



GUIDELINES FOR DISABILITY ASSISTANCE DOG APPLICANTS

For all applicants we consider the following points to be most important:

1. You must have a physical disability.
2. You desire independence from family or colleagues.
3. You must be over the age of 16.
4. You must have the motivation and ability to provide care, exercise and grooming for a dog.
6. You must genuinely enjoy the close companionship of a dog and want to form a working relationship with one.
7. All applicants will be considered regardless of race, sex, religion, creed, age or any other categories protected by law.
8. You must have your own pet dog aged between 10 months and 4 years old.
9. Not all dogs are suitable for training, and not all guarding breeds are will be accepted in to training.
10. You must **NOT** acquire a dog for the sole purpose of having it trained by Support Dogs. You must have your own **EXISTING PET DOG**.
11. The dog must be neutered prior to qualification.

FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

All applicants must consider the financial commitments of having a Disability Assistance Dog. The following outlines the commitment of each party:

Commitment of applicant:

- Dog food
- Dog treats
- Dog toys
- Travel expenses to Training Centre for the purpose of training sessions and aftercare visits.
- Vet bills
- Dog insurance once qualified

Funding may be available in full or part for these costs through direct payments

Commitment of Support Dogs

- Accommodation during training visits
- Instructor training costs
- Training jacket & qualified jacket (unless lost, a charge may be made to cover replacement).
- Worming tablets will be reimbursed once qualified.
- Vaccines will be reimbursed once qualified.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

1. The applicant requests a full application pack from the office either by letter or telephone.
2. The application pack is sent to the applicant including:

Information about the application procedure
Application Form
Medical Declaration Consent Form.
Dog information sheet
3. The application form, dog information sheet and the medical declaration form should be returned to Support dogs.
4. A letter of confirmation of receipt will be sent to the applicant.
5. The application form is initially assessed as part of the assessment procedure by the Disability Assistance Dog team.

AT THIS STAGE IF THE APPLICANTS DOG IS BEING CONSIDERED FOR TRAINING THE DOG INFORMATION WILL ALSO BE ASSESSED

6. Applicants will be informed of the results of this assessment. Some applicants may be advised that their application has not been successful.

7. Applicants will be interviewed at the training centre. You will be required to make own travel arrangements and cover own costs. The Training Manager and other representatives will be assessing applicants for their suitability for Disability Assistance Dog Training. At this stage your dog will also be assessed. Some applicants will be advised that their application has not been successful.

At this stage if the applicant's dog is being considered for training a behavioural assessment will be carried out on the dog. A form will be provided for the applicants own veterinary surgeon to complete prior to visit.

All dog's must be fully vaccinated including the Kennel cough vaccine.

8. These reports will be assessed by a specially appointed panel. Applicants will be informed of the results of this panel within 7 days of the assessment taking place. Some applicants will be advised their application has not been successful.
9. Successful applicants will be offered a place on the next stage of the application process which is the 2 day induction course. Applicants will be assessed on their dog handling skills, and dogs will also be assessed away from their owners. Applicants will be advised whether they have or have not been accepted on to training program. The charity will arrange 1 nights accommodation and cover the cost of **ROOM ONLY**. You will be required to make your own travel arrangements and cover the costs. Dates for residential training will then be given.
10. A medical report will be obtained from the applicants GP. A second report may then be obtained from the hospital consultant. A further report may be obtained from another professional person with the knowledge of the applicant's condition.
11. A home visit will be carried out to assess the suitability of your home environment and daily routine. Some applicants may be advised that their application has not been successful.
12. Successful applicants will be offered a place on a training course. The names of others may be placed on a waiting list for future courses. Some will be advised that their application will not proceed.
13. Applicants must be aware if specialist mobility equipment e.g. hoist that the hotel may not be able to accommodate such equipment due to health and safety issues. Normal/motorised wheelchairs are classed as acceptable.

At this stage if the applicant's own dog is considered suitable for training the dog will spend a minimum of one month at the Training Centre with a trainer. Support dog's will arrange for your dog to be placed with one of our qualified foster carers during this time. Dog's will remain with the foster carers during the weekends. You will be required to make own travel arrangements and cover costs, and supply all equipment for the dog during this time.

14. Applicants will attend the Training Centre for two weeks residential training and must be accompanied by a PA or family member or friend. You will be required to make own travel arrangements and cover costs. At this stage you will be re-joined with your dog, who will then stay with you at the hotel accommodation. The charity will cover cost of hotel accommodation ONLY.
15. Client and dog will return home. Regular checks will be made by the trainer to monitor partnerships progress.
16. Partnerships will be required to attend the training centre for up to three more visits. The frequency will be decided by the designated instructor and Training Manager.
17. Applicants who complete the full process to partnership complete a Licence Agreement and undertake to return a progress report each month for the first six months.
18. Each dog must be 12 months of age or over before they can qualify.
19. Qualified partnerships will also be required to attend the training centre once per year to assess social and training standards are being maintained.