



Lincoln Bishop University

Document Administration

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VERSION CONTROL TABLE

<u>Version Number</u>	<u>Date Authorised</u>	<u>Summary of Key Changes</u>
1.0	07 May 2026	Policy first introduced and approved.



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1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 1.1. Lincoln Bishop University aims to provide an inclusive, safe, and welcoming environment for all members of its community. This Policy set out when and how Assistance Dogs, Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) and Therapy Animals may be permitted on University premises, balancing individual need with legal duties, health and safety, and animal welfare. The University's default position is that animals are not permitted in University buildings or accommodation, except as provided for in this Policy or in other specifically approved arrangements (e.g. controlled wellbeing visits).
- 1.2. This Policy applies to all students, staff, visitors and contractors across all University-owned, leased or managed buildings, grounds, vehicles and University-managed accommodation. External premises (e.g. placements, partner colleges, host employers) will apply their own rules.

2. LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- 2.1. The University recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to avoid discrimination and to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people, which may include permitting access for an Assistance Dog as an auxiliary aid. ESAs and Therapy Animals are not recognised in UK law and therefore do not have the same access rights; any permission is discretionary and case-specific.
- 2.2. Where relevant, existing University policies continue to apply, including health and safety, accommodation terms and conditions, fire safety, and dignity and respect/complaints procedures. Sector guidance (e.g. Assistance Dogs UK) and evolving good practice in HE/FE will inform application and review of this Policy.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. **Assistance Dog:** A dog highly trained to carry out specific tasks that assist a disabled person to conduct day-to-day activities. Dogs trained by [Assistance Dogs UK](#) (ADUK) members or international equivalents will ordinarily be accepted; owner-trained dogs or those trained by other organisations may be recognised where evidence demonstrates equivalent standards of training, control and welfare.



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- 3.2. **Emotional Support Animal (ESA):** An animal that provides comfort or companionship to help alleviate symptoms or effects of disability or mental health conditions, but that is not trained to perform disability-mitigating tasks. ESAs have no automatic access rights under UK law and are considered only on a case-by-case discretionary basis, using defined criteria set out in this policy.
- 3.3. **Therapy Animal:** An animal brought onto campus for structured wellbeing sessions, often via a charity such as Pets as Therapy or Therapy Dogs Nationwide. These animals support groups of people, not a single owner. They are not assistance animals and require formal event approval.
- 3.4. **Pets:** Animals kept for companionship. Pets are not permitted in University buildings, grounds, or accommodation.

4. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1. **Inclusive access:** The University will make reasonable adjustments for disabled people, including facilitating Assistance Dog access.
- 4.2. **Safety & welfare:** Decisions will balance the needs of the handler with the rights and safety of others and the welfare of animals.
- 4.3. **Proportional controls:** Access may be restricted in high-risk areas (e.g. laboratory, clinical spaces, food preparation areas), with equivalent alternatives offered to the handler where feasible.
- 4.4. **Case-by-case ESAs/Therapy:** ESAs/Therapy Animals are discretionary and subject to risk assessment, controls and periodic review.
- 4.5. **Consistency and transparency:** Decision making will be guided by clear, published criteria and supported, where appropriate, by HR, Student Advice and/or a designated review panel to ensure fair and consistent handling of cases.

5. ASSISTANCE DOGS – ELIGIBILITY, REGISTRATION AND ACCESS

- 5.1. **Eligibility:** Students and staff seeking to bring an Assistance Dog onto University premises must provide:
 - 5.1.1. Evidence of disability (to Disability & Wellbeing/Occupational Health as appropriate).
 - 5.1.2. Evidence of training (ADUK/intl. equivalent or equivalent standards for non-ADUK or owner-trained dogs).



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- 5.1.3. Veterinary evidence (vaccinations, parasite control, microchip) and public liability insurance.
- 5.2. **Registration Process (Students):** Notify Student Advice at the earliest opportunity.
- 5.2.1. Provide documents listed in Section 5.1.
- 5.2.2. Risk Assessment (with site orientation as needed) covering teaching spaces, routes, accommodation and any specialist facilities. Complete a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) for the handler and dog where required.
- 5.2.3. Accommodation: inform Accommodation Services to plan room allocation, nearby “spending” areas, and cleaning protocols.
- 5.3. **Registration Process (Staff):** Staff must follow the steps below. Line managers must not make decisions in isolation; HR must be involved in all staff cases.
- 5.3.1. Initial Disclosure to HR: The staff member must notify HR in the first instance. HR will coordinate the process and advise on required documentation.
- 5.3.2. Submission of Required Evidence: Staff must provide the evidence listed in Section 5.1.
- 5.3.3. Occupational Health Assessment: HR will refer the staff member of Occupational Health, where appropriate, to confirm disability-related functional impact and advise on reasonable adjustments.
- 5.3.4. Risk Assessment: A risk assessment will be completed collaboratively by HR, the line manager, the staff member, and relevant departments (e.g. Campus Operations, Health & Safety). This will consider work locations, routes, specialist environments and any required controls.
- 5.3.5. Written Outcome: HR will issue a formal written outcome summarising:
- i. Whether the request has been approved
 - ii. Any reasonable adjustments
 - iii. Any agreed controls or restrictions
 - iv. Review dates
- 5.3.6. Timescales: Decisions will normally be issued within seven working days, subject to receipt of all required information and any Occupational Health involvement.
- 5.3.7. Right of Appeal: Staff have the right to appeal the decision through the University’s HR grievance procedure.



