

# Assistance Animals and Emotional Support Animals on Campus

## Process document

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## Bringing an assistance animal or an emotional support animal (ESA) on campus as a reasonable adjustment

Allowing entry to disabled people with guide dogs, assistance animals and emotional support animals (ESAs) is a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010. It is generally unlawful to refuse entry to guide dogs and well-trained assistance animals. Accordingly, the University supports access to assistance animals on campus and considers requests for the access of ESAs. ESAs do not have the same legal status as assistance animals under UK law; however, the University considers requests for the access of ESAs as part of our reasonable adjustment processes.

More information is available in the [Assistance Animals & Emotional Support Animals toolkit](#).

# Staff bringing an assistance animal or requesting an ESA as a workplace adjustment

## Decision-making process

- Requests for reasonable adjustments for staff who are disabled and have a long-term condition (known as workplace adjustments at King's) should be managed through the [Individual Adjustments Planner \(IAP\)](#), therefore staff who wish to request to bring their assistance animal or ESA on campus must start an IAP or edit an already existing IAP. This process will also facilitate the discussion around other needed workplace adjustments.
- An adjustment meeting should be held between the IAP Owner and their Nominated Contact (usually their manager) as per the IAP process. The safe access of the assistance animal or ESA should be a part of this conversation, and both parties should ensure they have read the [Assistance Animals and Emotional Support Animals on Campus Policy](#).
- Information discussed in the IAP should include:
  - Type of assistance animal or ESA and support the animal provides.
  - The animal temperament and expected behaviour while on campus.
  - Campuses and other spaces (for example Libraries) they are likely to visit including potentially risky environments, for example, laboratories, plant rooms, and other environments where chemicals may be used.
  - Identification of a safe and suitable office and/or desk space.
  - Documentation supporting the request such as a risk assessment, letter from a medical professional, evidence of insurance and vaccinations, and training (if applicable).
- When deciding if the request is reasonable, managers should consider the following factors.
  - Cost: carrying out a risk assessment should help highlight any cost. These are typically minimal but must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Managers must also request evidence of a valid [Public Liability Insurance](#).
  - Practicality: whether it is practical to allow the assistance animal or ESA within the specific work environment.
  - Effectiveness: whether the presence of the assistance animal or ESA effectively reduces or removes the disadvantage the disabled person is facing. For ESAs, a letter from a medical professional is helpful in explaining how the animal supports the individual.
  - Disruption: whether the animal is quiet, well-behaved, and unlikely to cause distraction. Consider whether the type of animal is suitable and whether it can effectively perform its role without causing disruption. Training or registration evidence can provide additional reassurance, especially for ESAs.
  - Health and safety: carrying out a risk assessment should help identify possible risks including risk to others. Managers should also request evidence of any vaccinations/treatments the animal has been given.
- Managers should cooperate with animal guardians to carry out a risk assessment to help assess and manage risk. A [5-step approach to risk assessments](#) should be used. The risk assessment can be uploaded in the IAP for record-keeping purposes. Managers can also contact the [local safety officers](#) for support.

- Managers should make sure relevant parties are consulted as part of the decision-making process such as Head of Department and Business Operations, Campus Operations, the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Wellbeing (EDI&W) Team. Guidance on who to consult can be found in the [Assistance Animals and Emotional Support Animals toolkit](#).
- Managers should inform the department and individuals who are likely to work near the animal. If made aware of other needs such as allergies, phobias, another assistance animals and ESA accessing campus, managers should discuss suitable arrangements with the affected individuals. More guidance on supporting those impacted by the presence of an animal is available in the [Assistance Animals and Emotional Support Animals toolkit](#).

### **What to do once the request has been approved**

- Animal guardians should read the [Assistance Animals and Emotional Support Animals toolkit](#) and familiarise themselves with key aspects such as animal identification at King's, signposted toileting areas, waste disposal procedures, and other practical support measures.
- Managers should signpost animal guardians to the [Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans](#) (PEEPs) process for Staff. Animal guardians are responsible for engaging with this process.
- Managers should request a [King's Animal ID card](#) for the animal guardian to help with identification of the animal on campus. This can be requested through [Helix Self Service](#).
- Managers can consider arranging a meet and greet as part of induction and orientation. More guidance is available in the [Assistance Animals and Emotional Support Animals toolkit](#).
- Managers should disseminate guidance provided by the University on appropriate behaviour around animals to the team. Guidance on working and studying near an assistance animal or ESA is available in the [Assistance Animals and Emotional Support Animals toolkit](#).

### **What to do if the request cannot be approved or there are limitations**

- If a request for an assistance animal or ESA can't be fully approved, managers should engage in a collaborative dialogue with the employee, clearly explain the reasons based on objective business or health & safety grounds, identify the barriers the colleague is experiencing, and fulfil their legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 by offering alternative adjustments that effectively remove or reduce those barriers.
- Where access must be limited to certain spaces, managers should outline which areas are restricted, why, and discuss alternative arrangements to ensure the colleague can still work effectively and safely.
- The [Staff Disability Support Advice Service](#) can be contacted for further support and advice on staff adjustments.
- Please contact the [EDI&W Team](#) if further advice is needed.
- More guidance is available on: [Managing & Supporting Disabled Staff](#).

# Students bringing an assistance animal or requesting an ESA as a reasonable adjustment

## Decision-making process

Students at all degree levels, including postgraduate research students, who inform a member of King's staff they have a disability should be referred to Disability Support & Inclusion (DSI) in line with the [Student Disability Support and Inclusion Policy](#). Students will be asked to register with DSI via their Student Record and, if they wish to request to bring an assistance animal or ESA to campus, will be also asked to complete a [request form](#).

