



Guidance Notes

Autism Assistance Dogs for Children



Guidance Notes

These Guidance Notes explain some of the questions we ask and some of the information that we seek during the application process. Each part refers to a corresponding section in the Application Form. Please read through these Guidance Notes before completing the Application Form.

Each section includes:

An Overview – this will give you a short summary of what information is covered in the section.

References/Examples – these are designed to show you the sort of information we would like to know. This may include example answers to questions.

The following checklist may help you to ensure that you are providing the relevant supporting information for your application. This may include:

- Permission from Landlord/Home Owner (if applicable)
- Pictures of Back Garden
- Permission from Work (if applicable)
- Permission from Voluntary Work (if applicable)
- Permission from College/University (if applicable)
- Pictures of Free Running Area
- Confirmation Letters from Support Network (two minimum)
- Permission from School for Dog to Enter School Grounds
(if needed for collecting children from inside school grounds)
- Clinical Diagnosis Report
- Signed Privacy Notice
- Jpeg photo

Applicant Information

Overview

This section focuses on your contact details, any other people that may live with you and any pets you may have - in the home or visiting regularly.

We would like to know who will be team leader who will form part of the assistance dog team. The team leader is an adult who lives in the home with the child, who will spend the majority of time with the dog on a daily basis. There is generally only one team leader within a household.

References/Examples

Household residents:			
Name	Age	Relationship to TL	Please list any health conditions they have, including any autism spectrum disorders

It is important for us to know about any other health conditions of other residents in the household, especially any autism spectrum disorders.

We place dogs with families where, at point of application, there is only one child in the household who has a clinical diagnosis on the autism spectrum. For the service to succeed and reach its full potential, a strong bond needs to form between the child and dog. When there is more than one child diagnosed with autism, the bond between dog and child can become confused, particularly where each child has different task-work and assistance needs. Also, the dog requires regular, consistent instruction and handling to maintain the standard of behaviour and work required for public access. This can be difficult to facilitate when there are two or more children with competing assistance needs.

- Are they good with/used to dogs:

By this, we want to know if any existing pet(s) are comfortable with a dog living in the house with them. Some terms you may choose to use are:

No issues seen / Is nervous around dogs / Aggressive towards dogs / worried by other dogs

If you have a pet dog, please describe how your dog interacts with other dogs both in and out of the home.

Please note, if you have a pet dog, there must be one handler per dog for lead walks, i.e. you will not be able to walk your pet dog(s) and assistance dog on lead together by yourself. This may mean walking your assistance dog separately, or having someone else with you who can handle your pet dog(s).

If you have 2 or more pet dogs, you must have another adult in the household who can assist with the dogs, so that you can focus on your assistance dog.

If your pet dog is not neutered, please let us know as this may affect whether you are accepted for an assistance dog, and the dog you are subsequently matched to. This will be decided following an assessment of your pet dog, and is to prevent any possibilities of a working dog being impacted by distractions such as; hormone levels, seasons, phantom pregnancies, etc. Please note if your dog/bitch is neutered we may ask for evidence of this in the form of veterinary notes.

Some pets such as cats, birds, rabbits and guinea pigs may not have been exposed to or used to dogs. In this case, please enter 'unknown'.

- Please provide details of your facilitator:

A facilitator is another responsible adult who will provide you with support with a dog. For example; able to look after the dog at short notice, help with childcare if your child/children are unwell and off school and additionally in the school holidays when you will still need to get out with a dog. With time, the facilitator could be trained to work with the dog, with instruction from your instructor. This may be a spouse, partner, relative or carer.

Your Life With A Dog

Overview

In this section, we would like you to tell us about your and your child's goals and aspirations. We'd like to know how a dog could help you. We'd also like to know what activities, if any, a dog would help you to become involved with. Are there any new skills you or your child would like to develop, or experiences you would like to have if you had an Assistance Dog? Tell us if there are any new places that you hope a dog could help you to access.

Your Child's School/College Details

Overview

Please be aware that your child cannot take the dog into school with them. Whenever the dog is working with your child, you as the Team Leader need to be present. Alternatively, if you have a facilitator, they will need to be present.

References/Examples

- Do you have permission to take your child out of school for training and aftercare visits:

After the residential training course, we generally visit 2-3 times per week for up to 3 hours at a time over a period of 5-6 weeks. Check with your child's school that you will be able to take your child out of school to be present when the Instructor visits.

- Do you have permission to take a dog onto school grounds: (If needed)

If you collect your child from inside the school grounds, then you will need to have permission to take the dog into places such as the playground or classroom. If your child has siblings, consider whether you will need to take the dog onto their school grounds as well. Under no circumstances must a dog be left unattended by the Team Leader or Facilitator when dropping off or collecting children.

