Bangor University

Position statement on Assistance Animals/Therapy Animals/Emotional Support Animals

Assistance Dogs

Assistance Dogs are specially trained to carry out specific duties for a disabled person. These animals are covered under legislation (Equality Act, 2010) and are legally permitted to accompany their owner, partner or handler at all times in all places (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2017). This means dogs which have been trained and registered with one of the Member Organisations listed by Assistance Dogs International (ADI) or Assistance Animals UK will meet these criteria.

Currently the following organisations are registered full members of ADUK:

- Canine Partners
- Dog A.I.D
- Dogs for Good
- Guide Dogs
- Hearing Dogs for Deaf People
- Medical Detection Dogs
- Support Dogs
- The Seeing Dogs Alliance

(Assistance Dogs UK, 2018)

Therapy Dogs and Mental Health

There is a growing upsurge in the engagement of ‘therapy animals’ or ‘emotional support animals’ for people with a range of difficulties including mental health problems and autism. However, these animals are not specifically trained to carry out any particular task, but rather their role is to be a source of comfort or support to the person with a disability. Whilst this is different to a pet, there is no legal status for these animals at this time in the UK.

Assistance Dogs UK makes the following statement on their website, “...emotional support dogs are not required to undergo any specialised training and are not recognised in any region of the world as being assistance dogs. The worldwide body representing assistance dog programmes, ADI, does not classify emotional support dogs as assistance dogs. As a result, the owners of emotional support dogs are not entitled to claim their dogs have public access rights in the UK under the grounds of ‘reasonable adjustments’ that apply to assistance dogs.”

Further, they point out that, “There are no ADUK accredited assistance dog charities at the present time that train dogs for people with mental health issues where this is the only disability.” (Assistance Dogs UK, 2018)*

Bangor University Position

Bangor University’s stance on this situation, therefore, is that any animal accompanying a student to University must be a registered Assistance Dog in order to be allowed onto University premises, in compliance with the law. Any unregistered therapy/emotional support animals will not be permitted to join students at University, or be housed in University accommodation.
It is acknowledged that there are other organisations which train assistance animals and if relevant paperwork can be provided, these will be considered on an individual basis.

References