



Visiting Assistance Animals

A guide for patients and visitors



The North Metropolitan Health Service recognises the importance of assistance animals in supporting people with a disability and welcomes them to our facilities.

The following information is intended to help you plan your visit to hospital with your assistance animal, recognising that there will be some cases where alternative arrangements may need to be made for them.



We rely on the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992* definition of an assistance animal being:

- ▶ a dog or other animal that is accredited under a State or Territory law to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effects of a disability;
- ▶ accredited by an animal training organisation prescribed in the regulations;
- ▶ trained to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability and meets the standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place.

To help us identify your animal as a legitimate assistance animal, please ensure that you carry and/or display the necessary evidence. You may have been provided an ID card, an assistance permit, or your animal may wear a harness, cape or badge.

Safety, Hygiene and Etiquette

You or a responsible person known to you and the animal must remain with the assistance animal. We require that the animal is under control, clean and in good health, and that you make arrangements for the animal to toilet outdoors.

We know that assistance animals are taught appropriate etiquette as part of their training and expect them to behave that way in our hospitals. The assistance animal should be responsive to your commands, calm and settled when not working, and show no aggression, or barking, growling or whining unnecessarily.



Where can my assistance animal accompany me?

Assistance animals can access outpatient clinics, and most inpatient rooms. They are not able to access operating theatres, intensive care units, areas where patients' immunity is severely compromised or suppressed, isolation rooms, or special care nurseries.

Admission to hospital

If you can, please notify the hospital before admission that you would like to bring your assistance animal with you. We can then plan appropriately for your stay. We can let you know if you will need to make alternative arrangements for your assistance animal at any point in your stay, such as if you will be undergoing an operation.

If your assistance animal will be staying with you, please ensure that you bring in everything that they will need such as bedding and food. You will need to be capable of taking the assistance animal outdoors to toilet or making arrangements for a friend or family member to do this for you.



This document can be made available in alternative formats on request.

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