



Chair of the Dog A.I.D. Board of Trustees

Thank you for your interest in joining Dog A.I.D. The Chair will lead our Board of Trustees and help to grow and develop this small charity to support many more people with disabilities throughout the UK to become more independent through training their own Assistance Dog. Our current Chair, Paul Miles, will leave the role at our AGM in September 2024 for personal reasons.

You would be joining the Board at an exciting time as we are building the staff team and implementing our Strategic Plan, led by Belinda Johnson as CEO supported by a small but strong team. As set out in our Strategic Plan, Dog A.I.D. has great potential and ambition to grow and extend our reach to support many more disabled people throughout the UK, through increasing the network of skilled volunteer trainers, developing our training and support, and raising the charity's profile.

Dog A.I.D.'s Assistance Dogs change lives. By focusing on the existing pet/owner bond, outcomes for our clients include:

- increased independence and self-confidence;
- improved mental well-being;
- reduction in social isolation;
- reduced reliance on family members and/or carers; and
- increased opportunities, with many of our clients being able to return to work or education, supported by their accredited Assistance Dog.

We are looking for a new, active and passionate Chair, who can provide the strategic leadership and guidance needed to work with the Board of Trustees, CEO, staff and volunteer teams to grow the charity and empower many more Disabled people to improve their quality of life and independence by training their own Assistance Dog, supported by a voluntary Dog A.I.D. trainer.

Contact details for arranging a call to discuss or sending in your application in 'How to apply'. We look forward to hearing from you.

About Dog A.I.D.

Dog A.I.D. (Assistance in Disability) was established in 1992 to assist people with physical disabilities, improving their quality of life by helping them train their own pet dogs to provide assistance with day-to-day tasks. In 1996, the Dog A.I.D. Scheme was launched nationally at Crufts and today works across the U.K. from our base in Shrewsbury, Shropshire.

As at May 2024, there are currently 96 fully qualified Dog A.I.D. dogs throughout the country, with 69 more in training, supported by 96 voluntary Dog A.I.D. Trainers.

Our volunteer trainers coach their client in positive, force-free dog training techniques so that they can train their own pet dog to undertake tasks that would support them to live more independently. The partnership works through three progressive levels of assessment undertaking tasks both in the home and in public, with an independent assessor ensuring that the partnership is proficient in its tasks.

The partnership is then accredited according to Assistance Dog International (ADI) [standards](#) after completing their public access tests, meaning that the partnership can access public spaces and services, as [required](#) under the Equality Act 2010.

Dog A.I.D. is a member of [Assistance Dogs UK](#), a voluntary coalition of assistance dog charities that aims to promote the freedom, independence and rights of people with assistance dogs across the UK. All Assistance Dogs UK dogs adhere to the highest training and welfare standards as set out by ADI and the International Guide Dogs Federation.

Case Study - Ben and Phoebe

Phoebe, a fox-red Labrador, came to my family to be our pet dog in 2018 when she was 12 weeks old. Her family had to relocate due to work and couldn't take pets to their new accommodation. She had already had three homes by the time she came to us but once I met Phoebe, we instantly had a bond.

Within about a year of having Phoebe, we started noticing that she started on her own trying to help me in day-to-day life. We found this amazing and naturally were quite curious about if we could train her.



Dog A.I.D. (Assistance in Disability)

Earlyworld House, 7 Darwin Court, Oxon Business Park, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY3 5AL
Telephone 01743 588469 | Registered Charity in England and Wales Number 1178719 | www.dogaid.org.uk

After researching online, we came across Dog A.I.D. and were instantly interested, reaching out to them due to the fact that the charity trains dogs alongside their owners.

We started Assistance Dog training officially once Phoebe was two, working alongside Sarah (our volunteer trainer). The Assistance Dog training for Phoebe ran through 2020 and 2021.

Spending the year training her predominantly online during COVID-19 was definitely a challenge... especially with my mum trying to point the camera in the right direction to show tasks to our trainer. Phoebe completed her Assistance Dog training in July 2021.

Phoebe helps with taking my clothes off and bringing me new clothes every morning. She can open cupboard doors in the kitchen and bring me the post whenever it is delivered. She comes out with me wherever I go out and about and, in the supermarket, will help put items into shopping bags (even if it's her own treats) and will hand over items like a wallet to people on the till if I can't reach.

Training Phoebe to go round shops came quite late in the game in terms of her training due to us isolating for most of the whole of 2020. We thought this would be a challenge, but she's adapted a lot quicker than we thought.

I cannot actually put in full words the change that having Phoebe as my Assistance Dog has made to my life. Having a dog who go out anywhere with me and pick things up that I always end up dropping means that I can actually now more than ever be part of society in a way I couldn't before. However, above all the help Phoebe gives me on a regular basis, what this training has given me is a bond I haven't experienced with a pet before and due to our connection, it's safe to say me and Phoebe are true friends for life.

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Overview of the Board

Dog A.I.D. is a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) and registered charity, number 1178719, with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. The charity is governed by a Board comprising of up to ten Trustees, who collectively oversee and have legal responsibility for Dog A.I.D.'s governance, management, values and strategic development.

