

Queen's University Belfast Animals in Residences Policy

Introduction and Purpose

Queen's Accommodation values diversity and is committed to providing a welcoming environment for all residents. This policy, which should be read in conjunction with the [Queen's Animals on Campus Policy](#), outlines the provisions for animals living in student residences, aiming to support individual needs while ensuring the wellbeing of all residents.

Queen's distinguishes between assistance animals (including guide dogs), therapy animals, and household pets. Assistance and guide dogs required by individuals with disabilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 NI are permitted in residences, subject to this policy.

Residents requiring an assistance animal must provide evidence from a relevant organisation or healthcare professional confirming the animal's specific training for:

- Assistance with daily living tasks
- Early medical alert for critical medical conditions

Assistance vs. Therapy Animals

Assistance animals are trained to perform specific tasks for individuals with disabilities. They are typically qualified by charities registered with Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK) or equivalent international organisations.

Therapy animals provide emotional support for physical or mental health conditions. They are not trained for specific tasks and do not have the same legal access rights as assistance animals. In the UK, therapy animals are not considered assistance animals.

Assistance Animals

Guide and assistance dogs undergo rigorous training and are typically qualified by ADUK member organisations, including Canine Partners, Assistance in Disability Dog AID, Guide Dogs, Dogs for Good, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, Medical Detection Dogs, Support Dogs, and The Seeing Dogs Alliance.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 NI, verified assistance dogs are legally permitted to accompany their owner at all times and in all UK locations. Students requiring an assistance dog in Queen's Accommodation should contact the University's Accessible Learning Service as early as possible to ensure appropriate arrangements. Verification from ADUK or a recognised international organisation is required.

Therapy and Emotional Support Animals

While emotional support animals offer comfort and companionship, they are not legally recognised in the UK and do not have the same access rights as assistance animals. ADUK does not register them. Queen's University does not permit therapy or emotional support animals in any University buildings, including Halls of Residence.

Therapy animals, which do not assist with mobility or practical tasks, may provide therapeutic benefits within structured activities agreed in advance with the relevant department. This does not extend to Queen's Accommodation.

Pets

Pets are domesticated animals that provide companionship but are not considered assistance or therapy animals. Pets are strictly prohibited in Queen's Accommodation.

Types of Assistance Animals

- Guide dogs: Assist people who are blind or visually impaired.
- Hearing dogs: Assist people who are deaf or hearing impaired.
- Support dogs: Trained to perform various tasks, such as opening/closing doors, calling emergency services, retrieving objects, assisting with dressing, accompanying owners shopping, providing physical support, raising alarms, operating controls, switching lights, carrying items, and fetching items. They can also provide assistance for specific disabilities, like Seizure Alert Animals for epilepsy.

Risks

Potential hazards and concerns associated with animals in Queen's Accommodation include:

- Delayed emergency evacuations
- Aggressive animal behaviour
- Allergic reactions and disease transmission
- Zoophobia
- Slips, trips, and falls
- Animal waste
- Property damage
- Discomfort of other residents

Policy

Queen's Accommodation has developed this policy to address issues relating to assistance animals in residences.

Assistance dogs (guide, hearing, and service animals) are permitted in University buildings under their owner's control, in line with the Animals on Campus Policy. Residents with a disability using an assistance dog or one in training must register with [Accessible Learning](#) before arrival, in addition to the arrangements made locally in Queen's Accommodation.

Therapy animals and personal pets are strictly prohibited in Queen's Accommodation.

Requirements for an Assistance Dog

Assistance do must be trained by:

- A registered member of ADUK (Canine Partners, Animal A.I.D., Animals for the Disabled, Guide Animals, Hearing Animals for Deaf People, Medical Detection Animals)
- A member of an established international assistance animal organisation (e.g., Assistance Animals International, Assistance Animals Europe, International Guide Animal Federation)

Dogs must:

- Have formal identification (branded jackets or lead slips)
- Carry the ADUK yellow ID booklet or equivalent international documentation containing owner and animal information, and training organisation details.

Assistance animals are working, not pets.

Queen's Accommodation offers adaptable rooms. Information for disabled students, staff, and families regarding assistance animals is available from [Accessible Learning](#) to ensure appropriate arrangements.

This policy ensures equality and fairness for all accommodation applicants.

Only assistance animals meeting the above criteria are permitted in Queen's Accommodation. Other animals are strictly prohibited from all residential sites.

Queen's Accommodation Roles and Responsibilities:

When a resident has an approved assistance animal, Queen's Accommodation will inform other residents who may come into contact with the animal to ensure they are not adversely affected.

Queen's Accommodation staff will receive appropriate training to respond to individual needs.

Owner's Roles and Responsibilities:

The owner is responsible for ensuring their assistance dog:

- Is kept on a lead at all times on University premises.
- Does not foul University paths or grounds.
- Has regular health checks, vaccinations, and grooming.
- Has its toileting and feeding needs met.
- Is clearly identifiable by collar and/or harness when on duty.
- Is covered by full liability insurance (certificate to be provided to Queen's Accommodation).
- Does not enter other residents' bedrooms or shared bathrooms.
- Behaves appropriately and does not disrupt others. Owners must ensure their assistance animal does not harm or injure anyone or damage Queen's Accommodation property. (Seizure Alert animals may behave differently when detecting a potential seizure.)

Complaint Section

Complaints about the treatment of a resident or their assistance animal should be raised with the Accommodation Manager and Residential Life Manager. Complaints about an assistance animal should also be raised with these individuals.

Every effort will be made to resolve matters informally, including mediation if appropriate. Unresolved issues will be dealt with through the University's Complaint Policy.