Health

Overview

This section tells us about your child's diagnosis and the behaviours they display.

- Wandering and Bolting Behaviours

Understanding your child's wandering and/or bolting behaviour is important as it helps to determine the size and temperament of the dog that you will need. As some of our dogs will be better at helping to manage different behaviour (wandering behaviours - slower, less forceful movement versus bolting behaviours - strong, forceful movements) than others, this information helps us to find the right dog for your child and your circumstances.

We define wandering as the child moving slowly with minimal force, such as walking pace. For example, if the child is distracted, or move towards something they are interested in. We define bolting as the child moving suddenly and quickly with force, such as running. For example, if the child is running with a strong impulse towards or away from something.

Property Details

Overview

This section looks at the physical features of your place of residence.

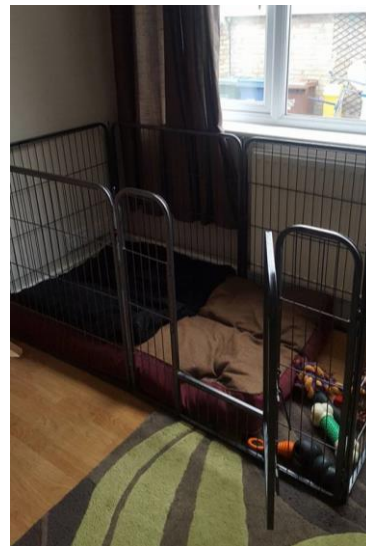
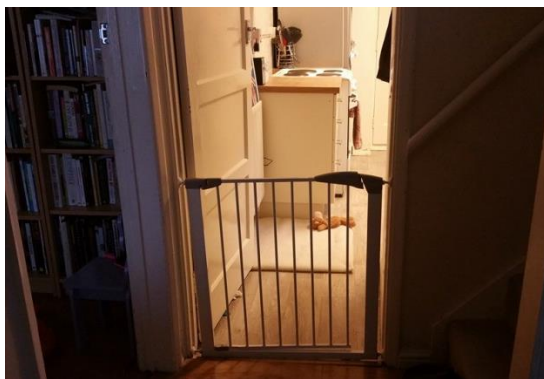
References/Examples

- Where will the dog sleep overnight:

This is a personal choice, some people opt to have the dog sleep in the bedroom with their child if this is appropriate and may not be straight away. If you would like this, then you need to ensure that there is enough space in the room for a dog bed and bowl of water. Alternatively, the dog can sleep in its safe space.

- Where will the safe space be located:

A safe space is an area of the house that can be cordoned off from children so that the dog has somewhere to have rest and respite. Quiet areas or rooms in the house are ideal for this purpose and installing a baby gate is important. Some examples are:



Garden Details

Overview

This section looks at how secure your garden is for a dog, the features of your garden and whether you need/want to install a toileting pen. Generally, applicants will plan to use their back garden for the purpose of letting their dog out to toilet. The area needs to be safe and secure for a dog to be in, with at least 5ft fencing all around. You will also need to consider how quickly you can get the dog into the garden should it be unwell.

References/Examples

- Is the garden directly accessible from the house:
Yes No
If no, state how you access the garden:

“To access my garden I have to leave my flat, proceed down a corridor, through a door and into the garden.”

- What is on the other side of your fence? Please detail:

By this we would like to know what a dog may potentially find distracting. Some examples may include:

Livestock / Other gardens with dogs in / Road / Park / Fields / Field with a lake in it.

- Where and on what surface will the dog toilet:

It is helpful for us to know what surface the dog is expected to toilet on and where this will be in the garden. For example:

“Corner of the garden next to the green house, surface is grassed.”

“Outside the conservatory on gravel.”

“anywhere in the garden”

- If needed, are you prepared to install a toileting a pen:

Yes No

If no, please detail reasons as to why:

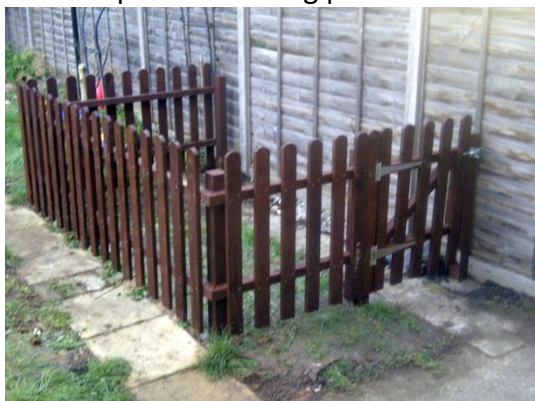
The dog needs a safe and secure area for the purpose of toileting. Dogs learn by association, so by having a safe and secure area in which they can be let off lead to toilet, means that they firstly learn to not toilet on the lead, which is important to ensure that the dog maintains the standard of behaviour required for public access.