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- 5.4. **Access:** Assistance Dogs may accompany handlers in University spaces. The handler is entitled to access (teaching rooms, offices, libraries, circulation areas, and accommodation), subject to reasonable health and safety restrictions. Restricted spaces typically include laboratories, clinical or sterile areas, food preparation zones, and areas requiring PPE; equivalent arrangements will be considered for the handler.
- 5.5. **Behaviour & Care Standards:** The dog must remain under control, identifiable as a working animal, clean, well groomed, and not unwell or in heat. The handler must ensure appropriate toileting in designated outdoor areas and report any accidental indoor fouling immediately for specialist cleaning. The dog must never be left with third parties except by prior arrangement (e.g. during lab work) and must receive adequate rest breaks.

6. EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS (ESAs)

- 6.1. **Eligibility & Evidence:** Requests are considered individually and in advance. For an ESA application to be considered by the University, applicants must submit all the required evidence listed below to Student Advice (for students) and HR (for staff).
- 6.1.1. Evidence will be assessed against defined criteria including:
- i. the necessity of an ESA as an adjustment rather than a preference;
 - ii. the impact of the ESA on the applicant's academic or work function;
 - iii. whether alternative reasonable adjustments have been explored;
 - iv. the potential impact on others, including hygiene, allergies, phobias, noise/disruption, and safeguarding; and
 - v. the welfare of the animal, including the suitability of University accommodation for the specific species or breed. For example, the impact on cats kept in confined indoor spaces with limited or no access to outdoor environments, and whether the living conditions can meet the animal's behavioural and welfare needs.
- 6.1.2. Required evidence includes:
- i. A letter from a relevant health/mental health professional setting out the rationale and expected benefits and confirming that alternative adjustments have been considered.
 - ii. Veterinary evidence (vaccinations, parasite control, microchip), behavioural assurance, and public liability insurance.
 - iii. A risk assessment addressing welfare, hygiene, allergies, phobias, noise/disruption, safeguarding, and emergency planning.



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6.2. **Access & Restrictions:** If approved, ESAs will usually be restricted to:

- 6.2.1. The student's own bedroom in University accommodation; and
- 6.2.2. Agreed direct routes in and out of the building.
- 6.2.3. ESAs are not normally permitted in shared kitchens/lounges, teaching spaces, library, laboratory, or catering outlets, except by explicit and time-limited exception following risk assessment.

6.3. **Review & Duration:** ESA approvals are time-limited and subject to review at 6 weeks, 3 months, 12 months, and annually thereafter, or earlier if incidents occur or circumstances change. Approval is specific to the named animal; a replacement requires a new application. Reviews will be conducted by:

- 6.3.1. Staff: HR and Line Manager
- 6.3.2. Students: Student Advice
 - i. Students in University Accommodation: The Accommodation Manager will also participate.
- 6.3.3. Reviews may be supported by Health & Safety where applicable.
- 6.3.4. Decisions will be formally documented and communicated in writing, including the rationale for the decision and the next review date.
 - i. Any changes to conditions, controls or permissions must also be issued in writing.

7. THERAPY ANIMALS (ORGANISED VISITS/EVENTS)

7.1. Therapy Animals may visit campus for structured wellbeing sessions (e.g. exam-time relaxation, pastoral activities). Requests must be submitted at least four weeks in advance by a staff organiser (or by a student via a staff sponsor).

7.2. Requirements:

- 7.2.1. Source animals via reputable organisations (e.g. Pets as Therapy) with formal temperament assessment.
- 7.2.2. Provide evidence of insurance, vaccinations, and handler credentials.
- 7.2.3. Submit an event risk assessment (space layout, flow of people, signage, cleaning, emergency arrangements).
- 7.2.4. Confine access to pre-approved rooms and routes; exclude labs, clinical spaces, food prep areas and other high-risk zones.
- 7.2.5. Ensure the handler remains with the animal at all times; animals must wear visible identification.



