

STAFF BRIEFING: Dogs in Bars, Pubs & Food Serving Venues (Scotland) For all front of house, bar, waiting, and management staff

1. Assistance Dogs (Guide Dogs, Hearing Dogs, Trained Service Dogs)

These dogs MUST be allowed into all areas where customers are permitted.

This is a legal requirement under the **Equality Act 2010**, which applies in Scotland.

- Businesses cannot refuse entry to a customer with a trained assistance dog. [[justicedir...tory.co.uk](http://justicedirectory.co.uk)]
- Assistance dogs must be allowed in **bars, restaurants, cafés, pubs, hotels, shops, and other service venues.** [glasgowlife.org.uk]
- You cannot ask them to sit in a separate area or impose extra charges. [[justicedir...tory.co.uk](http://justicedirectory.co.uk)]
- Assistance dogs are **highly trained**, sit quietly, and do not disrupt operations. [flexk9.co.uk]

Food Hygiene Considerations

- Food hygiene laws **do NOT ban** assistance dogs from customer areas, only from kitchens and foodprep spaces. [scotlandsislands.com]

What staff should do:

- Welcome the customer as normal.
- Allow the dog to remain with the customer in any public area.
- Do not ask for ID—customers are **not legally required** to carry identification for their assistance dog. [dover.gov.uk]

2. Emotional Support Animals (ESAs)

ESAs do *not* have the same rights as assistance dogs.

They are **not recognised** under the Equality Act and therefore do **not** have guaranteed access to bars, pubs, or restaurants in Scotland.

- ESAs do **not** have legal public access rights. [sandwell.gov.uk]
- Scotland does NOT legally recognise ESAs in the same way as assistance dogs. [dugswelcome.com]
- Admitting an ESA is entirely at the venue's discretion. You may refuse. [sandwell.gov.uk]

What staff should do:

- If the animal is an ESA (not trained as an assistance dog), follow your venue's pet/animal policy.
- You may politely refuse entry if the venue has a **no pets** rule.
- If unsure, ask:
“Is this an assistance dog trained to support a disability?”
(Do *not* ask for ID.)

3. Pet Dogs

- Venues may choose to allow or refuse pet dogs.
- This is **entirely your venue's policy**, except assistance dogs must always be allowed. [\[scotlandsislands.com\]](http://scotlandsislands.com)

4. Hygiene Rules for All Dogs

- **No dog** (including assistance dogs) may enter kitchens or food preparation/storage areas. [\[scotlandsislands.com\]](http://scotlandsislands.com)
- Dogs must not obstruct walkways or create trip hazards. [\[equalityhu...rights.com\]](http://equalityhumanrights.com)
- Staff should wash hands immediately after contact with any dog. [\[equalityhu...rights.com\]](http://equalityhumanrights.com)

5. Key Summary for Staff

Dog Type	Allowed in Customer Areas?	Legally Protected?	Notes
Assistance/Guide Dog	✔ Yes	✔ Yes	Must allow; cannot refuse; no extra rules. [justicedir...tory.co.uk]
Emotional Support Animal	✘ Not automatically	✘ No	Venue may refuse. Not legally recognised. [sandwell.gov.uk]
Pet Dog	Venue choice	✘ No	Follow venue policy. Food law allows pets in customer areas but business may ban them. [scotlandsislands.com]

6. How to Handle Uncertain Cases

If unsure whether a dog is an assistance dog:

Ask **one** polite question:

“Is this an assistance dog trained to help with a disability?”

Do **not** ask for documentation, proof, or ID—these are **not legally required**. [\[dover.gov.uk\]](http://dover.gov.uk)

If the customer confirms it is an assistance dog → **Allow entry**.

If they say it is an emotional support animal → **Follow venue pet policy** (you may refuse).