



Healthy ageing & lifestyle

Fact Sheet No.12

Assistance dogs

If you are considering making an application for an Assistance Dog, there is as you would expect, a rigorous process to go through to determine if you qualify for this type of assistance.

Over 7,000 disabled people in the UK rely on an assistance dog to help with practical tasks, offering emotional support and independence (Ref Assistance Dogs UK).

People who may benefit from an assistance dog include people living with:

Spinal cord injury

Cerebral palsy

Multiple sclerosis

Spina bifida

Muscular dystrophy

Stroke

Osteogenesis imperfecta (brittle bones).

What tasks can an assistance dog carry out?

Opening and closing doors

Helping with dressing and undressing

Retrieving items such as mobile telephones or dropped articles like keys or a bag

Loading and emptying the washing machine

Pressing a pedestrian crossing button

Reaching up to shop-counters with items such as a wallet
(taken from Dogs for Good website)

Top Tips

Make sure you check the individual charity websites for their most up to date instructions concerning COVID-19.

Check websites to see if charities are open to new applications.

Where can an assistance dog go legally?

A recognised assistance dog provides an extension of the person's abilities and is allowed by law to accompany their partner into public places such as shops, restaurants and also to travel on public transport (taken from Dogs for Good website).

Personal experience

Steve sustained a spinal cord injury as a result of a road traffic collision (RTC) and is paralysed from the chest down. Below Steve tells us of the value Kizzie adds to his life.

"Because of my need for so much help, I felt isolated from my life, a spectator. I will always be grateful to my assistance dog Kizzie as she gave me back the confidence and courage to interact with people, go back to work and other activities. We have been together for over 8 years. The positive changes these animals bring to your life are immeasurable."



Organisations

Assistance Dogs UK

The Grange, Wycombe Road
Saunderton, Princes Risborough
Bucks HP27 9NS

Assistance Dogs UK is a coalition of 8 assistance dog charities including Canine Partners, Dogs for Good, Dog AID, Guide Dogs, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, Medical Detection Dogs, Support Dogs.

Canine Partners Tel: 08456 580480

Mill Lane
Heyshott, Midhurst
Surrey GU29 0ED

Registered charity covering England, Wales and Scotland. The dogs provide practical day to day assistance for people with physical disabilities with tasks that may be difficult for them to perform. The dogs also provide increased confidence, independence and the chance to socially interact.

Dogs for Good Tel: 01295 252600

The Frances Hay Centre
Blacklocks Hill
Banbury
Oxon OX17 2BS

Their assistance dogs support adults age 17 plus with a range of disabilities, providing practical support which enables greater independence.

Support Dogs Tel: 0114 261 7800 or 07852 010229

21 Jessops Riverside
Brightside Lane
Sheffield S9 2RX

Support Dogs aim to improve the quality of life and independence of people with a wide range of physical disability by training their own pet dog as a disability assistance dog; carrying out tasks which are specifically tailored to their needs.

Disclaimer

The information and opinions shared on this website are based on my personal experience of working in the health sector and research I have carried out whilst writing articles; it is of a general nature and should not be used as a substitute for seeking medical advice. My aim is to ensure that this information is accurate and kept up to date, but you should always consult the appropriate healthcare professionals if you have a concern about your health.

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