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8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1. Animal Owners/Handlers:

- 8.1.1. Maintain control and ensure the animal's welfare (feeding, water, rest, toileting, grooming).
- 8.1.2. Prevent disruption, manage noise, and avoid distress to others.
- 8.1.3. Comply with restricted areas and designated spending areas; clean and safely dispose of waste.
- 8.1.4. Report incidents immediately via the University's incident reporting procedures.
- 8.1.5. Arrange alternative care if temporarily unable to care for the animal.

8.2. Student Advice (Students):

- 8.2.1. Manage Assistance Dog/ESA registrations, evidence review, and request PEEPs with Health & Safety, if required.
- 8.2.2. Co-ordinate communication to local teams about etiquette and any controls.
- 8.2.3. Schedule periodic reviews and respond to concerns/complaints.

8.3. HR & Line Managers (Staff):

Line managers must not make decisions in isolation and must involve HR in all Assistance Dog and ESA cases relating to staff, ensuring consistent application of this Policy and compliance with legal obligations.

- 8.3.1. HR will co-ordinate the staff process, including evidence review, Occupational Health input where required, and the completion of risk assessments in collaboration with the staff member, line manager and relevant departments.
- 8.3.2. HR will support line managers in managing sensitive workplace situations, including team communication, addressing concerns, and maintaining confidentiality.
- 8.3.3. All medical and personal information must be managed only by HR and Occupational Health, in line with data protection requirements. Line managers must not request medical details directly.
- 8.3.4. HR will function as the escalation point for complex, disputed or high-risk cases, ensuring consistency of approach across the University.
- 8.3.5. Line managers are responsible for implementing agreed local management plans and ensuring that controls, restrictions and adjustments are adhered to within their teams.



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8.4. Campus Operations & Estates (including Accommodation):

- 8.4.1. Advise on restrictions, routes, and designated toileting areas; support signage and cleaning plans.
- 8.4.2. For ESAs in accommodation, consult affected residents and ensure tenancy terms are upheld.

8.5. Health & Safety:

- 8.5.1. Provide risk assessment and PEEP support and maintain policy/guidance in line with sector practice.

8.6. University Community:

- 8.6.1. Assistance Dogs are not pets: do not feed, pet, distract or separate an Assistance Dog from its handler. Concerns should be raised through appropriate channels (see Section 10).

9. MANAGING CONFLICTS OF NEED

- 9.1. The University will respond sensitively and proportionately where others raise allergies, phobias, cultural or religious concerns. Actions may include alternative seating/rooms, timetable adjustments, or accommodation changes. Staff and students should raise issues promptly with their line manager, Student Advice or Accommodation, as relevant.
- 9.2. For staff, where conflicts arise:
 - 9.2.1. Legal rights relating to disability and the use of Assistance Dogs will take precedence over preferences.
 - 9.2.2. HR will support managers in balancing competing needs and identifying reasonable adjustments for all parties involved.
 - 9.2.3. Decisions will be clearly documented and communicated to relevant individuals.

10. COMPLAINTS, INCIDENTS AND APPEALS

- 10.1. Complaints about access decisions or conduct should be raised through standard University procedures (Student Complaints, HR Grievance Procedure), noting the legal protections for Assistance Dogs and their users. Incidents (e.g. fouling, bites, property damage) must be reported immediately for investigation and remedial actions. Appeals against decisions under this Policy will be considered under the relevant University appeal routes.



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11. WITHDRAWAL OF PERMISSION

11.1. The University may withdraw permission with immediate effect where:

- 11.1.1. An animal poses a risk to health and safety or animal welfare.
- 11.1.2. Behaviour is aggressive or persistently disruptive.
- 11.1.3. The owner fails to comply with agreed controls or this Policy.
- 11.1.4. Verified complaints are upheld following investigation.
 - i. The University will consider alternative reasonable adjustments for the handler where appropriate.

11.2. **Staged Approach:** Except in cases involving serious or immediate risk, the University will normally apply a staged approach:

- 11.2.1. Warning: The owner is informed of concerns and any required actions.
- 11.2.2. Review: HR (for staff) or Student Advice/Accommodation (for students) will assess whether controls, conditions or behaviour can be rectified.
- 11.2.3. Withdrawal: permission may be withdrawn if concerns are not resolved or risks remain.

11.3. **Staff Cases:** HR will be involved in all staff-related withdrawal decisions, ensuring legal compliance, fair process and consistent application of the Policy.

- 11.3.1. Decisions will be documented and communicated in writing, with reasons provided and any further options or appeal routes explained.

12. DATA PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

12.1. The University will ensure that all personal data processed under this Policy complies with the relevant data protection legislation and the University's data protection principles.

12.2. Medical and personal information provided as part of Assistance Dog or ESA applications will be managed confidentially, stored securely, and shared only on a strict need to know basis with authorised staff such as HR, Student Advice, Occupational Health, and relevant managers involved in implementing agreed adjustments.



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13. APPENDIX

13.1. Appendix One – Process Flowchart