Access to the whole of the garden is sufficient for a dog to use to toilet, in some instances however, you may need to install a toileting pen, this could be if your garden is communal or unable to be fenced in securely. We will advise you accordingly during your home assessment if we feel that you need to install a toileting pen. Please note a toileting pen must be at least 6ftx6ft in size, however, the bigger the better, and we suggest at least 10ftx10ft to be more comfortable for one of our dogs where possible.

Having a toileting pen, will mean that the dog will learn to go to the toilet when it goes into the pen. This is useful, as before you leave the house you can let the dog into the pen so it can toilet and then know that your dog will not need to toilet when you go out (depending on how long you are out). Toileting pens also keep all dog mess in one place so that it is easy to find and remove, particularly if you have children who may play in the garden.

The toileting pen can be placed on grass or concrete slabs. We do however advise that if the toileting pen is to be situated on concrete astro- turf or bark chippings are used to create a covering for its floor. This would be confirmed at the final stages of matching a dog to you and be prior to placement of the dog.

Some examples of toileting pens:



Vehicle Details

Overview

This section looks at your vehicle and any public transport you may use.

References/Examples

- How do you access your vehicle :

If you or your child uses a mobility aid, please let us know if you have a vehicle with a ramp or if you/they can self transfer into your vehicle. This lets us know how a dog may also need to access your vehicle.

- How will the dog travel in the vehicle:

Rule 57 of the Highway Code states:

“When in a vehicle make sure dogs or other animals are suitably restrained so they cannot distract you while you are driving or injure you, or themselves, if you stop quickly. A seat belt harness, pet carrier, dog cage or dog guard are ways of restraining animals in cars.”

It is important to make sure that the dog can be safely restrained but also has enough room to be comfortable. If using a crate, this must be large enough for the dog to be able to; stand, lay, sit down and turn around in this space.

- Please detail any public transport that you currently use:

Example:

Type	Frequency	Duration
Bus	Twice a week	15 minutes each way
Train	Once a month	30 minutes each way

It is important for us to know if you wish to take your dog abroad with you. Please provide as much information as possible. We appreciate that you may not know about future trips at this stage. The Charity will advise you accordingly if you wish to take a dog abroad with you, as some destinations may not be appropriate, depending on nature of trip, weather, duration, etc. Please outline anything you would like to work towards with a dog, or regular abroad commitments or plans for the future.

Team Leader Employment, Voluntary Employment and University/College Details

Overview

This section looks at your workplace (paid or voluntary) and /or University/College. If you are not in employment and/or in further education, then please state N/A in the relevant section and move to the next.

- Will you be seeking permission to take your dog abroad with you?
If so, please detail where, type of transport used and how often:

The supplementary leaflet entitled “Taking an Assistance Dog to Work With You” provides information on the logistical considerations of taking an Assistance Dog with you into a working environment. It will also help you with questions that your employer or University/College may have about an Assistance Dog accompanying you to work or study.

You will need to make your employer or University/College aware that, if your application is successful, you will want to bring a dog to work/study with you. Hopefully, the aforementioned leaflet will help to answer their immediate questions.

During your assessment visit, you will be asked to complete a workplace check on the same date or another date with your instructor. Please also advise your employer of any planned visits. This is an opportunity to ensure the environment is appropriate, meeting all of the needs of our assistance dog, together with providing the opportunity for the employer to meet a representative of the charity to discuss any concerns or questions they may have.

Please note that our dogs cannot be left for more than 4 hours in a 24 hour period.

References/Examples

- Hours of work:

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Start Time	9.00	8.30	9.00	9.00	X	X	X
AM Break	10.30	No break	10.30	10.30	X	X	X
Lunch Break	12.30	No Break	12.30	12.30	X	X	X
PM Break	3.30	No Break	3.30	3.30	X	X	X
Finish Time	5.00	12.00	5.00	5.00	X	X	X

X means that you do not work during this time.

- Where and on what surface will the dog toilet:

This is similar to the Garden Details section. It is likely that you will need a toileting pen to be put in place, so it is important that you identify where this will be and the surface that will be used (grass, concrete, etc).

It should be easy and quickly accessible from your place of work/study.

