

## **Othona and dogs**

Othona has long been a dog free space meaning that people living at Othona and people visiting are asked not to bring their dogs on site. However in order to welcome as many people as possible and to comply with equalities provisions there are very limited exceptions for people with genuine assistance dogs. We are aware that for some people with disabilities an assistance dog is invaluable, but there are other people who find the presence of dogs very problematic, extending to allergies and phobias. We are clear that neither party's needs are greater or lesser and that neither should be pathologised.

### **What is an assistance dog?**

An assistance dog is a dog that has been highly trained to carry out *a range of tasks and alerts* to support a disabled person or person with a long-term medical condition.

An assistance dog must be

- Trained to behave well in public and have passed a public access test
- Healthy and not constituting a hygiene risk
- Fully "toilet trained", able to go to the toilet on command and thus able to do so only in a specified location
- Able to sit or lie quietly on the floor next to its owner
- Trained to undertake specific tasks or alerts for the assisted person

**An emotional support dog is a dog that offers comfort and companionship by being present. Emotional support dogs are not referenced in law and cannot be accepted at Othona.**

### **Persons wishing to bring an assistance dog to Othona**

Anyone who wishes to bring an assistance dog must first make a request to the bookings team.

They will be asked to:-

- Verify that the dog is an assistance dog (not an emotional support animal)
- Confirm the dog has completed its training (an assistance dog which hasn't completed its training cannot be accommodated at Othona)
- Supply details of the dog such as breed, whether allergenic
- Outline what assistance tasks or alerts it is trained to carry out for the person assisted

Acceptance of an assistance dog will be based on assurance that it meets all the requirements above and below and that it is both registered and that the tasks and/or alerts it performs are essential to the assisted person.

A plan will be developed to be sure that the dog and assisted person can enjoy a visit to Othona, and also that other people on site are going to be comfortable and enjoy their time on site.

The presence of a dog and the needs of the dog and its owner will be communicated to other participants so far as is needed to ensure that others are comfortable with this.

### **Expectations on site**

- The dog should be either with the assisted person or in a dog friendly room at all times
- Dogs will not be allowed in the kitchen
- Dogs will not be permitted to sit or climb on furniture, they must remain on the floor

- The dog will use a designated area for “toileting” and their owners will clear up after them  
February 2026, BOS Committee/2026/Bradwell BCC Meeting Feb 2026