

Policy regarding members with assistance dogs going on U3a walks and other activities.

Retford U3a committee have reviewed the 'No dogs policy' currently in place relating to the Strollers, Moderate and Striders Walking groups. This is to ensure we comply with the Equality Act 2010 & Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (NI)

The Acts :

- require that disabled people have the same rights to services such as accommodation, restaurants, pubs and cafes as everyone else.
- That reasonable adjustments must be made in order to avoid discriminating against disabled people. These reasonable adjustments will range from creating an access route for a person with a wheelchair to modifying a "no dogs policy" in order that a disabled person may be accompanied by their assistance dog.

In order to achieve compliance with the Acts and our own Health and Safety walking group guidelines, **Registered Assistance Dogs Only** may accompany their owner on a walk as long as the following is applied:

- An ADUK (Assistance Dogs United Kingdom) or other Certification body identification booklet, should be provided prior to any walk to confirm that the dog has been highly trained as an assistance dog.
- The dog must be kept on an Assistance Dog harness (with a handle) depending on their training protocol, and a short lead at all times. Extending leads, long leads and 'off the lead' are not permitted.
- An Assistance Dog must be under the owner's close control at all times.
- The owner must liaise with the walk leader in advance to establish what hazards have been identified on the walk recce eg fields with livestock, stiles, terrain or length of walk etc
- Owners themselves are responsible for assisting their dog over any obstacles such as stiles.
- Where a walk will pass through fields that may contain livestock it may not be possible for the walker with the dog to participate, due to the serious danger that livestock may present to the group, due to the presence of a dog.
- The owner must give the walk leader notice of attendance at a walk.

If compliance with these restrictions is not followed the member and their dog will not be allowed to join future walks.

Please note the Equality Commission's recommendations that assistance dogs be kept away from other U3a areas of activity, e.g. table tennis or other physical activities, to avoid the risk of tripping and injury.

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