



## **Health and Welfare Policy for Dogs on the Dog A.I.D. programme**

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Our vision is that disabled people throughout the UK will be supported to train their own pet dog as a Dog A.I.D. Assistance Dog, helping them to become more independent.

Dog A.I.D.'s mission is to enable life-changing independence, confidence and resilience for physically disabled people through the effective training of Assistance Dogs in partnership with our skilled volunteer trainers.

### **1. ADI Standards**

Maintaining the health and welfare of dogs on the Dog A.I.D. programme is essential. For dogs to be able to work for their owners and carry out specific tasks they need to be in good general health and of physical soundness.

Assistance Dogs International (ADI) Standards Require the following:

- Dogs are screened to the highest degree of good health and physical soundness.
- All dogs are dewormed, receive flea control, have dental care and have a vaccination programme.
- All dogs are spayed/neutered before placement.
- All dogs are microchipped.
- Dogs' basic needs are provided for including regular grooming, regular exercise, appropriate housing, access to water, and being treated with appreciation and respect.
- Dogs receive annual health checks.
- Dogs' weight: ideal weight is maintained.

ADI assesses every programme to ensure that these standards are maintained every five years.

Dog A.I.D meets the standards by the following:

All applicants undergo an Initial assessment process before being accepted onto the programme. [Please follow this link for to see who is responsible for each part of the Assessment](#)



## Initial Assessment

• Veterinarian Health Check
• Health Score completed
• Vaccination record recorded
• Body Condition Score recorded
• Five Domains Check - see appendices
• Video Footage of dog in movement
• Taskwork is assessed as appropriate for the dog
• Insurance details recorded

In addition:

- Dogs do not begin training until they are a minimum of 12 months and under five years of age.
- Microchip numbers are recorded.
- Neuter status recorded and client informed that the dog would need to be neutered before qualification.
- Equipment used for the dog is recorded and assessed for appropriateness.
- The dog's exercise regime is discussed and recorded.
- The dog's behaviour around food, people, animals and other dogs is assessed and recorded.
- The dog's response to traffic and loud noises is assessed and recorded.
- The trainer assesses the bond between the dog and owner and if they handle the dog appropriately.
- Provisions for emergency care are recorded.
- The owner has appropriate insurance in place.

Dog A.I.D reassess the dog's health and welfare annually. This can be done virtually if required and appropriate but must be done in person a minimum of every two years.

The following areas are assessed:

- Repeat veterinarian check.
- Dog's physical condition - visual check and video footage of movement.
- Body condition score assessed and recorded.
- Bond between dog and handler.
- Appropriate handling of the dog.
- Appropriateness of equipment being used.
- Emergency provisions.



- Dog's response to other animals, people, traffic, other dogs and unusual objects.
- Dog allows the assessor to stroke down the length of their body.
- Any inappropriate behaviour, including barking.
- Appropriate toileting habits.
- Competence in basic exercises: sit, down, stay, recall, heelwork, control off lead.
- Competence working in public areas; door manners, behaviour around food, lead walking through shops and supermarket, ability to settle in a public place.
- Three taskwork exercises carried out by the dog to mitigate the person's disability.



Dog A.I.D. has a thorough process in place to assess health concerns raised about dogs on the programme.

A Case of Concern can be raised by staff, volunteers, members of the public or a professional involved in the care of the dog. Once a concern has been raised the Senior Training Advisor will manage the process.

### Physical Health Concerns

• Health Score completed
• Case of Concerns file created
• Concern assessed by Dog A.I.D.'s consultant Veterinarian
• Meeting with client to be held to discuss action
• Possible actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Veterinarian consultation with report to be sent to Dog A.I.D.</li><li>○ Physiotherapy consultation with report to be sent to Dog A.I.D.</li><li>○ Temporary suspension from working while treatment given.</li><li>○ Removal from the programme.</li><li>○ Behavioural consultation with report sent to Dog A.I.D.</li></ul>

### Behavioural Concern

• Health Score and Five Domains check completed.
• Case of Concerns file created.
• Meeting with client to be held to discuss action.
• Possible actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Veterinarian consultation with report to be sent to Dog A.I.D.</li><li>○ Physiotherapy consultation with report to be sent to Dog A.I.D.</li><li>○ Temporary suspension from working while treatment given.</li><li>○ Removal from the programme.</li><li>○ Behavioural consultation with report sent to Dog A.I.D.</li></ul>



## Stress

Eustress (good) and Distress (bad) are two types of stress that involve a release of the same hormones. Stress is vital for adaptation, performance and survival and is a part of life. However, stress can lead to fatigue, depression, anxiety, disease, and compulsive behaviours.

