

Guide Dogs Service Level Agreement

Police Response

When notified of an incident relating to an attack on an assistance dog, we will record the victim of the crime as 'vulnerable' in line with the National Victims Code of Practice. This will ensure that the victim receives an enhanced level of care, in terms of contact and updates, and that the investigation is tailored around the specific victim's needs.

We will always assign a named and contactable investigating officer and allocate a crime or incident number. They will always be advised and supported by the head of the Dog Section and lead dog legislation officer for West Yorkshire Police, other members of the dog section, or a nominated district contact.

We will ensure that the investigation is proportionate, timely, effective, and maximises all opportunities to bring an offender to justice (where appropriate).

We will ensure that any communication with the victim is accessible and/or tailored to their needs where appropriate and feasible.

If the crime is classified as a hate crime then the investigating officer will also be supported by a specialist in hate crime investigation. We will take a victim impact statement so that the full impact on the victim can be assessed and presented in any subsequent court proceedings. The victim will also be referred to Victim Support.

In accordance with local practice, we may ask for feedback on how we perform, so that we can be sure that we have understood and empathised with the victim and identified any opportunities to learn.

We will share our learning with other forces through the National Policing Lead for Dangerous Dogs, so that other forces can learn and together we can promote good practice nationally.

We will educate our staff as appropriate to ensure they are aware of the issues around attacks on assistance dogs, the vulnerability of owners and investigate from a position of knowledge, compassion and understanding.

We will meet with Guide Dogs every six months to review incidents and any areas of feedback.

Victims Response

An attack on an assistance dog will not be regarded by West Yorkshire Police in the same way as a 'dog on dog' attack. We recognise that such incidents can have a profound impact on the quality of life of owners of assistance dogs.

The victim should report if an attack has been made on their assistance dog. The victim should ensure they tell the police that they are blind or partially sighted, disabled or are vulnerable when they report the incident

The victim should tell the police that they believe that the attack took place because they have a visual or hearing impairment, and that they perceive the attack to have been a hate crime.

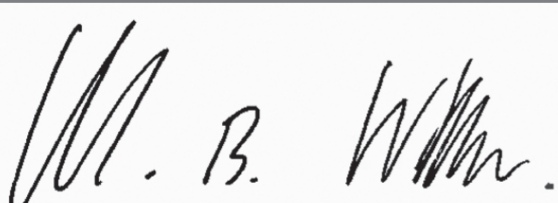
If the incident is in progress, or the offender is still in the area, the victim should ensure the police are told this. The victim should try, where possible, to obtain photographic/video evidence of the incident and/or any injuries sustained by the dog or themselves.

Later the victim should explain the full impact of the crime or incident. The investigating officer will ensure that a Victim Impact Statement is completed by the victim and include whether they have been left without the use of their assistance dog.

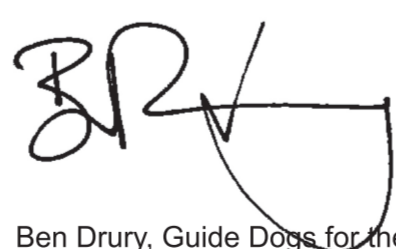
With the consent of the victim, we will work closely with Guide Dogs service delivery managers or a nominated representative to ensure the investigation opportunities are maximised and the path back to 'normality' after being a victim of crime is as smooth as possible in terms of support and help offered.

Guide Dogs service delivery managers, or other nominated representatives will, with the consent of the victim, liaise with West Yorkshire Police and provide any information needed to maximise investigation opportunities. They will ensure that where a report has been made by the victim to Guide Dogs, details will, with the consent of the victim, be sent to local districts and the head of the dog section.


West Yorkshire Police and Guide Dogs will share incident information and any other information and opportunities of interest and relevance through appropriate communication channels.



Mark Burns-Williamson, West Yorkshire's Police and Crime Commissioner



Ben Drury, Guide Dogs for the Blind Association



Temporary Deputy Chief Constable John Robins, West Yorkshire Police