- The assigned disability adviser will contact the student to discuss specific requirements of the campus where the student intends to bring their assistance animal or ESA. This conversation forms part of the King's Inclusion Plan (KIP) or the PGR planner. Safe access for the assistance animal or ESA should be addressed during this discussion, and both the student and the disability adviser should ensure they have read the [Assistance Animals and Emotional Support Animals on Campus Policy](#).
- The following information and supporting documentation will be requested when submitting the request form:
  - Type of assistance animal or ESA and support the animal provides.
  - The animal temperament and expected behaviour while on campus.
  - Campuses and other spaces (for example Libraries) they are likely to visit including potentially risky environments, for example, laboratories and other environments where chemicals may be used.
  - Whether they are staying within one of King's residences.
  - Evidence of any vaccinations/treatments the animal has been given.
  - Evidence of [Public Liability Insurance](#).
  - Letter from a medical professional to support the ESA request, which should include information about the support the animal will provide.
  - Evidence of animal registration or training is recommended for ESAs.
- DSI will cooperate with the department and [local safety officers](#) who will carry out a risk assessment to assess how 'reasonable' the request is and to help manage risk. A [5-step approach to risk assessments](#) should be used.
- If the student is staying within one of King's residences, DSI and Residences should work together to discuss access. Approval from DSI to bring an ESA onto campus does not constitute automatic approval to have an ESA in university accommodation. In halls of residence, the [Residences Emotional Support Animal Policy](#) applies in addition to this policy and sets out further procedures and requirements specific to student accommodation. Students can apply directly to Residences to bring an assistance animal or ESA into residences but will be referred to DSI to register. Students who directly request an assistance animal or ESA through DSI will have their details shared with Residences for approval.
- DSI will contact the Department, Senior Tutor, Personal tutor, and Campus Operations, to notify them a student is bringing an assistance animal or ESA to campus. Where students are required to

attend laboratories, the department (usually the module lead or Programmes Team) should contact the Health & Safety staff for the laboratory. A meeting may be required which DSI will facilitate.

- The Programmes Team should notify all tutors teaching the student and all students attending the same lectures/seminars/labs/tutorials etc. Template emails and guidance on appropriate behaviour on working and studying near an assistance animal or ESA can be accessed in the [Assistance Animals & Emotional Support Animals toolkit](#).
- Any student sharing information about an allergy should be referred to DSI by their department. If a student has an allergy that prevents them from being in the same class as an assistance animal or ESA, where possible one of the students could be moved to an alternative group if multiple sessions are available.
- Students with a phobia, for example cynophobia, a fear of dogs, will be asked to evidence the diagnosis in line with the [Student Disability Support and Inclusion Policy](#).
- If a student or staff member does not like animals, they should be reassured that the assistance animal or ESA is a working animal and will always remain with their guardian and that they are there to support for the student and will not be roaming around the classroom. Where possible the student who does not like animals can be given the option to change classes if appropriate. More guidance is available in the [Assistance Animals and Emotional Support Animals toolkit](#).

### **What to do once the request has been approved**

- Animal guardians should read the provided guidance and familiarise themselves with key aspects such as animal identification at King's, signposted toileting areas, waste disposal procedures, and other practical support measures.
- DSI should signpost animal guardians to the [Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans](#) (PEEPs) process for Students. Animal guardians are responsible for engaging with this process.
- DSI should request a [King's Animal ID card](#) to help with identification of the animal on campus. This can be requested through [Helix Self Service](#).
- Departments can consider arranging a meet and greet as part of induction and orientation. More guidance is available in the [Assistance Animals and Emotional Support Animals toolkit](#).

### **What to do if the request cannot be approved or there are limitations**

- If a request for an assistance animal or ESA can't be fully approved, DSI will facilitate a conversation together with the student and the department to identify the barriers the student faces and offer adjustments to remove or reduce those barriers.
- Where access must be limited to certain spaces, DSI should outline which areas are restricted, why, and, together with the student and department, discuss alternative adjustments to ensure the student can still participate in the activities effectively and safely.

# Regular visitors bringing an assistance animal or requesting an ESA on campus

Regular visitors should inform their host within the University who has approved their visit about bringing an assistance animal or ESA to campus. Requests for ESAs will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. More guidance is available in the [Assistance Animals and Emotional Support Animals toolkit](#).

Where there is uncertainty, hosts should seek guidance from the relevant department or contact the EDI&W team by raising a ticket on [Helix](#).

This will ensure that appropriate preparations can be made (if any) to ensure the safety and comfort of the assistance animal or ESA and other participants.

The University acknowledges that some visitors may arrive on campus with an assistance animal or ESA without prior notice and will make reasonable efforts to support access wherever possible. It is also worth noting that it is generally unlawful to refuse entry to guide dogs and well-trained assistance animals as they are considered an auxiliary aid.

## Further information and resources

- [Assistance Animals and Emotional Support Animals on Campus Policy and Guidelines](#)
- [Assistance Animals & Emotional Support Animals toolkit](#)
- [King's Residences Emotional Support Animal Policy](#)
- [King's Disability policy](#)
- [King's Student Disability & Inclusion Policy](#)
- [Disability Inclusion Hub](#)
- If you require a different format of this document, please contact the [EDI&W Team](#).

### Version Control

Policy name	Assistance Animals and Emotional Support Animals on Campus
Implementation date	April 2026
Next review	April 2027
Policy owner	Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Wellbeing