



## Dog Matters

Looking for an Assistance Dog: what are your options?

- ♥ Assistance Dog Charity / CIC
- ♥ Dog Training Organisation
- ♥ Owner selected and trained



### What do we mean by an “Assistance Dog”?

“Assistance Dog” is the term used in the UK to describe a dog that is trained to “assist” their caregiver, specific to the individual’s health needs.

There is more information about what that means here:

<https://www.assistedogs.org.uk/assistance-dog-information/>

There is not currently a legal requirement in the UK to be assessed by or provide identification that your dog has been trained by, an ADUK (or other) registered organisation. Please see the Equality Act 2010 for further information on the legal rights of an assistance dog under the UK law.

This does not mean that we should be accepting poor standards and wellbeing for assistance dogs, and anyone looking to seek help from an organisation or individual should check their credentials and ensure that they understand what is required of an assistance dog in terms of: wellbeing, responsibility, safety, access, and assistance.



## Assistance Dog Charities

- ♥ Waiting lists and application processes.
- ♥ Expertise in specific areas of assistance dog training and health conditions.
- ♥ Matched to a dog of at least 12 months of age.
- ♥ Health and behaviour background of all their dogs.
- ♥ Breeding, socialisation, and training processes in place.
- ♥ Assessment process for all their dogs and clients to get the best matches.
- ♥ Membership of Assistance Dog umbrella organisations with external assessment processes in place.
- ♥ Jacket and ID slips, ID and qualification documentation provided.
- ♥ Waiting lists, application and acceptance process can be years.



Examples of UK Assistance Dog Charities who provide dogs:

<https://www.assistedogs.org.uk/members/>

<https://www.assistedogs.org.uk/candidates/>

<https://assistedogsinternational.org/>

## Owner-trained Assistance Dog: looking for help?

- ♥ Do you have the energy and capacity to put all the work into: raising a dog, meeting a dog's needs, and all the input required to help you achieve your assistance dog goals?
- ♥ Do you have support from others to help you with the training, care giving, and meeting a dog's needs?
- ♥ Seek help in sourcing the right dog for your family and your future needs from knowledgeable and experienced dog professionals.
- ♥ Find help from experienced professionals who understand:
  - Dog behaviour.
  - Dog training.
  - Your health needs and what you may need support with.
  - Standards of training and behaviour to work towards.
- ♥ Be prepared that your dog may not be suitable for assistance dog training.
- ♥ Do you have the funds to pay for all the bills related to your dog's needs, health, and training support?
- ♥ Research insurance to make sure you are covered for public access.

Examples of UK Owner trained Assistance Dog Charities/Assessors:

<https://dogaid.org.uk/>

<https://pawsable.com/>

<https://www.cgidogs.co.uk/>

<http://www.darwins.org.uk/>

<https://www.theadaa.org/> - Assistance Dog Assessment Association



## Ready trained Assistance Dogs for £: What to look out for

- ♥ Is the organisation or individual supplying the dogs experienced in: selecting dogs, assessing dogs and training dogs for public access, and supporting people with a variety of needs? Ask for evidence.
- ♥ Is the organisation or individual keen to adhere to standards of wellbeing for the dogs in line with dog training organisations? I.e., are they a member of a dog training organisation?
- ♥ Is the organisation or individual keen to adhere to standards of public access set out by Assistance Dogs UK or any other public access standards designed to ensure dog wellbeing, client wellbeing and public wellbeing are at the forefront?
- ♥ Has the organisation or individual discussed your needs to gain a better understanding of the type of help you will need and based the dog's training around this?
- ♥ What does the organisation or individual recommend training a dog to do to support your needs? Is this realistic / safe / suitable?
- ♥ Has the organisation or individual been transparent about the training methods they use, the boarding facilities used and how they will support you with your dog's training and behaviour after the initial training process?

