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## COMMUNITY DOG HANDLER – SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION

## Key Tasks

1. To create and implement goal-oriented and engaging AAI programmes for clients supported by a range of partner organisations.

2. To work closely with our partners to agree appropriate goals for each client and to match dogs to clients and their agreed programme of work.

3. To undertake risk assessments appropriate to each client/working environment.

4. To regularly review the progress of clients with representatives from our partner organisations and to support the evaluation of our Community Dog programmes.

5. To manage the Community Dog(s) for whom you are the primary handler to ensure that their work schedule, working practices, interventions and associated care is managed in a way that meets the dog’s health, welfare and wellbeing needs, in line with Dogs for Good policies and procedures.

6. To assess and train Community Dogs in preparation for specific exercises and activities with clients.

7. To work closely with colleagues in our partner organisations, to co-ordinate Community Dog programme activity and maintain appropriate records.

8. To support a team of volunteers responsible for boarding the Community Dogs allocated to current projects.

9. To conduct regular checks and maintain records to ensure that the overall health, welfare and wellbeing needs of the Community Dogs are met, in line with the charity’s Dog Health and Wellbeing policy.

10. To participate in and support programmes of evaluation/research conducted by Dogs for Good and our partners. This will include ensuring that relevant data about work with clients is collected and maintained, in line with the Dogs for Good Data Protection policy and protocols agreed with our partner organisations.

11. To keep abreast of and share literature, ideas and best practice in the field of AAI and relevant client conditions, which may inform the development of the Community Dog service.

12. To support publicity requirements to promote the work of Dogs for Good and its partners.

13. To undertake any other task as agreed with your Line Manager.

**SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

1. **Sound judgement, skills and experience in relation to the following:**

* Dog training and handling matters, including the analysis of temperaments, behaviour, appropriate training methods and requirements, public image considerations, solutions for training and behavioural problems.
* Working with people with a range of disabilities/individual needs.

1. **Communication**

* Good interpersonal skills and ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with a wide range of people, internally and externally (oral and written skills). This will include clients and their families, a range of professional partners (eg therapists, social care practitioners, members of the public and colleagues).
* Ability to listen, respond and build on feedback received from the outcome of AAI programmes and from research initiatives.

1. **Creativity and change**

* Able to create engaging programmes of activity with a dog aimed at meeting agreed client goals.
* Responsive to recommended changes in policies, procedures and best practice and able to adapt working practices to ensure these are incorporated.
* Open to new ideas and also confident to put forward ideas to colleagues, thus enabling Dogs for Good’s work to develop. This will involve creativity in problem-solving and responding appropriately to new ideas and unexpected situations.

1. **Team-working skills**

* Ability to work effectively as part of more than one team, with people with a range of skills and experience.
* Able to work calmly when under pressure.

1. **Planning and organisation**

* Good planning disciplines, focused on clear outcomes and delivered in line with recognised standards of practice.
* Ability to manage and prioritise own workload and resources to meet programme commitments and deadlines.
* IT skills: Ability to use technology to support the delivery of the service and to ensure data and records can be stored and accessed easily.

1. **Knowledge in the following areas:**

* Understanding of AAI and its successful application.
* Law in relation to dogs.
* Health and safety practices of dog handling and client management.

**PERSON PROFILE**

We are looking for a person who can demonstrate the following qualities:

* Proactive, positive and flexible approach
* Outcomes-oriented; a ‘can-do’ person
* Self-motivated and organised
* Creative approach and problem-solver
* Inclusive style, willing to share and learn
* Operates to high standards

**OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

1. You will be required to hold a full UK driving licence, as daily travel is required in this role.

2. As you will be working with vulnerable people, you will be required to undergo a DBS check and adhere to the charity’s Safeguarding policy and procedures and those of our partner organisations.

3. The jobholder will be required to work to Dogs for Good’s standards of Animal Assisted Intervention, which embrace the standards of Animal Assisted Intervention International (AAII).

4. Flexible working hours will be required in some instances to facilitate the effective delivery of the Community Dog service.

5. The Community Dog Handler may on occasions be required to accommodate a trained Community Dog in their home.

May 2018