

Starfury: Policy on the use of Assistance Dogs

A Policy Statement

Starfury values the diversity of its attendees and is committed to ensuring that all attendees have as equitable an experience as possible, and therefore endeavours to work with **Disabled** attendees to support them during their time at **Starfury Events**. This policy has been developed to address specific issues relating to **Assistance Dogs** on **Convention Premises**. It is also intended to raise awareness for staff and other attendees of the issues relating to **Assistance Dogs**.

Attendees whose access to **Starfury Events** is facilitated by the use of mobility aids should not be refused entry on the basis of their **Disability** or reliance on mobility aids, including **Assistance Dogs**.

In line with the Equality Act 2010 (England, Wales and Scotland) and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (Northern Ireland), **Starfury** will work with **Disabled** attendees to identify support needs and make **Reasonable Adjustments** in order to provide a safe and welcoming environment.

More information on the definition of an **Assistance Dog**, as used in this policy, can be found in **Appendix 1**

B Purpose

Starfury recognises that **Assistance Dogs** play an important role in the safety and well-being of **Disabled** people and has designed a policy on the use of **Assistance Dogs** as set out in this document, with specific guidelines concerning the safe and acceptable use of **Assistance Dogs** at **Starfury Events** for the benefit of all: **Assistance Dogs**, the owners of **Assistance Dogs**, staff, stewards, other attendees and members of the public.

Starfury allows access to **Assistance Dogs** and is prepared to make **Reasonable Adjustments** for their safe access and conduct of duties. Pets and other animals who do not meet the definition of an **Assistance Dog** as set out in **Appendix 1** are not allowed in attendance at **Starfury Events**.

This policy on **Assistance Dogs** applies within all premises occupied and used by **Starfury** throughout the duration of any event. This includes but is not limited to photograph sessions, autograph sessions, meet and greet, fan meets, main hall and any other location used in the conduct of the running of the event.

Starfury requires that:

Access requirements involving **Assistance Dogs** are pre-agreed with **Starfury**

Suitable arrangements for the **Assistance Dog's** safe access to and conduct of work in the **Convention Premises** are made

The **Assistance Dog** owner agrees to the terms and conditions of use of

assistance dogs within the extent and duration of **The Event**.

This policy aims to outline:

organisational and physical arrangements required to be made to provide a welcoming and safe environment for **Assistance Dogs** and their owners

the roles and responsibilities within **Convention Premises** in relation to **Assistance Dogs**

the responsibilities of the owners of **Assistance Dogs** within **Convention Premises**

a process for dealing with issues and complaints if they arise

C Starfury's Role and Responsibilities

1. Compliance, Awareness and Training

1. **Starfury** will provide guidelines for staff and attendees on how to interact with **Assistance Dogs**. This information can be found in **Appendix 2**.
2. **Starfury** will ensure that practice is conformable to current legislation.

2. Notification

1. **Starfury** will provide prior notice to staff and attendees who may come into close proximity to the **Assistance Dog** asking them to confirm that they would not be adversely affected by the presence of the dog.

3. Orientation

1. **Starfury** will, on prior written request, provide an orientation of the **Convention Premises** to the owner and **Assistance Dog** on arrival at **The Event** (to be arranged in advance of arrival)
2. **Starfury** will organise guided assistance in the event of route variations, relocation, or when access to specific areas are restricted.

D Assistance Dog Owners' Responsibilities

1. Information

1. **Assistance Dog** owners must request permission from **Starfury** to bring **Assistance Dogs** into the event in advance of arrival on **Convention Premises**.
2. They should be able to provide information about the **Assistance Dog** and its tasks/duties, when requested by **Starfury**.
3. **Assistance Dogs** undergo intensive training before commencing duty. They also receive further training throughout their working lives, especially in the event of change in work location or work pattern. Owners are responsible for the training needs of their **Assistance Dogs**, for the correct and safe performance of their duties. A copy of the relevant certification must be

provided to **Starfury**.

2. Identification

Assistance Dog owners must ensure that their **Assistance Dogs** are clearly identifiable by the use of special collars and/or harnesses when on duty.

3. Insurance

Owners are responsible for ensuring that their **Assistance Dogs** are covered by full liability insurance and provide a copy to **Starfury** when requesting their attendance at the event (such policy to be for a term and a limit of liability acceptable to **Starfury**)

4. Access restrictions

1. **Assistance Dog** owners must respect access restrictions established by **Starfury** on grounds of health and safety.
2. Owners must ensure that **Assistance Dogs** do not enter privately assigned spaces without permission.

