



**SERVICE
DOGS UK**
for those with PTSD
who have served



CONSIDERATIONS & INFORMATION BEFORE APPLYING

Providing PTSD Assistance Dogs from rescue to veterans of the
Armed Forces & Emergency Services
for independence, 24/7 support and a new way of coping.

ServiceDogsUK.org

📌 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications are open to members/veterans who

- ✔ Have served or are serving in Armed Forces & Emergency Services (including Coast Guard & RNLI & UKSAR).
- ✔ Have a clinical diagnosis by a psychologist or psychiatrist of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.
- ✔ Are based/living in West Sussex, Surrey and East & North Hampshire.
- ✔ Are able to committed to partaking in the PTSD Assistance Dog Programme which is around 9 months long and involves 2 weekly training sessions at which we expect attendance.

Please note:

- ✘ We do NOT provide PTSD Assistance Dog Training to already existing dogs or puppies.
- ✘ We are NOT able to place an Assistance Dog (in training) with (an) already existing dog(s) in the household.
- ✘ We do NOT sell dogs or accept clients because of individual specific funding or other returns.
- ✘ Do NOT provide professional mental health support.
- ✘ We do NOT train for guarding or protection .

📌 WHAT IS THE PTSD ASSISTANCE DOG PROGRAMME

We provide an intensive dog training programme of around 9 months where you will get partnered with a rescue dog with the aim to become an Assistance Dog Partnership.

The rescue dog is selected by the charity for you. We do not select specific breeds or train, already existing, pet dogs or puppies.

The rescue dogs the charity selects are in need of a home, friendship and love. They are assessed thoroughly for temperament and character prior to being partnered with a veteran.

You will learn how to train the dog, look after him or her, obtain new skills and routines and become a responsible guardian under the guidance of our supportive team in weekly sessions.

The dogs we train are not pets or solely companions, they are trained to be with you **24/7 as working PTSD Assistance Dogs** and are training to mitigate particular symptoms of PTSD.; such as Nightmare Waking, Anxiety & Panic Interruption, Dissociation Interruption, Medication Retrieval, Body Positioning to give space, Exit (taking their partner to the nearest exit) amongst other tasks.

Our dogs wear a harnesses stating PTSD Dog in public both during training and are required to wear these once they are Assistance Dogs and working in the public domain.

The Assistance dog's ownership remains with the charity and Assistance Dog Partnerships will be in contact with the charity for the lifetime of the dog.

Our training programme is FREE to our clients.

📌 APPLICATION PROCESS...

Once you have applied and we have your details and provided you are eligible, you will be contacted either via telephone or email.

Upon a successful first telephone interview, we will conduct a home assessment to establish your suitability for the programme.

We will require:

- 🐾 Evidence of clinical diagnosis,
- 🐾 Evidence of service,
- 🐾 Details of your current/recent mental health support network and treatment,
- 🐾 Direct access to and contact with your support network and mental health provider.

It is on the basis of the above that we will review Suitability and Programme Acceptance.

If you are accepted on the programme you will be invited to a training session to meet the team.

After that, you'd be joining the Programme which will be explained to you in full detail.

Applying does not automatically mean you will be accepted.

We do NOT offer drop-in sessions before any programme acceptance, our training sessions are closed to the public.

CONSIDERATIONS

Please consider the below carefully before applying to be considered on the Service Dogs UK assistance dog programme.

- While we know that the right partnership of human and dog can significantly help with PTSD an assistance dog isn't for everyone ...
- Dogs are friends for life, taking care of them is a lifetime commitment with 'up and downs', they are highly sociable beings and cannot be left daily for long periods of time, an assistance dog will be trained to be with you at ALL TIMES - it's a partnership and you will become a partnership, as such an Assistance Dog has different requirements to a pet dog.
- Dogs are individual sentient beings and while they would be working for you, they too, need to enjoy life to stay focused and motivated.
- Dogs are not born as Assistance Dogs, it takes time and work for you and a dog, with the support of our professional dog trainers and team, to get to that stage - this is why the programme takes 9 months. You will not have an Assistance Dog from the start who is able to support you straight away. A rescue dog who is training to become an Assistance Dog, especially at the start, will be looking to you for support.
- If you live in sheltered housing, rented accommodation or council housing are you allowed a dog? *We will need evidence from the provider to support this.*
- For dogs to stay healthy, physically and mentally, they need to go out twice a day, come rain or shine, they need to explore the world with you and need twice daily walks – can you provide this?
- Can you afford insurance, veterinary care, good food and other dog needs? Dogs cost money! While we provide everything, apart from petrol, during the course of the programme, it is essential that you are able to fund the dog over his/her lifetime.
- Dogs need some stability, is your home environment stable enough to bring in another/new member of the family?
- Your dog would be wearing a harness saying PTSD Assistance Dog (in training - whilst in training) - this is unavoidable. Have you accepted your condition enough to not have an issue with this, if your condition is something you do not want other people to know then having a PTSD Assistance Dog might not be for you?
- The dogs we train are not pets, they are working assistance dogs to be with you at all times, if you are in

employment you will need to talk to your employer. *We would need evidence by the employer to say they support you and the Assistance Dog in training and later on the Assistance Dog, we can advise if needed.*

- Can you provide alternative care for the dog when you need to go into hospital for a short period of time? Do you have a support network of people around you? *We need evidence by your support network to say they support you and the Assistance Dog in training and later on the Assistance Dog.*
- Have you spoken to your friends, family and health worker about your application? If you haven't please do, it's important your support network is fully behind your decision. *We need evidence by your support network and mental health provider to say they support you and the Assistance Dog in training and later on the Assistance Dog.*
- Our programme is at times hard work, but very rewarding it from you requires a real commitment. It involves 2 weekly training sessions with homework, regular home visits and training courses over a period of 9 to 12 months are you able to commit to this? You will, at times, be asked to do things that you are not entirely sure about, which might push you out of your comfort zone, always with support, but are you ready for this?
- Once you and your dog have completed the programme we will provide after-care such as home visits, regular training checks and you and an Assistance Dog will be required to take annual assessments to ensure that you are still up to Assistance Dogs accreditation standards.
- If you are accepted onto the programme it can take time (weeks/months) before a suitable dog for you can be found. We are not able to provide instant suitable rescue dogs - the dogs we select are like 'gold dust'.

INFO

Service Dogs UK trains and provides assistance dogs to support members of the Armed Forces and Emergency Services who have PTSD. We mainly use dogs from rescue centres to achieve unique partnerships that will greatly enhance the lives of both. We continue to support the partnerships as part of our ongoing commitment to 'those that serve', past or present.

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Terms, processes and eligibility criteria are subject to change.