



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

September 2018

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about discrimination against guide dog owners.

I share your belief that everyone deserves the right to travel with comfort and dignity. That is why I value the use of guide dogs which gives people with disabilities the freedom and confidence to work and visit friends independently. There are already, as you are aware, strict laws against the discrimination of those who rely on guide dogs.

The Equality Act 2010 makes clear the duties of all people to permit guide dogs without any hindrance. Failure to comply with this requirement can result in prosecution and a fine on conviction of up to £1,000. People who use guide dogs currently enjoy the legal right to travel on routes that other animals or pets are not allowed. This is absolutely the right thing as independence is an important aspect in the lives of many people and should be extended to as many people as it is possible.

The use of guide dogs is encouraged by the clear guidance which clarifies the rights of guide dog owners and outlines the options available to those who have been discriminated against when using a guide dog. This includes the ability to report those who do not make reasonable adjustments to make a disabled person's journey easier. Distinctive jackets for guide dogs to wear are issued to help clearly identify them. It is also advised that any identification cards, if given, are carried by a person with disabilities to help ensure they are not discriminated against.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me. I will be following this issue closely and supporting improvements when they are needed.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris".

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY