

## **Policy for Guide Dogs in the Subtropical Swimming Paradise and Aqua Sana**

Animals, even guide dogs are not allowed into a swimming pool or spa area on the grounds of hygiene as the Pool/Spa Manager also has responsibility to other users under the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations to prevent exposure of any person to risks to their health and safety. This includes exposure to harmful micro-organisms which could be introduced by the dog to the pool environment.

Further, the Guide Dogs for The Blind Association confirm that it is inappropriate to provide access to the pool for assistance dogs due to the following issues relating to their welfare:

- The pool and/or spa is a hot, humid environment, in which the dog in their fur coat may suffer
- The chlorinated water likely to be underfoot is unsuitable for the dog to walk through
- The pool area is at times very busy and loud, which may cause the dog confusion and distress
- The person using the assistance dog may wish to enter the water, leaving the dog in an unfamiliar and, as described above, unsuitable environment

To overcome this barrier to access for a disabled person a reasonable adjustment should be made so that the disabled person is able to enter the Subtropical Swimming Paradise or Aqua Sana without their dog and without substantial disadvantage.

After discussions with The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (Ref: Gill Kenyon, Access Information Officer, Public Policy and Campaigns, Tel: 0845 241 2178), a reasonable adjustment would be for staff to care for the dog in an adjacent office and to liaise with the assistance dog user to establish what assistance needs to be provided to allow them to use the facilities in the pool, for example the provision of a member of staff during the course of their visit to allow them to access the areas of the pool they wish to use. In many cases the assistance may be provided by the friends /family

of the visually impaired person who would be with them during their pool visit and so help by staff may not be needed.

### Procedure for Guest Access to the Subtropical Swimming Paradise or Aqua Sana where the Guest Normally uses an Assistance Dog

On notification of a guest requiring access to the Subtropical Swimming Paradise or Aqua Sana they will be contacted by the pool duty manager to assess their requirements. Arrangements will be made for staff to care for the guide dog in the pool manager's office or Ground Services compound or other suitable location. Facilities will be agreed with the assistance dog owner/user, but will normally be a fairly quiet area with water provided, where the dog can rest with little disturbance.

The assistance dog owner/user will then be given any reasonable assistance in and around the Subtropical Swimming Paradise or Aqua Sana as required although this is often given by the friends /family. The assistance dog owner/user will be asked to inform the pool desk when they are leaving so they can be reunited with the assistance dog at the pool entrance or other location if they so choose.

Arrangements will be made during the time that the assistance dog is in Center Parcs care to ensure its evacuation in the event of a Fire Alarm or other emergency evacuation.