



## Policy on Assistance Dogs

### 1. Introduction

Exeter City AFC Ltd values the diversity of its employees, visitors and supporters and is committed to providing an environment which is welcoming for all. The Club provides information for its staff, visitors and supporters and this policy has been developed to address specific issues relating to assistance dogs on Exeter City premises/grounds. It is also intended to raise awareness for staff, visitors and supporters of the issues relating to assistance dogs.

This policy aims to outline:

- the arrangements made to provide a welcoming and safe environment for assistance dogs and their owners.
- the roles and responsibilities within Exeter City AFC Ltd in relation to assistance dogs.
- the responsibilities of the owners of assistance dogs on Exeter City AFC Ltd grounds.
- a process for dealing with issues and complaints if they arise.

More information on the definition of an assistance dog, as used in this policy, can be found in **Appendix 1**.

### 2. Arrangements

Exeter City AFC Ltd makes the following arrangements in order to allow staff, visitors and supporters with assistance dogs to enjoy the best possible experience:

- Spending pens are provided for the toilet needs of assistance dogs (for further information contact: [disability@exetercityfc.co.uk](mailto:disability@exetercityfc.co.uk))
- Water bowls are provided for assistance dogs (for further information contact: [disability@exetercityfc.co.uk](mailto:disability@exetercityfc.co.uk)).
- On request, Exeter City AFC Ltd will provide familiarisation with and orientation of club grounds.
- The club provides guidelines for staff on how to interact with assistance dogs. This information can be found in **Appendix 2**.
- The club is happy to listen to the suggestions of assistance dog owners as to how the clubs provision for assistance dogs could be improved.

#### The Clubs: Roles and responsibilities:

##### 2.1 Facilities (informing of staff)

The disability liaison officer or relevant member of staff is responsible for informing other staff, who are likely to come into contact with the assistance dog and for asking them to confirm that they would not be adversely affected by the presence of the dog.

The club will ensure that staff and stewards will be provided with training, so that they can respond appropriately to individual needs.



## EXETER CITY AFC LIMITED

### **2.2 Facilities (Grounds or Estates staff)**

Grounds or Estates staff will ensure the upkeep of Spending Pens to ensure the health of the dog and the safety of the owner, including the provision of bins for dog refuse and the disposal of the refuse.

### **2.3 Information**

The disability liaison officer or relevant member of staff will advise employees, visitors and supporters with assistance dogs and signpost them to this policy to make them aware of the help provided by the club and their rights and responsibilities. If required, the disability liaison officer or relevant member of staff will liaise with the grounds or estates staff to ensure that any reasonable adjustments needed have been made.

### **2.4 Operations Manager**

The operations manager will ensure that staff with an assistance dog are aware of this policy, including their own responsibilities and will work together with the member of staff to arrange any reasonable adjustments required. The operations manager will also ensure that other members of staff respond appropriately to the member of staff and the assistance dog. Grounds or estates staff will provide support to the operations manager in addressing any issues that arise.

## **3. The Owner: Roles and responsibilities**

The assistance dog is the responsibility of its owner who must ensure that the assistance dog:

- I. is kept on a lead at all times when walking around the club premises/grounds.
- II. uses the Spending Pens provided by the club and does not allow it to foul on club paths or grounds.
- III. has its requirements in relation to toileting and feeding requirements met.
- IV. behaves in an appropriate manner at all times and does not disrupt others. The following action must be taken in the event of fouling:

In the unlikely event that the dog does foul inside club buildings, the owner must report this to an appropriate member of staff to make arrangements with grounds or estates management to clean and sanitize the area.

## **4. Process for dealing with complaints and/or breaches of the policy**

### **4.1 Complaints by assistance dogs owners**

If a member of staff, visitor or supporter with an assistance dog wishes to make a complaint about the treatment of themselves or their dog, they should raise this issue with the clubs operations 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 and dealt with through staff disciplinary procedures, with reference to the Equality Act 2010.

### **4.2 Complaints about assistance dogs**

If a member of staff, visitor or supporter wishes to make a complaint about an assistance dog or notices any breaches of this policy, they should also raise the issue with the clubs operations 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



## EXETER CITY AFC LIMITED

complaint is not complied with, the issue will be escalated and dealt with through staff disciplinary procedures.

### 4.3 Complaints about this policy

Complaints about the operation of this Policy should be made to the clubs operations manager.

## Appendix 1

### Definition of Assistance Dog:

For the purpose of this policy, an assistance dog is one which has been specifically trained to assist disabled people and which has been qualified by one of the organisations registered as a member of Assistance Dogs (UK) or an equivalent organisation in another country.

Assistance dogs trained by members of Assistance Dogs (UK) or by an equivalent organisation in another country, have formal identification and are permitted to accompany their owners at all times and in all places within the United Kingdom (unless there is a genuine health and safety risk).

On the grounds of Health and Safety responsibilities to its staff, visitors and supporters, the football club reserves the right to refuse access for a dog that:

- i. Is not qualified by one of the seven membership organisations of Assistance Dogs (UK).
- ii. Dogs from other nations, which do not meet the full membership criteria of the established international assistance dog organisations - Assistance Dogs International, Assistance Dogs Europe, International Guide Dog Federation - or other such international bodies as may from time to time be recognised.

