

**What is a Puppy Parent Volunteer?** A Puppy Parent volunteer is someone who cares for, socialises a Canine Partners puppy, and provides the early education that will enable it to succeed in advanced training and become an assistance dog.

**What does the role involve?** The most fundamental part of the role is giving a loving, safe and secure home for a puppy, where they learn as much as possible about how to behave around different types of people, in different situations, with different sights and smells. However, it also involves teaching basic commands and introducing the puppy to new environments including different forms of public transport, as well as towns and cities. After 14-16 months, the Puppy Parent volunteer should have successfully socialised a puppy that behaves well and is both friendly and responsive to their handler. The puppy must also feel comfortable in all environments that they would be likely to visit with their future partner, such as a supermarket, and walks well on a lead.

**Do I need to have experience in puppy training?** Previous experience with dogs is a bonus, but not necessary. Our expert team are on hand to support you with advice and guidance every step of the way. You will also receive a Puppy Parent volunteer manual to refer to and will be connected to other volunteers who can share their experiences too.

**How long is the information admin process to become a Puppy Parent?**

Approximately 3-4 weeks. There are two assessments (Telephone and Home check). We require general information from you to register you as a Canine Partners volunteer.

**How long will I have the puppy for?** The puppy will be placed with you at 8 weeks of age and will be within your care for approximately 14 to 16 months, depending on events, for example, the availability of Advanced Trainers to take the puppy onto their next stage of training.

**Can I work part time and be a Puppy Parent volunteer at the same time?** We would ask you to demonstrate that you have enough time to be able to care, train and socialise the puppy, more details of which will be provided to you during registration. Please be aware that the puppy cannot be left for longer than three hours in one period.

**Can I take the puppy to work with me?** This will depend on your working environment and on the puppy as an individual. Our expert team will need to ensure that the puppy will be comfortable and safe, and that their training will not be affected. Your Puppy Coordinator will arrange to complete an Office Assessment.

**When will I meet my Puppy Coordinator, my staff point of contact?** Your Puppy Coordinator will contact you to arrange a time to complete your Home check.

**How often will I see the Puppy Coordinator?**

This changes through the puppy's age and stage of training. We provide weekly sessions either one to one or group sessions during working week. You will meet Canine Partners Volunteers during these training sessions and at social events. (There will be occasions you will not be able to bring Canine Partners pup/dog. Your Puppy Coordinator will arrange short term Foster care)

**How far will I be required to travel?** Classes/sessions will be in a 45-minute radius of the postcode on the role description. You can claim for pre-approved expenses.

**Will the puppy live with me?** Yes, the puppy will live with you. If you are due to go away on holiday or there are any other reasons why you may not be able to care for the puppy for a fixed period of time, we may be able to arrange a temporary fosterer to care for them, however it could be distressing and confusing for the puppy if this were to occur soon after the puppy was placed.

**How much will it cost me to have a Canine Partners puppy?** You will receive a starter pack with everything you need to begin your journey with the puppy. In addition, Canine Partners will cover the costs of food and vet bills. We only ask that you cover the costs of any grooming equipment, poo bags. You might like to give the puppy some treats and suitable toys to play with. We do ask that you cover the costs of transport, however this is within your local area to allow you to socialise the puppy in new environments, to attend puppy-training classes, and meet other Puppy Parent volunteers for support and fun!

**Can I be a Puppy Parent volunteer if I have young children?** Many of our volunteers have young children or grandchildren. We will assess each volunteer's circumstances individually.

**Can the family help?** Anyone aged eighteen and over, within the family/household can apply to become a Puppy Parent. We actively encourage this. Children can become involved with the care of the pup/young dog. Eighteen and over to handle and walk the dog at all times.

**Can I have a pet dog and be a Puppy Parent volunteer?**

You can become a Puppy Parent as a dog owner with up to two pet dogs of suitable temperament in your home. The dogs must be over 18 months of age and have lived in your home for at least six months. One of our trainers will assess the temperament of your pet dog during the application process. The puppy is to be fed and walked separately to your pet dog on a daily basis to maintain their training successfully.

**Can I introduce a dog into my home while caring for a Canine Partner dog?**

We ask that you speak to your staff point of contact to confirm you are considering getting your own pet dog. We will then make arrangements for the Canine Partner

dog in training to be moved to a different home. If you wish to continue to be a Puppy or Foster Parent, we will assess pet dogs over 18 months of age after six months with you.

**How long before I meet Canine Partners puppy/dog?** This will vary dependant when the next litter of pups are due. There are opportunities to have dogs for short term foster E.G when a puppy parent has a holiday

### **Is it ok to leave the puppy?**

Puppies sleep a lot when young but are also not used to being alone. There will be occasions when we need to go to the shops. Your Puppy Coordinator will help with initial settling training. Once a pup is used to, being left alone the maximum time of being alone is no more than a few hours. This will be a gradual thing and dependant on each individual puppy.

### **What happens if I want a holiday?**

We kindly ask our Puppy Parents not to take any holidays for the first few months of welcoming a puppy into their home. We have Foster care who will look after the pup while you go on holiday or if you require a break.

### **Are Canine Partners puppies allowed to be let off the lead to free run?**

Once the puppy is old enough to be allowed off lead and has an effective recall, then this is encouraged 3 – 4 days a week. Our team will work with you to decide when the time is right.

### **How do volunteers cope when they hand the puppy on to advanced training?**

All of our Puppy Parent volunteers form a bond with the puppy they have been looking after, having invested so much, and wanting the puppy to be the best they can be. As such, it can be tough to see the puppy move on to advanced training, however those who view it as a success because this is what the puppy is meant to do, find it easiest. Some have compared it to seeing their children go off to university, leaving home but continuing to grow and learn, so they can go on to be partnered, leading a rewarding and happy life in the service of someone with a disability.

### **Will I see the puppy once they leave for formal training?**

Once the puppy has entered formal advanced training, you will receive an update when they have passed their training, and when they have been partnered. It is then important that we leave it up to the discretion of the partner to decide whether to maintain contact, since it will depend on his or her own circumstances.

**How much does a Canine Partners dog cost through its lifetime in training and service?** From puppy selection, through to training, the partnership and aftercare, costs £30,000 to Canine Partners for each dog.

**What happens to the puppy if they don't reach the required standards to go on to advanced training?** This will depend on the circumstances and considerations. If the dog is unable to become a fully jacketed assistance dog, we will consider:

## Puppy Parent Frequently Asked Questions

- **Home assistance canine** – Our home assistance canines are tailor-trained to their partner's needs and can carry out important practical tasks inside the home but not in public. This could include retrieving dropped items, calling help in an emergency, helping with undressing, and many more.
- **Canine Companion** – A canine companion is placed in a home where there is an adult or a child with a physical disability or condition who would benefit from the companionship and emotional support a dog can provide, but where practical support from the dog is not required. These special dogs also give other social benefits of dog ownership, such as friendship and reduced loneliness
- Ambassador Dog
- Brood bitch
- Alternative organisations
- Rehoming

The puppy's needs and welfare will be paramount in deciding upon the best placement.