

## Section 8: Being Aware of Equality and Disability

TfL is committed to improving transport in London by making it more accessible, safer and reliable for all. Public transport plays an important role in opening up opportunities by providing access to education, employment and other essential services. It helps people stay in touch with family and friends and allows many people to live independently.

This section tells you about your responsibilities and how to provide the best service to all your passengers.

### Assisting passengers

TfL believes it is important to provide a public transport system which all people can use, so that older and disabled people have the same opportunities to travel as all other people. TfL expects PHV drivers to deliver a high standard of customer service to all passengers, whatever their needs. However, we know that some passengers may need more help. This section gives you information, advice and tips on what you can do to help disabled passengers and other passengers that require assistance.

Here are some tips to help provide the best service to your passengers.

- Always ask your passengers if they need any help and wait for your offer to be accepted. Listen to any requests and remember that everyone is different
- Be ready to give disabled and older passengers some help. This could be as simple as writing things down for them, giving them a little extra time, facing them so they can see your lips as you speak, or speaking loudly and clearly if they have problems hearing you
- Talk directly to the older or disabled person rather than to the person with them if they are travelling with someone
- If the passenger is vision-impaired and asks you to guide them to the vehicle, stand by the person's side and allow them to take hold of your arm/elbow so you can guide the customer along. Do not take hold of the passenger and pull or push them in a particular direction
- Disabled or older passengers may need more time or help to get in and out of your vehicle. For their safety, be patient and make sure they are comfortable and have their seatbelt fastened before you start the journey
- You can also help by asking the passengers if they have all their belongings with them before you set off and when you arrive at their destination
- Tell the passenger where they are going and let them know about any possible dangers, such as pavement kerbs, doors opening towards or away from them and slopes going up or down. This will help prevent accident and injury

- During the journey, vision-impaired passengers in particular should be told about any delays, or changes to the route. This is also a good thing to do with any elderly passengers or passengers who have a learning disability, as they might get worried or upset if there is a change to the route they expected to take
- When you arrive at your destination, tell the passenger the location, then offer to assist them out of the vehicle and to guide them to a safe place before leaving them
- Clearly tell the passenger how much the fare is. When you give change to passengers who are vision-impaired, it is important to count out the coins and notes into their hand
- Offer to help count out the change if a passenger seems to be having problems
- Always have a pen and paper with you so that you can write things down. This can help passengers who have a problem hearing or passengers who do not speak much English
- If you drive a designated wheelchair accessible vehicle, make sure the equipment is in good working order and therefore available to use at any time
- Be careful of where you pick up and drop off wheelchair users. Avoid places where the pavement is on a slope
- Not all disabilities are easy to see, so offer, or be prepared to help any passenger

## **Equality Act 2010**

The following characteristics are protected under the Equality Act:

- Age
- Disability
- [Gender reassignment](#)
- Marriage and [civil partnership](#)
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity

It is illegal to treat anyone unfairly based on any of the characteristics listed above. It is unacceptable for you as a PHV driver, or for any of your customers, to use language or

behave in a way that [discriminates](#) against any person. As a PHV driver you are expected to treat all passengers in a professional and respectful way without making a judgement about any person's personal characteristics or assuming anything about them.

## **Designated wheelchair accessible PHVs**

If you drive a [designated](#) wheelchair accessible PHV, you have certain duties under the law. Your operator should be aware that the vehicle you are driving is a designated wheelchair accessible vehicle.

If your vehicle is a designated wheelchair accessible PHV, you must:

- Carry the passenger while they remain in the wheelchair and make sure the safety belts are attached to the wheelchair to keep it in a safe position
- Not charge extra because a passenger uses a wheelchair
- Carry the wheelchair safely and securely if the passenger chooses to sit in a passenger seat
- Make sure the passenger is carried safely and in reasonable comfort

Offer the passenger any help that is reasonably required

## **Exemptions**

A driver can only get permission to not carry wheelchairs for medical reasons. If a driver cannot carry out the duties of section 165 of the Equality Act because the driver's poor health or fitness makes it impossible or unreasonable, an [exemption](#) certificate may be given to the driver. You will need to contact TfL to apply for an exemption certificate and, if granted, you will need to display an Exemption Notice in the windscreen of your vehicle.

