**Paddington Development Trust**

**Dog Policy and Procedure**

**Approved by Board of Trustees on:**

13 November 2024

**Next policy review:**

November 2025

**Lead Staff Member: Elena Grbcic**

**Policy objective and scope:**

Paddington Development Trust (PDT) operates a number of community and public buildings, ensuring that the environments are safe for staff and members of the public, as well as inclusive and welcoming.

This policy is written with particular reference to Grand Junction at St Mary Magdalene’s and Stowe Centre. Both are public buildings, operating wide-ranging activity programmes, and an arts, heritage and music programme in the case of Grand Junction.

This policy sets out the boundaries of having all dogs on the premises, including assistance dogs, emotional support dogs, and pet dogs. As such, it outlines both our legal duties to assistance dog owners under the Equality Act 2010, as well as PDT’s policy towards other dogs visiting our premises.

The policy will address the presence of dogs within PDT’s building under the following occurrences:

1. Assistance Dogs
2. Emotional Support Dogs
3. Employee’s Dogs
4. Dogs as part of specified activities/events
5. Visiting reception and foyer areas
6. Exclusions
7. Complaints

**Principles**

Paddington Development Trust will always comply with our legal responsibilities to welcome guide dogs and assistance dogs to our buildings, making any reasonable adjustments to support a visit.

PDT recognises that environments can be improved by the presence of dogs, increasing social interaction and reducing stress. We also reserve the right to balance the needs of all our users when determining whether dogs can attend a specific event or activity. The guiding principle here will be the behaviour of the dog and the particular nature of an event.

This policy refers to all employees, volunteers, visitors, and users of the building.

### **Legal Aspects**

Guide dog and assistance dog owners have important rights under the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act provides for people with disabilities to have the same right to services as everyone else.

It is against the law for service providers to treat people with disabilities less favourably because of their disability, or because they have a guide or assistance dog with them.
Making “reasonable adjustments” might mean giving extra help, such as guiding someone within the building, or making some changes to the way services are provided to make it easier for blind and partially-sighted people to use them. This includes allowing guide dogs and assistance dogs into all public places with their owners.

Service providers have to make “reasonable adjustments” for guide dog and assistance dog owners. In 2004 the law was extended to state that service providers have to consider making changes to “physical features” which make it unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use their services.

Emotional support animals (ESAs) are not defined in the Equality Act 2010. Service providers are required to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people. Dependent on the specific facts and circumstances in each case, it may be a reasonable adjustment to give access to a disabled person’s ESA.

There is a legal obligation to make sure there is no risk of contamination of food and ensure and that all food preparation areas are up to specified hygiene standards, as set out in EU Regulation (EC) 852/2004, Annex II, applied in the UK by the Food Hygiene Regulations 2013. This means that food preparation areas are out of bounds to dogs. There is no legal requirement for them to be banned from areas that food is served or eaten.

**1. Assistance Dogs**

PDT will ensure we are meeting our obligations under the Equality Act.

PDT will talk with users of the building who have disabilities to ensure the premises have no barriers affecting their ability to use the building. Staff will receive disability awareness training to assist this process.

Accredited Guide dogs and assistance dogs are highly trained, and their owners will have had specialised training in the safe and effective use of their dog. The dog’s behaviour is a key part of this training – it will have been trained to lie quietly and it should not cause any disruption.

The assistance dog is the owner’s responsibility. In the rare event that an assistance dog misbehaves, discussion with the owner will support them to control their dog.

If the assistance dog owner plans to be a regular user of the building, the premises may be included in their training programme so they become familiar with the surroundings.

The owner of the assistance dog must ensure that

* the dog is kept on a lead at all times when walking around the premises
* the dog has its feeding and toileting requirements met
* the dog behaves in an appropriate manner at all times and does not disrupt others
* in the unlikely event that the dog does foul inside the church building, the owner must report this to an appropriate member of staff to make arrangements with the Facilities Team to clean the area.
* While not a legal requirement, we strongly recommend that guide dogs and assistance dogs wear a harness or jacket that identify them as an assistance dog.

**2. Emotional Support Dogs**

Emotional support animals (ESAs) are not defined in the Equality Act 2010. However, PDT will always make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities, and in some circumstances this may include those attending our building with an emotional support dog.

Where users are attending an activity, class, or event (as opposed to general use of the café or foyer areas), PDT staff will work with users to understand their needs and the barriers facing them attending without their dog. Where a dog will be attending, staff will conduct a risk assessment with the owner prior to their first visit.

