

Ellenborough Park Assistance Dog Policy

At Ellenborough Park, we are committed to welcoming all guests and ensuring that individuals who rely on assistance dogs feel supported, respected, and accommodated during their stay. This policy outlines our approach in line with current UK legislation, with additional information to help guests and staff understand our practices.

Policy Purpose

This policy ensures that guests who rely on highly trained assistance dogs are treated without discrimination and that our team complies with legal requirements under the **Equality Act 2010** and the **Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Northern Ireland)**.

Legal Framework

Under the Equality Act 2010, assistance dogs are not considered pets but essential auxiliary aids for disabled people, supporting both visible and invisible impairments. The legal rights are held by the individual, not the dog, and extend to full access of public areas.

Access Rights at Ellenborough Park

Guests with highly trained assistance dogs are welcome in all public spaces. The only exception would be restricted environments where access must be limited for health and safety reasons.

Recognition of Assistance Dogs

We recognise that:

- Assistance dogs come in all breeds.
- Not all disabilities are visible, and no one will be asked to disclose their health condition unless they wish to, to support with making reasonable adjustments.
- There is **no official certification** or registration legally required in the UK.
- Assistance dogs are not required to wear harnesses or identification.

We trust our guests and rely on assistance dog handlers to meet expected behavioural standards whilst also ensuring the assistance dog's welfare.

Emotional Support Animals

While emotional support animals are not legally granted the same rights as assistance dogs in the UK, we will do our best to accommodate them when possible, depending on the circumstances and guest needs. Please contact our team ahead of your stay to discuss.

During Your Visit

- Our 90-acre estate offers plenty of outdoor space for exercise and toileting.
- Garden rooms with private outdoor areas are available, though these are not accessibility-adapted.
- Accessible public restrooms are located throughout the hotel.
- We request you inform us in advance if you're bringing an assistance dog so we can prepare accordingly, however we recognise this isn't legally required.

Historic Building Considerations

Ellenborough Park is a **Grade II listed** historic property with unique architectural features, including staircases and uneven surfaces. While we have worked hard to improve accessibility, there are some limitations. Please refer to our **Accessibility Guide** or speak with our team if you require specific arrangements or assistance.

Leisure Facilities

Our spa and leisure facilities are designated dog-free areas. However, assistance dogs are welcome in our outdoor pool area, provided they remain on a lead at all times. Should access to our spa area be required, this can be arranged with prior notice to our team, who will be happy to assist.

Service Dogs vs Pets

- **Assistance dogs** are not subject to pet fees.
- We do charge a fee for non-assistance dogs, but this is waived for highly trained assistance dogs.
- For clarity, feel free to bring documentation (such as a doctor's note or organisation letter), although this is not legally required.

Planning Your Stay

To help us make your stay as comfortable as possible, we request:

- Let us know in advance if you're bringing an assistance dog.
- Share any specific accessibility requirements.
- Feel free to review our Accessibility Guide or ask for further assistance before arrival.

Expectations

No assistance dog, no matter how highly trained and experienced is going to be perfect 100% of the time. It is recognised that whilst they are trained to focus on their partner, from time to time they may be distracted. However, there are some behaviours that we do not expect to see such as:

- Dogs that have been not trained to behave well in public e.g. barking, lunging, or jumping up or pulling strongly on a lead.
- Dogs with aggressive or very fearful temperaments e.g. cowering or showing aggression.
- Poorly cared for dogs that constitute a hygiene risk or dogs that are not toilet trained.

If you have any questions or special requests, please don't hesitate to reach out to our team. We're here to ensure every guest enjoys a warm and inclusive experience at Ellenborough Park.

Resource Links

- [ADUK Information Hub](#)
- [ADUK Quick Guide – Welcoming Customers with Assistance Dogs](#)
- [The Equality & Human Rights Commission - Assistance dogs: A guide for all businesses](#)
- [The Equality Act \(2010\)](#)

[The Disability Discrimination Act \(1995\) Northern Ireland](#)