Constant exposure to a level of stress, that causes the body to take resources away from other functions and causes a decline in an animals' mental and physical welfare, is known as 'distress' (Moberg & Mench, 2000; p.9-10)

Causes of stress in dogs:

External: environment, high volume and or pitch of noise, sudden noises, shouting, crowds, other dogs, too hot, too cold, damp etc.

Internal: pain, irritated skin, loneliness, frustration, physical punishment, neglect, confusion.

To reduce the probability of stress we use the 2020 Five Domains model (Mellor DJ, Beausoleil NJ, Littlewood KE, McLean AN, McGreevy PD, Jones B, Wilkins C. The 2020 Five Domains Model: Including Human-Animal Interactions in Assessments of Animal Welfare. *Animals (Basel)*. 2020 Oct 14;10(10):1870. doi: 10.3390/ani10101870. PMID: 33066335; PMCID: PMC7602120)

Dog A.I.D.'s criteria for the five domains is set out in Appendices A-D.

## Taskwork

Taskwork should be specific to the individuals needs and appropriate to the size and physical ability of the dog.

Dog A.I.D. does not train dogs to carry out bracing tasks or any task that involves weight being placed directly onto the dog.

Dog A.I.D. does not train guide dogs, hearing dogs, psychiatric dogs, or emotional support dogs.

Please see list of taskwork in [Appendix E](#)



## Retirement

- Dog A.I.D.'s suggested age of retirement is 11 years, however we will assess each partnership individually when they reach this age. The following areas will be considered before making a decision on retirement:
  - Breed
  - Pre-existing health conditions
  - Physical health
  - Task work that the dog is doing
- A dog can also be retired earlier than the suggested retirement age. This would happen in cases of medical and physical conditions affecting the ability to work and continuing to work would be detrimental to the health and welfare of the dog. This decision would only be made after consultation with veterinarian consultation or other relevant professional, such as a physiotherapist.

## Equipment

**Please refer to the separate document Dog A.I.D. equipment guidelines. You can request a copy from [the office](#)**

Date policy approved/last updated	March 2023
Date for policy review	March 2025



## The Five Domains:

Nutrition	<a href="#">Appendix A</a>
Environment	<a href="#">Appendix B</a>
Physical Health	<a href="#">Appendix C</a>
Behavioural Interactions	<a href="#">Appendix D</a>
Mental State	Mental State is covered when the first four domain criteria are met.

## Using the Five Domains Criteria

The criteria should be used to assess the dog's health and welfare in the following cases:

- If a case of concern is raised for the welfare of the dog
- If a concern is raised about the health and wellbeing of the dog
- If a case of concern is raised regarding the behaviour of the dog
- If a concern is raised during an assessment



**Domain One NUTRITION**

**Appendix A**

Criteria:

1. Food appropriate to the age and size of dog provided.
2. Fresh water available.
3. Best quality diet provided within the individuals financial means.
4. Food appropriate to the activity level of the dog.
5. The dog is fed at regular feeding times.
6. feeding equipment is clean and fit for purpose.
7. Body Condition Score is 4/5 on the 9-point scale.
8. Any allergies are identified and treated appropriately.
9. Owner is aware of where to go for advice and support if required .
10. Awareness of signs of dietary issues (loose stools, coat changes, itching, change in energy level).

	Criteria met Score of 7 - 10	Intervention required Score 4 - 6	Criteria not met Score 1 - 3
Action 1	Annual Vet checks	Advice and guidance provided	Temporary or permanent removal from scheme
Action 2	Annual weight checks	Advised to seek appropriate support	Advised to seek appropriate support
Action 3	Annual health score completed	Case of concern created	Case of concern created
Action 4		Timescale for improvement	If severe neglect suspected, they should be reported to the appropriate agency

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**Domain Two ENVIRONMENT**

**Appendix B**

Criteria:

1. The dog has appropriate indoor housing with no extremes of temperature and ventilation.
2. The dog has adequate space within the living environment.
3. The dog has access to a suitable, pet friendly, outside area.
4. The dog has appropriate place to sleep, with an adequately sized bed.
5. The dog's environment is secure.
6. The dog is not exposed to inappropriate noise levels.
7. The dog is not exposed to hazardous substances, ensuring appropriate ventilation in smoky environments.
8. The dog has free access to fresh water.
9. Multi dog homes have enough space and resources to avoid stress and competition.
10. The flooring in the home is appropriate and provides adequate grip to avoid slipping.

