

Volunteer Speaker Guidance and Agreement: Giving talks for, and on behalf of, Canine Partners

Last updated: February 2024

Thank you for registering to be a speaker on behalf of Canine Partners.

Please read the following guidance on giving talks for, and on behalf, of Canine Partners and please sign and return a copy to talks@caninepartners.org.uk. Please keep a copy for your files.

By delivering a talk for, and on behalf, of Canine Partners, you are representing the charity and our values. We ask that you embrace and support these.

Our Values:

Excellence

We always aim for the very highest standards. We never accept anything less and work hard to make improvements where necessary.

Respect

We always aim to deal with other people in the way we would ideally like to be dealt with.

Passion

We are passionate about our work and the mission of our charity. We throw ourselves into everything as much as possible and enjoy the rewards.

Teamwork

We are a multidisciplinary team, spread across the UK. We support each other, through good times and the not so good.

The personal touch

We foster a friendly family feel towards anyone with whom we come into contact. Whenever possible we are flexible and seek to tailor-make our service to every individual.

Innovation

We aim to lead the way in everything we do becoming ever more expert. We try new things, in the full knowledge that some things work and some things do not but if you never try, you will never know. We welcome any new ideas.

Equal opportunities

Canine Partners is committed to being an inclusive organisation that promotes inclusion, equality, and diversity. We promote equality of opportunity for all, giving every individual the chance to achieve their potential, free from

prejudice and discrimination. We oppose all forms of unfair discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, religious belief, age, or disability. Canine Partners ensures everyone is treated with fairness, kindness, and respect, and we know as a representative of our charity, you will do the same.

We would ask that you:

- Please do not express personal opinion about your views on colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, religious belief, age or disability.
- Please do not express personal opinion about your views on politics.
- Please do not express personal opinion or unfairly criticise, other people, organisations or other Charities and their work, and this includes other ADUK Charities.
- Please do not encourage a donor to cancel a donation with another charitable institution in favour of Canine Partners.
- Please do not disclose confidential information belonging to Canine Partners to the audience. If you have any concerns or wish to clarify information that you are aware of, but is not within the formal presentation, then please email talks@caninepartners.org.uk
- You are an ambassador for Canine Partners. Please consider your actions to protect our reputation.
- Please be aware that even if you feel you are saying something in light humour, this could be misconstrued or cause offence.

Disability Awareness and Language Guidance

(Source: www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication/)

We will provide guidance notes with the presentation, so please use these to assist you.

What is important to remember?

Good disability etiquette is very simple and ensures that you are treating all individuals with courtesy, dignity and respect. The way you speak about disabilities - your disability etiquette - demonstrates your, and your organisation's values.

The Social Model of Disability

Canine Partners follows The Social Model of disability which says that people are disabled through the barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference. Read more here: <https://www.scope.org.uk/about-us/social-model-of-disability/>

The main message is that there is therefore a difference between an impairment and a disability:

- An **impairment** is a condition caused by such things as an accident or trauma, disease, or genetics that affects a person’s vision, hearing, speech, mobility, or mental function.
- A **disability** is the constraint imposed upon a person, regardless of that person’s ability or impairment. These constraints can be physical or attitudinal. For example, stairs and curbs are disabilities imposed on those who use wheelchairs.

Basic guidelines:

The word ‘disabled’ is a description (see above) not a group of people. Canine Partners does use the term ‘disabled people/adults’ and “adults with physical disabilities/impairments” in some circumstances, but we do not use ‘the disabled’ as the collective term. Don’t automatically refer to ‘disabled people’ in all communications – many people who need disability benefits and services don’t identify with this term. In some circumstances, it may be more suitable to use ‘people/adults with health conditions or impairments affecting their mobility’ if it seems more appropriate.

Avoid medical labels. They say little about people as individuals and tend to reinforce stereotypes of disabled people as ‘patients’ or unwell.