Any dog attending an organised class or event, will be required to be highly trained and display the same standards of behaviour as an assistance dog, including:

* Able to sit or lie quietly on the floor next to their owner
* Be kept on a lead at all times.
* Have had its feeding and toileting requirements met and be unlikely to foul within the building.

We also strongly recommend that emotional support dogs wear a harness or jacket that identifies them as such.

**3. Employee’s Dogs**

An employee who wishes to bring their dog to the office should obtain permission from their line manager and from colleagues who share the office. Dog owners must ensure that their dog will not cause allergies or other medical problems for their colleagues.

An employee who requires the help of an assistance dog (defined as "any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability") will be permitted to bring their dog to the office.

Employee’s dogs must be on a lead in all public areas of the building when walking in or out of the office area, with the owner having full control of their dog. The only place in the building the dog can be left unattended by the owner is within the office, ensuring that the dog is secure.

The dog owner is responsible for their dog’s behaviour and well-being at all times, including being responsible for any cleaning or damage caused by their dog. The owner is responsible for informing others of their dog’s presence in the office, with the use of an agreed sign when the dog is present.

Any colleague who is unhappy having a dog in the office should bring the matter to the attention of the owner and then to their line manager.

PDT shall not be liable for loss of, or injury to, any dog brought to the office.

Employees who are dog owners will want the experience of having their dog in the office to be a positive one. This will be helped by ensuring that the dog is clean, house trained, behaviourally trained, does not disturb or pester other workers, and is provided with bedding and an area to settle down.

**3. Dogs as part of specified activities/events**

There may be other occasions where the presence of dogs is appropriate within PDT’s buildings. Examples of these may be a visiting dog at a Dementia Café, or an event arranged to engage with dog owners.

A risk assessment will be carried out prior to these activities to ensure that potential risks are identified and mitigating actions are implemented.

Consideration will be given to the breed, temperament and characteristics of the dog(s) being brought into the activity, and if more than one dog is involved, the compatibility of the dogs to be together.

Dogs must be kept on a lead at all times and be under the full control and supervision of their owner.

If children are involved, they must be reminded of appropriate behaviour around dogs to help the dog remain calm. Children must never be left alone with dogs and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times. Children should be reminded to always wash their hands after handling a dog.

**4. Visiting the Grand Junction Café, reception, and foyer spaces**

If a visitor to the building requests to bring their dog onto the premises the following applies:

* Dogs are only allowed into the café, foyer, and reception areas indicated by reception staff and are not permitted to enter other parts of the building without prior permission.
* Dogs must remain with the owner and be on a lead at all times.
* If a dog is disruptive or misbehaves, the owner will be asked to remove the dog from the building and must respond to this instruction.
* A dog who is required to leave on more than 2 occasions will not be allowed in the building in future.

**5. Exclusions**

Aggressive dogs, or those with a history of aggression, must not be brought onto the premises.

Dogs who are in season must not be brought onto the premises.

**6. Complaints**

 If a person with an assistance dog wishes to make a complaint about the treatment of themselves or their dog, they should raise this issue with the Facilities Manager.

Every attempt will be made to resolve the matter informally, including where appropriate the use of mediation. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the issue will be escalated to the Trustees of PDT with reference to the Equality Act 2010.

If a member of staff or user of the building wishes to make a complaint about an assistance dog, or employee’s dog, or notices any breaches of this policy, they should also raise the issue with the Facilities Manager.

Again, every attempt will be made to resolve the matter informally with the dog’s owner, including where appropriate the use of mediation. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, or if the request to resolve the complaint is not complied with, the issue will be escalated to the PDT Trustees.

This document will be reviewed in XXXX.

The following documents have been referred to in the writing of this policy:

<https://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/resource/welcoming-guide-dogs-assistance-animals-and-emotional-support-animals-to-events-and-meetings/>

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/guidance/assistance-dogs-guide-businesses-and-service-providers>

<https://dogsforautism.org.uk/assistance-dogs-and-the-law-2/>

<https://www.rocketlawyer.com/gb/en/family-and-personal/family-and-personal-insights/legal-guide/assistance-dogs-and-the-equality-act-2010#:~:text=into%20their%20businesses.-,What%20are%20assistance%20dogs?,somebody%20with%20another%20prescribed%20disability>

<http://www.assistancedogs.org.uk/law/>

<https://resources.workable.com/pets-in-the-workplace-policy>