It is important that staff recognise the assistance dog is a working dog and should try to minimise distractions.

This policy aligns with our company values "Safety and Care for People", "Quality and Excellence in our Services" and to the following Care Quality Commission Regulations;

Regulation 9: Person-centred care

Regulation 10: Dignity and respect

2.0 Equality Statement

Physiological Measurements Ltd ensure that all service users and staff have the same protection regardless of age, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice.

3.0 Policy Scope

This policy will apply to all patients and will be inclusive of all protected characteristics i.e. age, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion/belief, gender identity, pregnancy/maternity, marriage/civil partnership, as well as psychological and physical requirements. Patients should feel they 'matter' to the organisation all of the time by all staff whether in a clinical or non-clinical setting.

This policy should be read alongside the following Company Policies;

QS1108 Privacy Dignity Policy

QS1187 Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy





4.0 What is an Assistance Dog?

Thousands of disabled people rely on an assistance dog to help them with day to day activities that many people take for granted. You may be surprised to learn that it is not only blind people that are helped by assistance dogs. Assistance dogs are also trained to help people with hearing difficulties, epilepsy, diabetes, physical mobility problems and more.

Assistance dogs carry out a variety of practical tasks for people such as opening doors, picking up objects, carrying items and raising an alarm, as well as supporting their independence and confidence. **Assistance dogs are not pets.**

All Assistance dogs:

- are highly trained
- will not wander freely around the premises
- will sit or lie quietly on the floor next to its owner
- are trained to go to the toilet on command, so are unlikely to foul in a public place
- are instantly recognisable by the harness or identifying coat they wear.

5.0 Responsibilities

Managers

- Managers are responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of the policy and that it is adhered to.

All Staff

- All staff have a responsibility to be aware of the policy and ensure that an assistance dog user feels welcome upon arriving at the clinic
- Staff are not expected to interact with the assistance dog in any way.

Governance Department

- The governance team will ensure this policy is kept up to date and follows guidance and will audit compliance with the policy.

6.0 Exclusions to Animal Visits

There are occasions where it is not appropriate for an animal to be permitted. PML can prevent an assistance dog from entering an area within the clinic on the grounds of Health and Safety by proving:

- they genuinely believe that there is a risk of endangering the disabled person or others, eg infection control risk, if other patients have an allergy to dogs, and,
- the risk cannot be overcome by a 'reasonable adjustment', which the service provider has to consider making, eg providing a side room for the dog owner to wait away from affected patients.





Refusal to permit access to an assistance dog due to severe phobia or severe allergies must be done so with a certified exemption from a General Practitioner (GP).

Refusal of access for assistance dogs based on the possibility that other people 'may' be allergic is unlikely to be classed as a reasonable or proportionate response.

7.0 Welfare of the Animal

- Should the animal be visibly ill, e.g. suffering from diarrhoea or vomiting, it should not be permitted to enter the clinic.
- Should any animal be showing signs of stress and agitation, it should be removed from the environment and taken to a safe place to calm down. This should only be done with the consent or assistance of the owner.
- Should there be any concerns about the conduct or behaviour of the animal owner this will be escalated to a senior manager.

8.0 Hygiene and Cleanliness

All staff must ensure good hand washing practice as per the infection control 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 usual protocols. If the animal urinates/defecates on the premises, this should be cleaned as human waste would be, using the appropriate PPE.

9.0 Justifiable Separation

In the event that it is necessary that the owner and the dog have to be separated, that period should be kept to the shortest time possible. The dog should be left in a safe, supervised area with the consent of the owner.

10.0 Religious, Cultural and Health Considerations

PML will endeavor, where possible, to take into account any religious, cultural or health objections from staff members when booking a patient who will be attending with an assistance dog, however, where this is not possible, staff must be aware that PML has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for the patient and the appointment must go ahead. Staff will note that this is not something that will happen often, that reasonable attempt will be made to avoid this, and any dogs are trained to a high standard and will not interrupt or interfere with the appointment.

11.0 Training Requirements

This guidance will be available on PML's document management system, Radar. It is the responsibility of all managers to ensure that their staff are made aware of this.





12.0 Key Contacts

For further information on this guidance, please contact a member of the governance or operations team.

- Derek Taylor: Deputy Director of Governance – d.taylor@pml.tel
- Tracey Jones: Governance Lead – t.jones@pml.tel
- Coral Wynes: Patient Experience Lead – c.wynes@pml.tel
- Peter Leigh : Deputy Director of Operations – p.leigh@pml.tel
- Ellie Roberts: Operations Lead – e.roberts@pml.tel

13.0 References

- [Assistance Dogs UK - ADUK](#)

