

# Dogs for Good: A question and answer guide

## **Why are we changing our name and logo, and why now?**

Dogs for the Disabled as a brand has served us well for 27 years, but it no longer really reflects all that we do, all the people we support and the way we talk about the many exciting ways that dogs can have an impact on the lives of people.

We are proud of what we have achieved, the dogs we have worked with and the people we have supported in the past. Now is the time to make a serious 'step-change' to better reflect what we do now and our ambitions for the charity.

We also recognise that language is changing, particularly in the way people talk about disability. We see this most notably in our relationship with government agencies, trusts and other funders. Increasingly, the focus is on people as individuals, rather than what may be perceived as a label of disability. We support this.

At the heart of our new name and brand positioning is a celebration of all the good that can be achieved by bringing people and dogs together. This will make it easier for us to tell our story and encourage people to engage with us.

We have taken a lot of care to ensure we create a positive brand for the future. The immediate family of Frances Hay, our founder, have been involved in the process and understand the need for the brand to reflect the wider vision we have, a vision that was actually shared by Frances from the early days.

We will formally change our name and present ourselves under the new brand from 15 October 2015.

## **How will the re-brand help the charity?**

We believe it will:

- Better reflect the range of services we offer and enable us to stand out from other charities in our field. We have chosen a name that focuses on outcomes (the good we are able to do), rather than the disability.
- Better reflect the range of people we currently support and those who we think could benefit from interaction with a dog in the future, whether an assistance dog, family pet dog or community dog.
- Make us more attractive to potential funders, particularly corporates.
- Give us wider appeal to the general public through our promotion of the positive role dogs play in supporting a wide range of people.
- Create many new marketing opportunities.

Overall, we think the charity needs to be bolder in the way it projects the great work we do, to ensure we really get the recognition we deserve. We are confident that this investment will reap excellent returns for the charity in the future.

## **Will the services we offer change or be phased out?**

No, there will still be three core services at the heart of what we do.

- Assistance Dogs – currently for adults and children with physical disabilities and children with autism. We currently support 315 Assistance Dog partnerships.

- Family Dog – PAWS, a workshop-based service that supports families with children with autism who have a pet dog, or are thinking of getting one. We currently provide advice and support to over 600 families.
- Community Dog – supporting people who cannot have a dog on a permanent basis by providing a therapy or activity dog. For example, our School Dog project, our work with the Kingwood Trust etc.

We plan to increase the number of assistance dogs we train in future years. To do this, we will need to make ourselves more attractive to generate funds in an increasingly competitive market. We also want to support more people through our Family Dog and also our Community Dog service, which is largely funded by organisations who buy our services.

### **Are we looking to provide different services to other assistance dog organisations?**

Assistance dogs will remain a core part of what we do, but, building on our experience and knowledge gained from many years of training assistance dogs, we think there is room in the UK for an organisation with a slightly wider remit such as our own.

In many other countries, it is very common for assistance dog organisations to offer a wide range of dog-related services, ensuring people get the support they really need.

We believe our approach is focused fully on meeting the needs of both our clients and our dogs and it enables us to reach many more people than we could do by only providing an assistance dog service.

### **Why this name and were others considered?**

At the outset of the brand review process, we decided to work with a specialist brand agency. They develop new brands all the time, whereas for most of us, going through a rebrand will be a 'once in a lifetime' experience.

After a rigorous process, we appointed an agency called Fishburn, and their team went through a comprehensive creative process and came up with a shortlist of names.

The trustees felt that Dogs for Good would offer the strongest brand option for us and this was backed up by the independent research that we did with a variety of stakeholders, including members of the public.

### **Why are there no people in the logo?**

We have chosen a logo that is different from the traditional look that assistance dog organisations adopt.

There are over 180 derivations of a 'dog and person-type' logo being used by Assistance Dog International member programmes around the world. They tend to focus on describing and illustrating the conditions/disabilities of the people they work with, rather than the outcomes/benefits of the service.

We felt that doing something different would enable us to stand out from the crowd. We will use real life stories and photos (based on the 'My Good Is..' idea) alongside the logo, to convey what we do and the difference we make to people's lives.

### **Who was involved in the process of choosing a new brand?**

A Brand Group appointed by the trustees and made up of some senior managers and trustees has been working on this project, along with our chosen agency Fishburn, for well over a year.