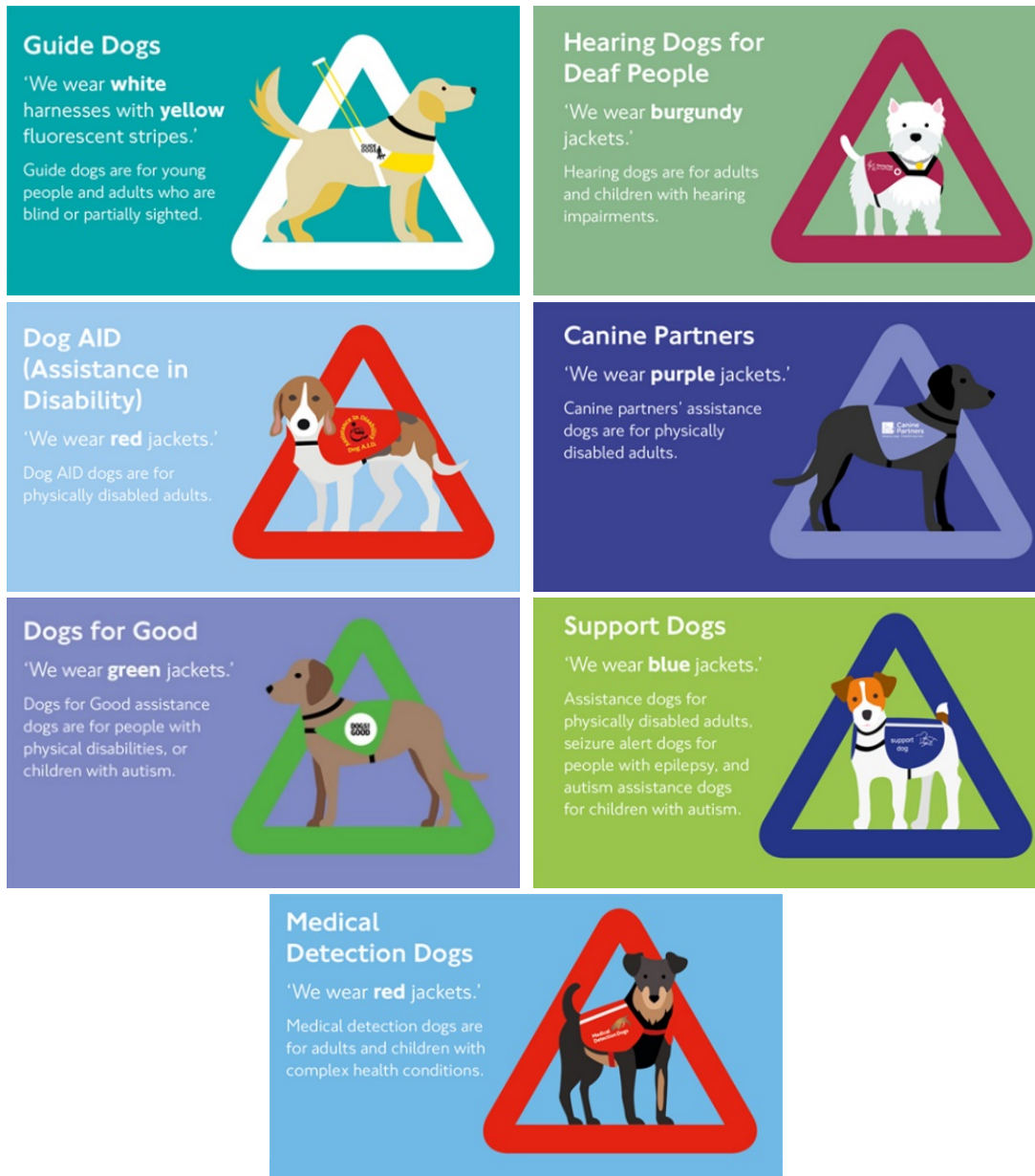
## **Assistance dogs**

Section 170 of the Equality Act says that PHV drivers must accept passengers with [assistance dogs](#) and must allow the assistance dog to sit in the footwell, with the passenger. PHV drivers and operators cannot refuse or charge a passenger extra because they have an assistance dog.

Assistance dogs are highly trained 'working' animals so should not be treated like pets. Do not stroke or feed assistance dogs or distract them in any way.

There is a wide range of assistance dogs. You can sometimes see what type of assistance a dog provides by looking at the colour of the jacket it is wearing. Remember, though, that an assistance dog may not always wear a jacket.

The pictures below are of some of the dogs you might come across. Please remember that assistance dogs are not always the same breed as shown in the pictures and not all assistance dogs have a jacket to identify them.



## Dogs and Islamic law

In 2002, the Shariat Council confirmed that trained assistance dogs may accompany disabled people in PHVs managed or driven by Muslims. The council's guidance helps to make religious law clear, and to prevent any possible conflict with [secular](#) law.

## Exemptions

A PHV driver can only get an exemption from carrying assistance dogs for medical reasons.

If a driver has a medical condition, such as [asthma](#) which gets worst when near dogs, or if the driver is [allergic](#) or has a fear of dogs (a [phobia](#)), it may be possible for them to get an exemption. You will need to contact TfL to apply for an exemption certificate and, if granted, you will need to display an Exemption Notice in the windscreen of your vehicle.

## **Complaints**

We will investigate any complaint we receive about a PHV driver breaking the Equality Act. If there is enough evidence of an offence being committed and it is in the public interest to do so, we will always prosecute the driver. If you are convicted of an offence under the Equality Act we will decide how suitable you are to be a licensed PHV driver and we may suspend or revoke your PHV driver's licence.