



Canine  
Partners

Amazing dogs. Transforming lives.

Guidance and Tips for

Speakers

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# Introduction

Thank you so much for offering to talk to different audiences to spread the word about Canine Partners. It is so important that we continue to raise awareness of how our wonderfully trained assistance dogs really do transform lives.

We hope you find this document helpful, as we want to help you as much as possible in delivering presentations, so you feel confident and comfortable.

# The talks booking process

We thought it would be useful to give you a brief synopsis of the talk booking process:





Groups are directed to the website to complete an initial enquiry form: [caninepartners.org.uk/book-a-speaker/](https://caninepartners.org.uk/book-a-speaker/)





The charity then sends a letter/email following up the initial enquiry form thanking the organisation for their interest, giving some further details, and requesting the organisation complete a “Talks Booking Form.”


The Talks Booking Form asks for information on a range of items including the type of group, venue and accessibility, and preferred dates.

 When the Talks Booking Form is completed, the information of the organisation is entered into our database. We have a spreadsheet that allows us to search nearest speakers by postcode. Further to this, our spreadsheet shows us speaker preferences. For example, availability on days of the week and preferred audiences.

 The charity then contacts the volunteer Speaker, giving some brief details of the requested talk booking. If the volunteer Speaker is unable to help on this occasion, we then ask another volunteer Speaker if they are available.

 Once a Speaker has confirmed that they can offer a talk, we then send a confirmation to the organisation, giving them the name of the speaker, date, etc.

 We ask that the speaker then liaise directly with the organisation about further details and any questions.

 After a talk has been delivered and if we receive any income from a talk, we thank them and record any income against the organisation.

The whole process is tracked on our database, including the name of the speaker, amounts raised, and any correspondence with the organisation.

We understand that organisations may approach volunteer Speakers independently, without going through the above process. Please may we respectfully ask that, if this is the case, Speakers ask the organisation to still complete a Talks Booking Form, and that volunteer Speakers email this to [talks@caninepartners.org.uk](mailto:talks@caninepartners.org.uk) with the details that have already been arranged with the organisation.



This is so we can ensure that all our records are up to date and that you are covered under the Canine Partners' Insurance.





# Tips for Speakers


After speaking to several experienced volunteer Speakers for the charity, we thought it may be helpful to give some tips to help speakers who are new to giving talks.

## Preparation

-  Canine Partners will provide you with information about the type of organisation, size of audience, age of audience, etc.
-  Please contact the organisation before you visit. You may want to double-check:
  - Parking and facilities
  - The size of the audience, the purpose, timings, and length of presentation, etc.
  - Whether the venue has a laptop you can use so you can take a memory stick with a presentation on
  - If the venue has a projector and screen
  - Whether you can access the internet
  - The organiser's phone number for emergencies

 It is nice to understand your audience, so have a quick search on the internet!


 Check the location and directions of the venue, and how long it will take to get there, especially at busy times.

 Please wear your lanyard, your volunteer clothing (a Canine Partners polo shirt and/or a Canine Partner jumper) with dark trousers/skirt.










## Giving the presentation

-  Adapt to your own style - we are all comfortable talking to audiences in different ways. Some people do not like using PowerPoints and would prefer to talk, other people prefer to use props and some people prefer to use a mixture. Please feel free to print off pages from the presentation and use these as visuals.




Please see below some examples of what some of our speakers take with them:



-  Adapt the presentation for your audience. Children prefer visuals and like answering questions so try to keep it as interactive as possible.
-  Remember the audience is interested and on your side, otherwise you wouldn't have been invited! Be confident, and clear.
-  You are Canine Partners! Please try to use we/us when talking about the charity.
-  Talking to organisations can be quite nerve-wracking at first. We want you to enjoy giving talks, so you may want us to arrange someone to “buddy-up” with for your first few talks. Please let us know if you'd like this by contacting us at: [talks@caninepartners.org.uk](mailto:talks@caninepartners.org.uk)
-  Please take a donation box with you. You will find that audiences will often donate further after listening to a presentation. Please get in touch with [fundraising@caninepartners.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@caninepartners.org.uk) if you do not have a collection box and send us any donations with a clear explanation of where the donations came from.



