



Disabled woman and service dog asked to leave Hanley pub Free 251224

Description



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A disabled woman said she was reduced to tears when asked to leave a pub because of her assistance dog.

Louise Harris, who has multiple sclerosis, was approached by a manager in Hanley Wetherspoons on 13 January.

"I was in utter shock, I could not believe it," said Ms Harris, adding she had provided proof cockapoo Bella was a service dog.

Wetherspoons said in a statement it had a "no-dog policy", but assistance dogs were allowed in its pubs.

The chain added it was in contact with Ms Harris to understand her concerns.

Ms Harris was socialising with friends over food and cups of tea at the Reginald Mitchell on Parliament Row, when the staff member came over about 19:00 GMT, she said.

Bella, who helps her owner with daily tasks made difficult by her limited mobility, was lying on a mat under the table in a clearly marked jacket.

"We'd been in there for a good few hours and then the manager come over to me and asked me to leave," Ms Harris told BBC Radio Stoke.

"[He said] 'we don't allow your kind of dog in' and I said, 'she's an assistance dog she has a coat on saying she's an assistance dog, please do not ignore me'."

Ms Harris, who was wearing a hidden disability lanyard and had crutches with her, said she felt intimidated and frustrated during the incident.

"I came outside and just cried because I was humiliated, discriminated and in front of my friends and that we'd been in there for five hours," she said.

She added that an action card listing her disabilities and paperwork on her phone were "ignored" by the manager.

The Equality Act 2010 prevents businesses refusing entry, external to those who need an assistance dog with them.

Ms Harris said she and Bella had previously been allowed entry to the same Wetherspoons, and another in nearby Newcastle-under-Lyme, and she had "no idea" why she had been challenged on this occasion.

She has contacted the Equality Advisory and Support Service, external to intervene with the venue on her behalf.

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Date Created

25/01/2023

Author

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