### Types of Assistance Dogs:

- **Guide Dogs:** for adults and young people who are blind or partially sighted.  
Identification: Qualified guide dogs wear a white harness with yellow fluorescent strips.
- **Hearing Dogs:** for adults with a hearing impairment (aged 17+) and for children with a hearing impairment (ages 7-12).  
Identification: Qualified hearing dogs wear a burgundy jacket.
- **Dogs for the Disabled:** Assistance dogs for children with physical disabilities (Age 7-16) and for adults with physical disabilities (Age 17+).  
Assistance dogs and other services for families with a child affected by autism (age 3-16) The charity also runs a non-assistance dog programme called PAWS working with families with children with autism who have, or want to acquire a pet dog (see website for details).  
Identification: Qualified disabled and assistance dogs wear a fluorescent yellow jacket. Autism assistance dogs wear a blue harness.
- **Canine Partners:** Assistance dogs for adults with physical disabilities.  
Identification: Qualified canine partners assistance dogs wear a purple jacket.
- **Support Dogs:** are trained to do many tasks, which their owner may find difficult or impossible or disability assistance dogs for people with physical disabilities (client-owned dogs specifically trained to meet their owner's needs).



## EXETER CITY AFC LIMITED

**Autism Assistance dogs for children with autism** are trained to do many other tasks, which their owner may find difficult or impossible or disability assistance dogs for people with physical disabilities (client-owned dogs specifically trained to meet their owner's needs).

**Seizure Alert Dogs** for people with epilepsy. Autism Assistance dogs for children with autism. Seizure Alert dogs are trained to behave differently when they detect a potential seizure, which may appear to be misbehaving.

Identification: All the above qualified support dogs wear a blue jacket.

- **Dog A.I.D:** Volunteer trainers supplied to help physically disabled clients train their dogs to assistance level.

Identification: Qualified Dog A.I.D. assistance dogs wear a red jacket.

- **Medical Detection Dogs:** Medical Alert Assistance Dogs for adults and children who manage complex health conditions. Dogs are trained to identify the odour changes that are associated with life threatening medical events.

**Cancer & Bio-detection Dogs** detect cancer volatiles in urine and breath samples. These specialist dogs provide valuable data to assist in the development of new ways to detect and diagnose cancer.

Identification: Qualified dogs wear a red jacket.

### Members of Assistance Dogs (UK)

The following are registered members of Assistance Dogs (UK):

- Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
- Hearing Dogs for Deaf People
- Dogs for the Disabled
- Canine Partners
- Support Dogs
- Dog A.I.D
- Medical Detection Dogs

Membership of Assistance Dogs (UK) is open to organisations that are accredited members of Assistance Dogs International (ADI) or the International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF).

### Additional sources of information and guidance

#### Assistance Dogs UK

Assistance Dogs (UK) is a coalition of assistance dog organisations that encourages the exchange of ideas and best practice amongst its members, raises awareness amongst the general public and promotes behavioural and legislative changes to ensure the freedom, independence and rights of its clients. This policy\* refers to the definitions and types of assistance dogs provided on its website.

<http://www.assisteddogs.org.uk/>



## Appendix 2

### Interacting With Assistance Dogs:

**When interacting with assistance dogs or with people who have assistance dogs, please bear the following points in mind:**

- Talk to the handler, not the dog!**

It is very frustrating for a person to have to interrupt your conversation with their dog. Likewise, if you are helping a person with a guide dog to get somewhere, give the person directions or talk with the person as they follow you. They will give the dog the correct commands for following you. Please do not call the dog. The dog is used to working for the disabled owner. If it is responding to you, it is no longer focused on their needs but on you.

- Do not pet or praise the dog without asking first, please!**

It can be very dangerous for the handler if their dog is distracted and not doing its job. It is important to remember that while they are extremely intelligent, devoted, and highly trained, service dogs are still capable of acting upon natural instincts and may display the same behaviours as other dogs from time to time. Guide dogs sometimes scavenge for food, get distracted by other animals, experience fear, and forget about their work when tempted by things they like. People's attention can be especially alluring. Praise is a reward for service animals, and people who work with the dogs provide it when it is appropriate. Sometimes it is given quietly in small doses; and at other times it is given lavishly. If another person says, "What a good dog," in passing, the person may have just rewarded the dog, without knowing it, for something the dog did just before the person arrived that was dangerous to the user. When admiring a service dog, it is best to keep eyes averted, comments directed to the user, and voice modulated appropriately (e.g. do not speak as if addressing a child or use an especially sweet-sounding voice, as this will draw the dog's attention).

- Don't get angry at the handler if he or she does not want to stop to talk about their dog.**

Please keep in mind that they hear the same questions many times a day and often would just like to get home. Nice comments are always welcome, however!

- Don't feed the service dog.**

Many - not all - service dogs are on strict, healthy diets to keep their working lives long, and they may also have allergies that you are not aware of. It also can break the dog's training if they learn that they get food in a public place.