- Where will the dog be located during the day:

In this question you will need to indicate where the dog will be during the day. You need to have somewhere close to you, so the dog can get to you if needed. This area must have enough room for a bed and water bowl. We generally ask that our dogs are off lead if the environment is suitable, rather than being benched on a lead all day.

- Can you meet the notice period and commitment to training times:

The training course will last 5-7 days. We try to give at least 2-3 weeks notice before the course begins. After the training course, an Instructor will visit you regularly

over the following weeks. Generally, we will visit 2-3 times per week for up to 3 hours at a time over a period of 5-6 weeks. Check with your employer or University/College that they will allow you enough time to train with a dog.

We ask you to take the first week off work for training with an assistance dog, then make every effort for gradual introductions into the workplace moving forward. Suggested timings will be monitored and agreed with your instructor during the placement stage.

Weekly Routine

Overview

This section includes a table for each day of the week. This is so you can outline your average daily routine. This helps us to understand the times and places in which an Assistance Dog will need to work, as well as the environments it will encounter during a typical week.

References/Examples

Monday	TL	Child
06.00	Wake up / breakfast	Will wake at 4.00am but stays in room watching TV/playing
07.00	Get ready for school / 7.45 walk to school	Get ready for school / 7.45 walk to school
08.00	Get ready for work; Leave for work 8.45	School
09.00	Work	School
10.00	Work	School
11.00	Work	School
12.00	Work	School
13.00	Work	School
14.00	Work	School
15.00	Collect from school	Return from school
16.00	Jobs around the house	TV/playing
17.00	Prepare dinner	TV/playing
18.00	Dinner	Dinner
19.00	Clear up, get ready for bed	TV
20.00	Watch TV/Read	Bed – may not sleep until 11.00/12.00
21.00	Watch TV/Read	
22.00	Bed	
23.00		
Environments encountered during this day: Car to travel to work, office environment, residential town environment, school environment.		

Saturday	TL	Child
06.00		Will wake at 4.00am but stays in room TV/playing
07.00	Wake up / breakfast	TV/playing
08.00	Jobs around the house	TV/playing
09.00	Jobs around the house	
10.00	Go to see family / park / swimming	Go to see family / park / swimming
11.00	See family / park / swimming	See family / park / swimming
12.00	See family / park / swimming	See family / park / swimming
13.00	Go to Riding for the Disabled	Go to Riding for the Disabled
14.00	Horse riding at RDA	Horse riding at RDA
15.00	Return home, relax in the home	Drawing / reading / TV
16.00	Return home, relax in the home	Play outside with brother
17.00	Prepare dinner	Play on Xbox/watch TV
18.00	Dinner	Dinner
19.00	Clear up, get ready for bed	Homework
20.00	Watch TV/Read	Bed – may not sleep until 11.00/12.00
21.00	Watch TV/Read	
22.00	Bed	
23.00		
Environments encountered during this day: Car, busy town, supermarket, café, swimming pool, horse par/farm.		

It is important to understand that Assistance Dog ownership can add around two hours per day to your daily routine. This ensures that the dog's health, socialisation and taskwork are maintained. The below sections provide more detail on each aspect of Assistance Dog life. The times and durations quoted are based on a qualified partnership who have completed their initial training.

Note that the amount of time that needs to be dedicated to training will be greater when you are first paired with a dog than what is stated below. This will be covered in more detail under the Training Course section.

Task work – It is important to allocate time during the day for short sessions to practice obedience and task work. This helps to keep the dog's skills fresh. Typically, this can amount to 30 minutes per day broken into 10 minute sections.

Walking – Ideally, this would consist of two 30 minute lead walks a day. These can be working walks, where the dog is wearing its Assistance Dog jacket, to complete public access work or walking on a lead practice. Some clients may need a member of their support network to help with walks from time to time, such as in bad weather or when they are ill.

Free Running – Dogs need time off lead. We call this free running. The amount of time that each dog needs will depend on its individual circumstances, but should be a minimum of 30

minutes to 1 hour per day. This will be discussed with you by your individual Instructor and structured to your situation.

Grooming and Health Check – This is a daily job that takes up to 10 minutes. Ideally, you should groom and check your dog daily.

Feeding – The Charity will advise you on the type of food that the dog needs. Our dogs are fed twice each day: once in the morning and once in the evening. Our typical feeding times are:

AM – 7.00 - 9.00

PM – 6.00 – 8.00

These times can be earlier or later if needed, but feeding times must be consistent i.e. the same time each day.