During that time the group consulted with a number of stakeholders including all staff, a cross section of clients, socialisers, supporters, corporate partners, key donors, collaborative partners and members of the public, to help understand reactions to the various issues under consideration. We also talked to a number of other charities who had rebranded to learn from their experiences.

The Brand Group provided regular feedback to the trustees and staff before a final decision was made by the trustees that proceeding with the re-brand would offer us a great opportunity for the future.

### **Can the investment in a new brand be justified?**

The main investment we have made was in a specialist brand agency to help us create a compelling new name and brand identity. We were pleased to be able to secure their services at preferential rates.

Overall, the additional direct cost for us, over and above regular charity spend, has been about £44,000 over two years. For context, this is less than 0.75% of charity costs over this period. We're delighted to have received generous sponsorship support to help us, for example, funding our new clothing for staff and volunteers. We've also benefited from pro bono input and expertise from other stakeholders and partners.

We're taking a practical and pragmatic approach to the change. We've taken time to plan things. This has allowed us to run down supplies and refresh and renew materials within our usual charity budgets, for example as things come up for reordering or replacement.

### **What return on investment will we see?**

We believe the new brand will be an excellent investment for us, leading to greater public appeal and improved marketing and sponsorship opportunities. This will enable many more people to benefit from our services in the future.

### **What is going to change on 15 October?**

We will start to use the new name and brand on much of our externally-facing material from 15 October, eg our clothing, website, letterheads and dog jackets. Some of this has been made possible by generous sponsorship.

However, we are taking a practical approach and some things will take longer to change, eg vehicle livery.

Some things won't change - we will still be the same group of passionate people offering the same services with the same ethos and values at the heart of the charity. Our charity number will remain the same.

### **How will the 'My Good Is...' idea work?**

At the heart of what we do there are many incredibly powerful stories about how our dogs have changed the lives of many people and the great things that happen during every stage of our work – socialisation, training, fundraising etc.

The 'My Good Is...' idea gives us a great platform to tell those stories in a very personal and compelling way. Whether someone is a socialiser, boarder, member of staff, donor or corporate supporter, they can tell their story of what the charity means to them through the 'My Good Is...' idea.

We plan to use it as a way of tying together all our work and giving it a clear identity that is distinct from the way any other organisation presents itself. That is what makes a great brand and we are confident it will work for us.

Some people have expressed concern that 'My Good Is..' is not good English. However, several expert linguists have told us that it is quite proper to use 'good' as a noun rather than an adjective. Indeed, even Shakespeare used it like that!

**Will there be changes in staff and the work you do?**

There will be no changes in staff or the services we provide as a result of the re-brand.

**As an Assistance Dog client, what will change for me?**

You will continue to be supported by the same passionate and committed team. You will receive a new jacket for your assistance dog and a member of our team will be in touch on this in due course.

**As a PAWS client, what will change for me?**

You will continue to receive ongoing support and advice from the same passionate and dedicated PAWS Family Dog team. We remain committed to developing our PAWS Family Dog service and to extend its reach to many more families.

**As a puppy socialiser, what will the change mean to me?**

You will continue to be supported by our passionate and committed Dog Supply team. We will provide new training jackets for dogs. You will also receive new branded clothing and a member of our team will be in touch about this in due course.

**As a fundraising supporter, what will the change mean for me?**

You will receive new branded clothing and updated support materials to help you represent the charity in your much-valued fundraising activities. You will continue to be supported by the same passionate and committed Community Fundraising team and they will be in touch in due course.

**As a volunteer, how will I know how to use the new identity in my everyday work?**

You will be contacted and given guidance by the staff teams you work with, based on brand guidelines for our new brand. It will take time to establish the new brand, so please do ask your usual point of contact in our team if you have any concerns about how to use the new brand.

**As a donor, what will the change mean for me?**

We will continue to keep you informed about all the good things we are doing across our Assistance Dog, Family Dog and Community Dog services. We value your support as we seek to realise our ambition to benefit many more people through our work. There is no need for you to take any action. If you have a Direct Debit with the charity, the regular transfer will continue automatically.

**I have left a legacy in my will to Dogs for the Disabled, what will the change mean for me?**

If you have left a gift in your will to Dogs for the Disabled, this will remain valid after we have changed our name, as we will be keeping our registered charity and company registration numbers. There is no need for you to take any action or amend your will to reflect our new name.