



Newcastle Wetherspoons refuses assistance dog entry to pub Free 221224

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A disabled teenager has told how they “completely broke down” after being refused entry to a Wetherspoons pub in Newcastle with their assistance dog.

River Cartledge, 19, who has a number of mental and physical disabilities, was stopped from entering The Five Swans in the city centre on Friday.

They were told by the manager shih tzu Chico was “not a guide dog” and therefore “against company the policy”.

A spokesman said it was a “genuine error” and apologised “wholeheartedly”.

River, from West Denton, said: “We were stopped at the door and the bouncer asked me what the dog was for and he was completely fine with it.

“But then we tried to go in he stopped us and he radioed for the manager. I started filming at this point because I knew exactly what was going to happen because it’s happened before in different places.”

River said the manager “refused to listen to reason” and “they can choose to only allow guide dogs in”.

They said they had been in the premises before with Chico and had no issues.

The Equality Act 2010 bans service providers – including taxis, pubs and restaurants – from discriminating against those who need an assistance dog with them.

In a video shared on River’s TikTok, the manager is heard saying the law is a “basic standard” and “you’re not getting in so I suggest you move along”.

Chico has been fully trained for two years to assist River with their fibromyalgia, PTSD and arthritis – the dog is trained in medical alert and response, psychiatric and non-weight bearing mobility work.

The dog is also able to detect when River’s heart rate is too high.

River said: “I asked her to look up the Equality Act and the guide for all businesses and she was just being really rude and condescending towards me and was refusing to even do any research.

“It escalated and it got to the point where I physically couldn’t keep at it any more and I had to walk away.”

River said they had “one of the worst” medical episodes they had had in a while.

“My dog was alerting like crazy and I knew I had to sit down. I had a pretty severe meltdown,” they said.

“One of the bouncers came round and apologised to us himself, I have absolutely nothing against him, he was lovely.”

Wetherspoon spokesman Eddie Gershon said: “It was a genuine error and we apologise wholeheartedly.

“We can understand the fact the customer would have been upset and frustrated by the situation.

“Assistance dogs are allowed into Wetherspoon pubs and we will reiterate this to staff at the pub and the company’s pubs in general.”

He added River and their dog was “more than welcome to visit the pub”.

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