	Criteria met Score of 7 - 10	Intervention required Score 4 - 6	Criteria not met Score 1 - 3
Action 1	Annual Assessment	Advice and guidance provided	Temporary or permanent removal from scheme
Action 2		Case of concern created	Advised to seek appropriate support
Action 3		Advised to seek appropriate support	Case of concern created
Action 4		Timescale for improvement	If severe neglect suspected, they should be reported to the appropriate agency

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**Domain Three PHYSICAL HEALTH**

**Appendix C**

Criteria:

1. No sign of pain, discomfort or distress from allergies.
2. Appropriate interventions for dental care, ears are checked regularly and kept clean.
3. Body Condition is Score 4/5, weight is monitored.
4. Coat is clean and looks healthy and regular grooming, nail clipping is provided. The body is monitored for any lumps.
5. The dog's mobility is monitored.
6. No unmanaged medical conditions. Conditions needing ongoing medication have been disclosed and monitored.
7. Owner ensures the dog has appropriate physical exercises to maintain health of muscles and joints.
8. Stool frequency and consistency is monitored.
9. Dog is retired at an age appropriate to their health and fitness.
10. Vet checks are carried out at least annually and preventative healthcare-vaccinations and parasite protection is provided.

	Criteria met Score of 7 - 10	Intervention required Score 4 - 6	Criteria not met Score 1 - 3
Action 1	Annual Vet checks	Advice and guidance provided	Temporary or permanent removal from scheme
Action 2	Annual Video Footage of dog in movement	Advised to seek appropriate support	Advised to seek appropriate support
Action 3	Annual health score completed	Case of concern created	Case of concern created
Action 4		Timescale for improvement	If severe neglect suspected, they should be reported to the appropriate agency

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**Domain Four BEHAVIOURAL INTERACTIONS**

**Appendix D**

Criteria:

1. Enrichment activities are provided.
2. Appropriate exercise is provided.
3. Opportunity for appropriate play is provided.
4. Social interaction with inter and intra species.
5. Appropriate, positive and consistent training is given.
6. Dog is given opportunities to display species specific natural behaviours.
7. The owner is aware of signs of stress and does not intentionally expose them to stressful stimuli.
8. The dog is provided time to rest undisturbed.
9. Choice of interactions is given.
10. Appropriate advice is sought if there are signs of separation distress or phobias.

	Criteria met Score of 7 - 10	Intervention required Score 4 - 6	Criteria not met Score 1 - 3
Action 1	Annual assessment	Advice and guidance provided	Temporary or permanent removal from scheme
Action 2		Advised to seek appropriate support	Advised to seek appropriate support
Action 3		Case of concern created	Case of concern created
Action 4		Timescale for improvement	If severe neglect suspected, they should be reported to the appropriate agency

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## Taskwork

## Appendix E

Tasks that are taught regularly (this list is not exhaustive)

Pick up a dropped item and bring to hand
Retrieve an item and bring to hand (medication, phone, keys, mobility item, post)
Open doors/drawers/ cupboards
Close doors/drawers/cupboards
Load and unload the washing machine
Get help
Push buttons
Pull levers
Assist with dressing/undressing
Take an item to someone
Support from sitting to standing - train to bring an aid for this or to alert a person for assistance.
Carrying an item
Turn on/off lights
Deep Pressure Therapy for physical support (relief from spasms, pain relief)

Tasks that trainers can support clients to train if they wish but **are NOT able to be counted as a task for their level 2 and 3 assessments.**

Interrupt a behaviour
Deep pressure therapy for emotional support
Acting as a visual block
Anxiety support (chin rest, nose nudge, leaning into body)

**We do not train for any of the following due to the risks to the dog and client:**

Bracing for the client to lean on to support sitting to standing
Bracing to prevent a fall
Bracing to support getting up after a fall
Medical detection
Any task that involves applying direct pressure onto the dog's body

### Guiding tasks

We do not train or recommend that you train guiding behaviours as this requires specific experience in this area. Please discuss with the Dog A.I.D. Head Trainer or Senior Training Advisor if this is a task that your client has requested.

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## **Responsibilities for Assessment Criteria**

The Initial Assessment is carried out by the trainer. The trainer visits the client at their home and assesses the home environment, the dog's temperament, and suitability for being accepted onto the programme. The trainer will also take the video footage of the dog in movement.

The Five Domains check and Health Score is completed by the Senior Training Advisor using the Register of Interest document, veterinarian Check and Initial Assessment.

The Annual Assessment is completed by the trainer annually and reviewed by the Senior Training Advisor.

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