 If people ask for other ways to donate other than by cash, please direct them to our website and ask them to add in the notes box that they are donating after listening to a talk, or ask them to contact the National Training Centre and again explain that they are donating after giving a talk. This will ensure that the donation is added to our system correctly.

### Over the phone


Call us on  
**03456 580480**

### Send us a cheque

Make cheques payable to  
Canine Partners and send to  
**Canine Partners, Ashby Road,  
Osgathorpe, Loughborough,  
Leicestershire, LE12 9SR**

### Online

Visit our website to pay  
in your sponsorship  
donations online.  
**[caninepartners.org.uk/donate](https://caninepartners.org.uk/donate)**

 Canine Partners sends thank you letters to thank organisations when we receive their donations

## Frequently asked questions

### When was the charity founded?

Canine Partners was registered as a charity in 1990, making 2025 our 35th Anniversary. The charity has since gained recognition as an international leader in training assistance dogs and is accredited as a Centre of Excellence by the association Assistance Dogs International.

### How many people have a canine partner?

*(Please note that these figures will be updated regularly on the website and there is a slide in the "other slides" to support this question if needed.)*

Our facts and figures change constantly but to date (February 2024) we have over 345 working partnerships and we have successfully matched over 950 partnerships throughout England, Wales and Scotland since 1990. Family members also benefit from a canine partner, providing peace of mind and removing the responsibility of care. Many spouses have returned to work and children to education, secure in the knowledge that their loved one is in safe paws.



## Where is the charity based?

Canine Partners is a National Charity. We have a National Training Centre in Osgathorpe, Leicestershire, but our training programme to train puppies and recruit Puppy Parent volunteers is all across the UK.

We have Puppy Training areas in Staffordshire, Birmingham, Bedford, Leicester and Nottingham, Derby, Hull, East Berkshire and Surrey, West Berkshire, South Hampshire, and West Sussex. We also have active partnerships throughout England, Wales and Scotland, and our Aftercare Team provide support to all these partnerships.

## How many puppies are in training?

We have over 50 puppies in training living with Puppy Parent volunteers at one time and, ideally, we have approximately three dogs in advanced training at our National Training Centre per Advanced Trainer at any one time. This is approximately 18 dogs.

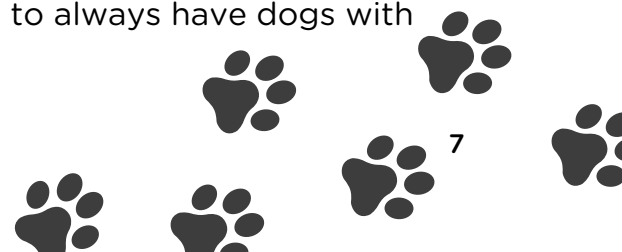


Due to the high standard of training required for each canine partner, and making sure we consider our dogs' wellbeing and happiness, not all of our puppies become fully jacketed assistance dogs. If they are not suitable for the life of an assistance dog, they have a career change within Canine Partners to be a Pet Assisted Living dog (PAL) working within the home of a disabled person helping with everyday tasks, as a Dog Ambassador raising awareness for the charity, or another important role within the charity such as working with our applicants on assessment days.

Although only a small amount of our dogs are withdrawn, each of them are rehomed to a suitable loving home. These dogs often support to families who would benefit from a well-trained dog. Sometimes our dogs are returned to their breeders if they haven't been bred by Canine Partners.

## Why have you not brought a dog with you today?

The focus of the charity is to train our wonderful assistance dogs to help transform the lives of people living with a disability. We do have a small Dog Ambassador Team, who are volunteers or members of staff, who look after and train our demonstration dogs. However, we give talks to many groups nationally and therefore it is just not feasible for us to always have dogs with us.