Dog A.I.D.'s Board of Trustees has been led by Co-Chairs Lynn Stacey and Debbie Broomfield since 2021, supported by Andrew Binks as Treasurer whose financial expertise and experience has been invaluable, developing robust financial management procedures and reporting. Lynn's personal experience as a Dog A.I.D. client and trainer, and in depth knowledge of assistance dog training, was complemented brilliantly by Debbie's business and HR skills and experience. Lynn continues as the Trainer Representative trustee and Debbie has now stepped back from her trustee role. The Board is now recruiting a new Chair to lead the charity's further growth to support many more Disabled people and build our volunteer team throughout the UK.

The current Trustees are:

Paul Miles, Chair
Isobel Michael, Deputy Chair
Andrew Binks, Treasurer
Hazel Shields

Client Representatives:
Gillian Kirkman
Robert Moore
Trainer Representative:
Fran Murtaugh

Profiles of the trustees available on our [website](#).

Trustees are appointed for an initial three-year term, after which trustees would be eligible for reappointment, for up to three terms. Three roles are elected through the charity's AGM: two Client Representatives and one Trainer Representative.

The trustees meet at least four times per year. The trustees mainly meet online by Zoom or Teams from across the UK. Trustees are asked to make a commitment to attend each meeting and to represent the board on committee(s) where they have specific interests and/or expertise. Trustees are also asked to take part in training and strategic development meetings.

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Role Description

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Provide leadership to the Charity and its Board, ensuring that Dog A.I.D. has maximum impact for its beneficiaries
- Ensure that Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of Dog A.I.D., and are supported and encouraged to build their skills and knowledge in relevant areas
- Ensure that the Board operates within its charitable objectives, provides a clear strategic direction for Dog A.I.D., regularly reviews policies, procedures, major risks and measures to manage and mitigate risks.
- Ensure that the Board fulfils its duties to ensure sound financial health of Dog A.I.D., with systems in place to ensure financial accountability

Relationship with the CEO

- Establish and build a strong, effective and a constructive working relationship with the CEO within which each can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges
- Provide support to and line manage the CEO on behalf of the Board, including regular meetings and an annual appraisal

Governance

- With the Deputy Chair, ensure that Trustees receive induction and training to enable them to fulfil their roles and governance arrangements are regularly reviewed
- Ensure that Trustees are fully engaged, that decisions are taken in the charity's best interests and the Board takes collective ownership

External Relations

- Act as an ambassador for Dog A.I.D.
- Proactively develop and use networking opportunities to raise awareness of the charity

- Represent Dog A.I.D. at external functions, meetings and events

Efficiency and Effectiveness

- Chair meetings of the Board of Trustees effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process, involving trustees and bringing in external expertise as needed
- With the Deputy Chair, ensure that the Board of Trustees conducts an annual skills audit to review the balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern and lead the charity effectively, and recruits to fill identified gaps
- Manage potential conflicts of interest to ensure probity is maintained and there is appropriate transparency

Person Specification

Essential

- Demonstrate a strong and visible passion and commitment to Dog A.I.D., its strategic objectives and cause
- Strong leadership and networking skills
- Effective communication and interpersonal skills, impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidence, listen and engage effectively
- Ability to bring people together
- Ability to commit time to conduct the role well
- Knowledge and understanding of the needs of Disabled people
- Demonstrable commitment to the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion, and Dog A.I.D.'s values
- A commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership

Desirable

- Personal experience of training and/or working with Assistance Dogs
- Good knowledge and understanding of charity governance, funding and finance requirements
- Experience of chairing meetings and committee work
- Experience of working and/or being a trustee in a charity

How to apply

Thank you for your interest in joining Dog A.I.D. to lead our Board of Trustees and help to grow and develop this small charity to support many more people with disabilities throughout the UK to become more independent through training their own Assistance Dog.

You will be joining the charity at an exciting time as we will be building the Board and staff team, led by our CEO. Dog A.I.D. is a small charity with great potential to grow and extend our reach through increasing the network of voluntary trainers throughout the UK, developing our training and support, and raising the charity's profile.

We are seeking to recruit a new Chair, who can provide the strategic leadership and guidance needed to work with the Board of Trustees, staff and volunteer team to grow the charity and empower many more disabled people to improve their quality of life and independence by training their own Assistance Dog, supported by a volunteer Dog A.I.D. trainer.

In order to apply, please send a copy of your CV and a covering letter to Isobel Michael at isobel.michael@dogaid.org.uk.

Please use your covering letter to demonstrate how your skills, qualities and experience meet each of the requirements listed in the Role Description, and how they have helped you achieve relevant, positive results.

We will review each application and invite shortlisted applicants to interview via Zoom. Interviews will take place on a rolling basis with a final deadline for applications of 4th September so that the new Chair could be introduced at the AGM on 15th September.

If you have any questions or would like to have a confidential conversation about the role with one of the Trustees before making your application, please contact isobel.michael@dogaid.org.uk.

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