5. Animal misbehaviour

1. Preventing and correcting **Assistance Dog's** misbehaviour is the owner's responsibility.
2. Owners must make sure that their **Assistance Dogs** do not cause harm or injury to others and damage to convention property.

6. Cleanliness

1. Registered blind people are not required to clean up after their guide dogs and these are expected to have received the appropriate training to avoid dog waste on convention premises. **Assistance Dog** users share responsibility for the clean-up of the animal's waste, consistent with reasonable capacity.
2. **Assistance Dog** owners must liaise directly with the hotel within which the **Convention Premises** are situated to identify areas in which they may exercise the **Assistance Dog** and attend to its toileting needs.
3. Owners must use the designated areas identified by the hotel whilst within the curtilage of the hotel premises. In the unlikely event that the **Assistance Dog** does foul outside of these designated areas, the owner must report this to an appropriate member of the hotel staff to make arrangements for them to clean and sanitize the area.

7. Animal care and supervision

1. Animal care is the owner's responsibility. The owner must ensure regular health checks, vaccination, adequate standard of grooming, and the supply of food and drink at all times.
2. Owners must ensure that **Assistance Dogs** are kept on a lead at all times when walking around the **Convention Premises** and ensure that the

Assistance Dog is under adult supervision at all times.

3. Owners must ensure the **Assistance Dog** has its requirements in relation to toileting and feeding met.
4. Owners of **Assistance Dogs** that are ill, in poor health, excessively unclean or unkempt may be required to remove the animal from **Convention Premises**.
5. **Starfury** is not responsible for the loss, ill health, or death of the **Assistance Dog**.
6. **Starfury** is happy to listen to the suggestions of **Assistance Dog** owners as to how provision for the **Assistance Dog** may be improved.

E Conflict Situations

1. Removal of Assistance Dog

Starfury reserves the right to remove or bar entry to an **Assistance Dog** when it poses a direct threat to the health & safety of others. Unresolved animal misbehaviour may also provide grounds for removal, after all reasonable measures have been taken to address this.

.2 Damage

Assistance Dog owners are responsible for any damage to persons, hotel premises and convention property.

3. Restricted access

Starfury may restrict access of **Assistance Dogs** to certain areas for health and safety reasons.

4. Conflicting disabilities

Where an **Assistance Dog** poses adverse health risk to an/other attendees **Starfury** will seek medical documentation from the affected party/parties to determine suitable alternative arrangements for either or both parties.

5. Religious or cultural conflicts

Religious or cultural beliefs cannot be used to prohibit access to **Assistance Dogs** and their owners.

6. Complaints

Any issues in relation to **Assistance Dogs** on **Convention Premises** that cannot be resolved informally should be raised in writing to **Starfury**.

Appendix 1

Key Definitions

Starfury – Sean Harry trading as Starfury Conventions or his duly appointed representative

Convention Premises – Property that is utilised by Starfury for the running of The Event

The Event/Starfury Events – the convention for which the attendance of the Assistance Dog is requested or at which the Assistance Dog is in attendance

Disability/Disabled – applies to a person if they have a physical or mental impairment which is having a substantial, adverse and long-term (lasting or likely to last 12 months or more) effect on their ability to perform normal day to day activities (Equality Act 2010)

Reasonable Adjustments – changes offered at Starfury's expense, where needed, and where disabled users would otherwise be at a substantial disadvantage compared with non-disabled people without. What is reasonable will be decided on a case by case basis.

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, guests and attendees, Starfury reserves the right to refuse access for a dog that:

1. Is not qualified by one of the five membership organisations of Assistance Dogs (UK).
2. 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 assist people who are blind or are visually impaired.

Hearing Dogs assist people who are deaf or are hearing impaired.

Support Dogs/Dogs for the Disabled A Support Dog can be trained to do many other tasks, which their owner may find difficult or impossible for example:

Opening and closing doors,

Calling an ambulance

Picking up objects

Assisting with dressing and undressing.

Accompanying their owner whilst shopping etc.

Acting as a physical support

Raising the alarm

Operating control buttons

Switching lights on and off

Carrying items

Loading and unloading the washing machine

Fetching the telephone and other items

Support Dogs also train dogs for people with disabilities and Seizure Alert dogs for people with Epilepsy. Seizure Alert dogs are trained to behave differently when they detect a potential seizure, which may appear to be misbehaving.

Members of Assistance Dogs (UK)

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

- Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (GDBA)
- Hearing Dogs for Deaf People
- Support Dogs

- Dogs for the Disabled
- Canine Partners

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 dog guide 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. Dog guides 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 – assistance 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.