It is essential that a dog is **not** exercised 1 hour **before** feeding and two hours **after** feeding. This helps to prevent the dog developing gastric bloat, otherwise known as gastric torsion, which can be lethal for dogs.

Free Running

Overview

Free running is off lead activity that is essential for all dogs.

References/Examples

- Please list the areas that you intend to free run your dog. The Guidance Notes provide information that can help you decide on a sufficiently secure free run area. (provide pictures if possible):



Free run areas need to be safe for your dog to be off lead in. Suitable free run areas may include: local footpaths, fields, parks or woods (see the above examples).

You should also check that dogs are allowed off lead in the free run areas you are considering and whether there are certain times of the year where dogs must be on lead.

Consider what in this environment a dog may find distracting. This could be things such as ponds, lakes or other animals.

Also think about if you and your child can access these areas at all times of the year. If you are unable, decide what measures you can put in place to meet a dog's exercise needs. It is important that your child can carry out free runs with us as much as possible or that is appropriate, to help with dog-child bonding and relationship.

- Are you prepared to ensure that the dog is exercised every day regardless of the weather:

Yes No

Please detail how you will ensure the dog is exercised each day:

Applicants need to be able to ensure that their dog receives enough exercise on a daily basis. Consider what provisions you will need to put in place to exercise your dog everyday. For example, you may seek help from a neighbour, a local dog walker, family member or friend (if appropriate for the dog), or choose different locations throughout the year to maintain access.

Be aware that if you plan on regularly using someone else to exercise the dog, then this could affect the bond between you and the dog. It is advisable that you as a team leader should carry out most of the free runs.

It is recommended that you have a minimum of 3 different free run areas that you can use as variety is best for a dog where possible.

We ask that clients visit their identified free run spaces to get photos to share with their instructor but also to ensure it is accessible to you all year around, this should take place prior to an assessment visit.

Support Network

Overview

This section outlines who will look after the dog if you are unable, and should include a minimum of 2 nominees who do not share your address. This may include times when you are sick, in hospital or on holiday. You must be satisfied that your nominee's house and garden are suitable and that they are able to look after a dog as instructed. You will need people who can look after the dog for both long and short periods of time or an emergency situation.

Your nominated people will need to confirm in writing that they agree to look after the dog should your application be successful. Additionally, you will need support networks to help with childcare; if your child is off school poorly or in the school holidays when you will still need to get out with a dog. Please include copies of these letters when you submit your application.

Please be aware that adults over the age of 16 can walk our dogs and will need instruction on how to do so.

Dog Experience

Overview

It is helpful for us to know about any experience you have had handling dogs, as well as any breed or gender preferences.

References/Examples

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Are you happy to accept any dog that the Charity identifies as being suitable regardless of breed, sex, colour: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <p>If no, please detail:</p>

Dogs for Good primarily trains Labradors and Golden Retrievers. From time to time, we will also train other breeds. These come mainly from the Gundog Category and include breeds such as: Cocker Spaniels and Flat-Coated Retrievers.

If you have specific reasons for wanting a particular breed and/or gender, such as a phobia, then please enter it in this section.

We are often asked about Poodle cross breeds by applicants seeking to avoid allergic reactions and hair drop. Sadly, there is a misconception that Poodle crosses are hypoallergenic. Poodle crosses can shed hair depending on the ratio of Poodle to the other breed of dog used in the cross.

It is important to remember that each dog is different. Even if there is a particular breed of dog in which you are interested, its personality, working ability or temperament may not match your needs and requirements. Should your application be successful, your individual Instructor will discuss different dogs with you as part of our matching process.

Training Course

Overview

This section provides us with information about your ability to attend a dog handling session following your assessment if you are successful and attending a training course (once a dog is placed with you), including any care needs that you might have.

In order to maximise our limited resources, we usually train two to three clients at a time at a hotel located near to one of our centres in Banbury, Culcheth and Bristol or from their own home depending on their specific care needs.

Training courses last for a minimum of five days and require overnight stays. Consider the arrangements that you will need to make to look after any family members or pets during your stay away. Please note that children do not attend the training course, it will be the team leader who is required.

After the training course, an Instructor will visit you 2-3 times a week for a period of up to 3 hours each time. On the days in between the visits, you will need to invest a similar amount of time in training with the dog by yourself and/or with your child and dog together. Having time off from work and someone to help with children or other animals is vital. Together with, the children having time off when required to train with their assistance dog.

When you have completed your application, please email or post it to us at:

trainingsupport@dogsforgood.org

Post:

FAO Client Services
Dogs for Good
The Frances Hay Centre
Blacklocks Hill
Banbury
Oxfordshire
OX17 2BS