Most disabled people are comfortable with the words used to describe daily living. People who use wheelchairs ‘go for walks’ and people with visual impairments may be very pleased – or not – ‘to see you’. An impairment may just mean that some things are done in a different way.

Avoid phrases like ‘suffers from’ which suggest discomfort, constant pain and a sense of hopelessness. Avoid passive, victim words. Use language that respects people living with disabilities as active individuals with control over their own lives. For example, wheelchair users may not view themselves as ‘confined to’ a wheelchair – think of it as a mobility aid instead and they are a mobility aid user.

| Avoid | Use |
|--|--|
| (the) handicapped, (the) disabled | disabled (people) |
| afflicted by, suffers from, victim of | has [name of condition] |
| confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound | wheelchair user |
| mentally handicapped | with a learning disability (singular) with learning disabilities (plural) |
| invalid | disabled person |
| able-bodied | non-disabled |
| mental patient | person with a mental health condition |
| deaf and dumb; deaf mute | deaf, user of British Sign Language (BSL), person with a hearing impairment, dual sensory impairment |
| the blind | people with visual impairments; blind people; blind and partially sighted people |

| Avoid | Use |
|---|--|
| an epileptic, diabetic, depressive, and so on | person with epilepsy, diabetes, depression or someone who has epilepsy, diabetes, depression |
| dwarf | someone with restricted growth or short stature |
| fits, spells, attacks | seizures |
| needs | requirements |

Canine Partners presentation

We do understand that everyone presents in their own way/style, and this is key to feeling confident when delivering a talk. The official Canine Partners presentations give the key messages and information about our charity, up-to-date facts and figures, as well as approved up-to-date resources. Please share this information with your audiences. We do recognise that you may not want to deliver talks using the PowerPoint format or by using the notes as a script especially as you may want to alter your talk depending on your audience. However, please only share the facts and figures that are within the approved presentation. We do, of course, understand that you may wish to talk about your personal positive experiences with Canine Partners during the presentation. You are there to share the Canine Partners story, and you are part of that.

All the photographs and images in our presentations comply with data protection, privacy agreements and have been approved for use. It is so important that we do not use images or photographs that may cause upset or no longer have the correct permissions. However, we would be very happy for you to add a couple of approved images of yourself volunteering for Canine Partners, especially for the introduction.

We plan to continually update the presentation so please only use the current version available to you.

If you are referring to a partnership in the talk, please use their first name and dog name only. Please do not disclose their surname or any other personal details.

If you require something slightly different to what has been provided, please email talks@caninepartners.org.uk for advice.

It may be possible for a member of the Dog Ambassador team to join you for certain presentations. If you would like a dog to join you at your talk, please email talks@caninepartners.org.uk and we will do our best to support this request. Please do not approach dog handlers or partnerships directly.

If you have a canine partner, please seek approval from your Aftercare point of contact before agreeing to attend a talk with your canine partner.

If you are a Puppy Parent volunteer, please seek approval from your Puppy Team point of contact before agreeing to attend the talk with your puppy in training.

Talk bookings

All talk bookings **must** be made via our talk booking form and submitted to talks@caninepartners.org.uk. You are very welcome to secure your own talks, but a talk booking form must still be completed. This is to ensure your safety and to cover you under our insurance policy.

And finally...

It is important that you feel comfortable and confident in this role. You will be required to attend training updates when appropriate. Everyone who becomes a speaker must have completed initial training.

May we take this opportunity to thank you for volunteering and giving your time to be a speaker for Canine Partners. Delivering talks across the country to a wide range of audiences makes more and more people aware of our charity and how our wonderfully trained dogs can transform the life of a person living with a disability.

If you are happy with this guidance and would like to raise awareness of the work Canine Partners does, then please complete, and sign below and return this form to: talks@caninepartners.org.uk.

Confirmation

| |
|--|
| I agree to follow and adhere to the above guidance in relation to the giving talks for, and on behalf of, Canine Partners and I agree to attending appropriate training sessions. |
| Signed: |
| Print name in capitals: |
| Date signed agreement: |