

Guidance Pack



Sunday 3rd March 2019

Advice on Welcoming Visitors with Guide Dogs

As you know, our sight and functioning of our eyes is a huge blessing from Allah (swt) – but unfortunately many people are not so lucky and many who are blind rely on Guide Dogs to help them live independent lives.

You may have a **blind visitor(s) with a Guide Dog** (see photo from West London Islamic Centre from 2016). Below is some advice for how to welcome visitors with Guide Dogs:



Visitor with guide dog to West London Islamic Centre, February 2016

Scenario 1: Your Open Day is taking place in a function hall (non-carpeted area)

- Great, your conference hall is like any other indoor building, guide dogs can walk freely.
- Please notify your volunteers to be aware the room is guide dog-friendly.
- Ask one of your volunteers to stay with or take extra care of your blind visitor and their Guide Dog to make sure they are made to feel welcome.

Scenario 2: Your Open Day is taking place in the prayer hall of the mosque (carpeted area)

- Discuss with your mosque committee your policy about letting dogs in to the main prayer hall of the mosque, bearing in mind the necessity of Guide Dogs for the blind.
- If the policy is not to allow dogs inside the carpeted area, can you arrange for an area outside of the main hall such as the shoe lobby (i.e. ideally covered and warm) which the Guide Dog could be left at, while the visitor is inside?
- Ask your volunteers to stay closely at all times with your blind visitor who is asked to leave their Guide Dog in a non-carpeted area to ensure they still feel welcome.
- Also ask a volunteer to stay in the area where the Guide Dog is staying, to make sure the dog is ok and nobody else is alarmed at the presence of the dog in this area. Ask the visitor if the dog has any needs e.g. water.
- Communicate this or your other planned arrangements to all your on-the-day volunteers!
- At all times, make sure your blind visitors feel very welcome and not ignored inshaAllah.

If the visitor and their Guide Dog are separated, then make sure you assign a volunteer to guide the blind visitor throughout their visit. Common things to be aware of when guiding a blind person include:

- Put your hands on their shoulder or offer them to hold your arm etc., but ask your visitor what they prefer first.
- Describe to them in words what is in front of them or the sounds they can hear in the mosque

For further guidance on how to guide a blind person, view this online guide **[Help Sheet: Guiding someone who is blind or partially sighted.](#)**

I pray this advice is beneficial. If you have any queries or questions on this or other subjects, get in touch at **visitmymosque@mcb.org.uk**