

Honorary Secretary for the Dog A.I.D. Board of Trustees

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About Dog A.I.D.

Dog A.I.D. 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 and in some circumstances providing life-saving interventions.

In 1996, the Dog A.I.D. scheme was launched nationally at Crufts and today has a team of staff, volunteer trainers and assessors based across the country supporting Assistance Dog partnerships, both in training and fully qualified, with our small office in a shared charity space in Shrewsbury, Shropshire.

As at June 2026, there are currently 64 fully qualified Dog A.I.D. dogs throughout the country, with 13 more in training with voluntary Dog A.I.D. Trainers and 13 waiting to be matched with a local trainer. Recruitment and support of more skilled volunteer dog trainers is key to meeting this need and growing our reach.

Recruitment of volunteers and new applications to join Dog A.I.D. for training was paused during the Emergency Appeal over autumn and winter. Following the tremendous success of the appeal, we reopened to applications and are actively recruiting for new volunteers.

The training takes up to two years with both dog and disabled owner (‘client’) receiving specialist education from our network of volunteer trainers and attain fully qualified Assistance Dog status.

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 Assistance Dogs International and the International Guide Dogs Federation.

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.

In 2025, Louise Doran became Dog A.I.D.'s new Chair, bringing extensive charity and leadership experience in Assistance Dog and Dog Welfare charities. She is supported by Andrew Binks as Treasurer and Isobel Michael as Deputy Chair. Full profiles are trustees are available at: www.dogaid.org.uk/trustees-and-patrons

We are now seeking to recruit a new Honorary Secretary to join the Board as the charity develops following a successful Emergency Appeal in 2025 to support more physically Disabled people and build our volunteer team.

The Trustees collectively oversee and have legal responsibility for Dog A.I.D.'s governance, management, values and strategic development.

The current Trustees are:

- Louise Doran (Chair)
- Isobel Michael (Deputy Chair)
- Andrew Binks (Treasurer)
- Gillian Kirkman (Client Representative)
- Rhiannon Moore (Client Representative)
- Fran Murtaugh (Trainer Representative)
- Liz Drury
- Hazel Shields

Trustees are appointed for an initial three-year term, after which trustees would be eligible for reappointment. 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, online as we are based 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.

Role Description

Honorary Secretary

Responsibilities

Governance

- Work with the Deputy Chair to ensure up-to-date records are maintained of Board membership and that Dog A.I.D. complies with the requirements of the Charity Commission in terms of registration, reporting, changes to the Constitution or Trustees.
- Circulate agendas and minutes of the annual general meeting (AGM) and any special or extraordinary general meetings.
- Prepare agendas for Dog A.I.D. Board meetings in consultation with the Chair and Charity Manager.
- Receive agenda items from other Board members and circulate agendas and any supporting papers in good time, as set out in the Constitution.
- Check that quorum is present at all Board meetings.
- Minute meetings (including AGM) or ensure that another minute taker is available and circulate the draft minutes to all committee members. In the case of closed Board meetings, the Secretary will take the minutes.
- Check that trustees and staff have carried out action(s) agreed.
- Maintain the summary of the Declarations of Interests from Trustees and circulate with the agenda for Board meetings.

Overall Trustee Responsibilities

- Ensure that Dog A.I.D. pursues its charitable objects, as defined in the Constitution, by developing and agreeing a long-term strategy.
- Ensure that Dog A.I.D. complies with its Constitution, charity law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- Ensure that Dog A.I.D. applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects
- Ensure the financial stability of Dog A.I.D.
- Safeguard the good name and values of Dog A.I.D.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of Dog A.I.D., including having appropriate policies and procedures in place.
- Declare any conflict of interest while carrying out the duties of a Trustee.

- Appoint and support staff, monitor and review their performance.
- Use any specific expertise, knowledge or experience to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions - this includes leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives or other issues where appropriate.
- Attend all meetings, scrutinise papers in advance of meetings, and attend sub-committee meetings as appropriate
- Participate in other tasks as they arise from time to time, such as helping with fundraising and representing the charity at events or other opportunities
- Keep informed about Dog A.I.D.'s activities and wider issues which affects its work

Person Specification

- Demonstrate a strong and visible passion and commitment to Dog A.I.D., its strategic objectives and cause
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to their duties as Secretary and Trustee
- Organisational ability and an eye for detail
- Experience of committee work and procedures
- Effective communication skills.
- Strategic vision
- Good, independent judgement and a willingness to speak their mind
- An ability to think creatively
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship (training and information will be provided)
- An ability to work effectively as a member of the team
- Understanding of the needs of people with physical disabilities
- A commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

How to apply

Thank you for your interest in joining Dog A.I.D. as Honorary Secretary for 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 implement our new Strategic Plan, supported by Louise Doran as Chair, our Board and great small team led by Tara Patrick as our new Charity Manager. We will also be launching a new working name and brand for the charity, with a new website.

Dog A.I.D. is a small charity with great potential to extend our reach through increasing the network of voluntary trainers throughout the UK, developing our training and support, and raising the charity's profile.

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.

The Board of Trustees will review the applications and invite shortlisted applicants to interview via Teams.

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:

Louise Doran, Chair louise.doran@dogaid.org.uk
or
Isobel Michael, Vice Chair isobel.michael@dogaid.org.uk