## What breed of dogs do you use?

Our dogs are mainly Labrador or LabradorXR retriever. This is because of their natural instinct to retrieve. Further to this, they also love their food which does help when training! We do occasionally train Labradoodles to support people with higher levels of allergies.

## How much does it cost to train a canine partner?

*This is broken down further in a slide provided in the "other slides" section of the PowerPoint presentation if needed.*

-  Puppy selection and training = £7,500  
Includes puppy recruitment and puppy training for the first year with a Puppy Parent volunteer and an expert Puppy Trainer.
-  Advanced Trainer = £6,500  
For advanced dog training at the National Training Centre, including kennelling and training.
-  Partnership creation and training = £6,000  
Including assessment and training of applicants as well as the two-week residential training course.
-  Aftercare and partnership support = £10,000  
Includes regular visits, advice and support from our network of Aftercare Assistants for the lifetime of the partnership.

## Does all the money donated go to creating new partnerships?

*This is broken down further in a slide provided in the "other slides" section of the PowerPoint presentation if needed.*

In every £1 donated, 75 pence goes directly towards breeding and selecting puppies, specialist dog training, assessing potential applicants, and supporting partnerships across the whole of the United Kingdom. 25 pence goes to raising further awareness of our charity and fundraising.





## Do you charge a person with disabilities for a canine partner?

The charity retains ownership of the dog, during its working life. Our only fee to our partners is £1 as part of our Custodian Agreement for the canine partner. The partner pays for dog food, vet bills and insurance themselves, however many of our partners receive direct payments from their local Council to cover these costs as their canine partner can be recognised as their official carer.

## What happens to the canine partner when it retires?

A partnership may last for as long as the dog remains fit and healthy, and the partner can manage and care for the dog. Then we would look to retire the dog by the age of 12 years. We are dedicated to ensuring that our dogs continue to enjoy happy and content lives during retirement. This may involve the dog remaining with their partner, being rehomed with a friend or relative of the partner, or with someone on our rehoming list waiting for a retired canine partner. The dog's well-being remains at the heart of all our decisions. We provide successor dogs to our partners as a priority when their dog retires or passes away, as we commit to supporting the person for as long as they need or want us to provide them with assistance dogs.

## What happens if you are worried about the welfare of a dog?

Dog welfare is of paramount importance. Canine Partners is always the owner of the dog, and the partners are the custodians of the dog. We work with the partnerships to ensure that they are a success for all parties and monitor these relationships with our Aftercare Team. Sometimes, for example, a beneficiary is unwell and cannot look after their dog for a while. We have a huge network of volunteers who can provide foster care for the dog while the partner recovers.



## Do you work with other charities?

As a member of the organisation Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK), we work closely with fellow members, as well as running regular campaigns to promote access and understanding of the role of assistance dogs in supporting the needs of people with disabilities. We also sometimes train dual-purpose dogs for applicants who have physical disabilities as well as other impairments such as hearing loss (with Hearing Dogs for Deaf People). We also work closely with Forces charities.



## Do you receive any Government funding?

We receive no Government funding and rely solely on public donations and legacies to provide our amazing dogs. We are fortunate to have many wonderful volunteers across Great Britain, who help to train and foster our puppies, fundraise for us, organise and help at events, and help us with administration, which keeps our costs down.

## Can we visit the National Training Centre?

We welcome visits to our National Training Centre near Osgathorpe, Leicestershire. We have Open Mornings each month, which you can reserve tickets for via our website [caninepartners.org.uk/events](https://caninepartners.org.uk/events)

## Where can I find out more information about Canine Partners or how to help the charity?

Please contact us on:

 **Phone**  
Call us on  
**03456 580480**

 **Email**  
Email us at  
**[info@caninepartners.org.uk](mailto:info@caninepartners.org.uk)**

 **Website**  
Visit our website  
**[caninepartners.org.uk](https://caninepartners.org.uk)**

**Thank you for helping us raise awareness about Canine Partners as a volunteer Speaker.**

If you have any questions, please contact the Talks Team on [talks@caninepartners.org.uk](mailto:talks@caninepartners.org.uk)