

# Volunteer Dog Team Role Description

**Reports to:** Community Dog Team

**Coordinator:** Community Dog Practitioner/Handler

## About Dogs for Good

Dogs for Good believes that dogs and the bond that we share with them can help us lead happier, healthier lives. We have an ambitious five-year strategy to support over 4,000 people a year by 2028, and we're now looking to expand our communications team to help raise awareness of our work and support communications across the organisation.

Our approach is unique, we work with people who often find the world inaccessible and difficult to be part of, supporting people with complex health and social care needs. We're continually striving towards an ever more person-centred and dog-centred approach - we know that a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't reflect how we can best help people - dogs come in all shapes and sizes and so does our support. Our experienced team understands the powerful connections between people and dogs and how to tailor this to help individuals, families and communities to increase independence, feel connected, confident and happier.

## About Our Workplace

Dogs for Good is dedicated to advancing the boundless possibilities of what a connection between people and dogs can enable – in making everyday life fuller, healthier and happier for everyone involved. We want to support more people to



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benefit from these connections and we have an exciting new strategy to expand our reach and impact by 2028. About Our Workplace

## Role outline

The role of the Volunteer Dog Team involves supporting the work of the charity by providing animal assisted activities with their own trained dog. The role involves facilitating positive interactions between the dog and the people we support with a range of individual needs. These may include taking part in activities which are aimed to provide opportunities for motivation, education, or recreation to enhance quality of life through one or more of the following activities:

- Wellbeing walks for small groups
- Visits to care homes, schools or other facilities
- Befriending visits, i.e. visiting people in their own homes
- Dog Days: group activity with several dogs present

The activities will depend on the need in your geographical area, specific projects, and of course which activities the handler and dog would enjoy and be most suitable for. The handler is the advocate for their dog, there to support them, and ensure they are prepared and enjoy their role fully.

## Main tasks & responsibilities

- Carry out engaging, safe and enjoyable visits and activities for people with a range of needs
- Support and train your dog in line with Dogs for Good principles and guidance
- Keep your dog clean and healthy, ensuring hygiene standards are upheld for the safety of all participants
- Maintain and monitor the training, behaviour and wellbeing of your dog and prepare for activity sessions
- Keep up-to-date records on activities carried out



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- Report any concerns or incidents that occur in a timely manner
- Liaise with the relevant Dogs for Good staff to ensure the dog's activity, wellbeing and behaviour are regularly assessed
- Liaise with relevant health/social care professionals and/or clients' families where required
- Learn about and adhere to Dogs for Good standards for Animal Assisted Activities

## Desired skills and abilities

Support and training will be provided to ensure handlers are familiar with Dogs for Good standards of handling, training and welfare, and how to facilitate interactions with clients. Additional education will be provided if working with a specific client group. We ask our handlers to meet the following requirements:

- Commitment to carrying out activities as agreed in your area
- Dog training/handling experience and knowledge of dog welfare
- Prepared to follow Dogs for Good guidelines, including hygiene measures like regular grooming
- Knowledge of animal assisted interventions
- Able to work in a team including Dogs for Good staff, clients, family members and health professionals
- Kind and compassionate approach to working with clients while maintaining boundaries
- Good communication and organisational skills

## Practical requirements

- Able to transport your dog safely to sessions and training (valid driving licence and access to a vehicle or suitable alternative)
- Manage the dog's working schedule, taking advice from Dogs for Good staff
- Keep records of activities and dog welfare
- Attend Dogs for Good training (online and face-to-face), covering:



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- Dog body language and behaviour
- Teaching your dog skills
- Facilitating positive dog-person interactions
- Dog welfare and wellbeing
- Understanding client needs
- Preparing for activities, risk assessing, zoonoses
- Safeguarding adults and children
- Dogs for Good standards for Animal Assisted Activities
- Participate in refresher training and annual assessments

## What you will gain from volunteering in this role

- Be part of a community-based service supporting people with diverse needs
- Support from Dogs for Good in training your dog
- Learn new skills and gain understanding of animal assisted interventions
- Represent the charity and contribute to its wider work
- Be part of a team and meet new people

### Disclosure & Barring Service Check: Required

In some activities (e.g., befriending), the handler may support clients unsupervised, such as people living with dementia. Ongoing training, regular check-ins, and support from Dogs for Good or a partner organisation will be provided.



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