

Volunteer Handbook



2025 edition

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Dear Canine Partners volunteer,

A special thank you

Welcome to our Volunteer Handbook, and thank you so much for choosing to volunteer with Canine Partners. For 35 years, we have been changing the lives of disabled people using expertly trained dogs, and we just could not do this without the amazing dedication of so many people like you.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of Canine Partners and we rely on you to help us achieve our life-changing work, so I am delighted that you have chosen to get involved. You are joining an inspiring and talented team, dedicated to creating amazing partnerships between dogs and people, and then supporting them for life.

This handbook provides you with all the information you will need to know about volunteering with Canine Partners - including how to get the most from volunteering with us, and what to expect. It also contains all relevant policies and procedures and I hope you will find it helpful and relevant. Please don't hesitate to let us know if you think there are items we could usefully add to the handbook.

The road ahead is exciting for Canine Partners and I sincerely hope you can play a part in helping us to shape our future. Once again, thank you for your commitment: I hope very much that you will find your time with the charity both fulfilling and rewarding.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Lucy Eldred'.

Lucy Eldred
Chief Executive



Section 1: About Canine Partners



Welcome to the team

This handbook has been produced to help ensure that your experience of volunteering with Canine Partners is an enjoyable and rewarding one. The valuable work we do is only made possible through the efforts of volunteers, like you; who willingly give up their time and expertise to make a difference.

Inside this handbook, you will find important information about our work, our mission, vision and values. The handbook also contains a brief description of the policies that affect you. Thank you for choosing to volunteer for Canine Partners and welcome to the team!

Our vision

Every disabled person lives life to the full.

Our mission

We will change the lives of disabled people using expertly trained dogs to improve physical, emotional and social wellbeing.

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 that 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.



Our history

Canine Partners was founded in 1990, thanks to Anne Conway, an assistance dogs enthusiast and dog welfare campaigner, and Liz Ormerod, a well-known vet and animal-assisted therapy expert. Canine Partners was based on the model of The SOHO Foundation of Holland, an established assistance dog programme.

Anne and Liz were joined by Nicky Pendleton who, as an occupational therapist, brought expertise in the field of disability, and by Roger Jefcoate CBE who became our Vice President and sponsored the training of the first three dogs, Alex, Angus and Alfred, in 1994.

The Charity rented various Hampshire-based premises over the years. It was not until 2003 that we began to operate from a training centre of our own, in Heyshott, West Sussex. A former polo yard and farm with various outbuildings, the Heyshott site had potential for conversion to specialist facilities. Dogs were trained while building work progressed and the Southern Centre was officially opened in 2005 by our Patron, HRH the Duke of Gloucester.

A growing waiting list and a need to expand our reach across the UK led us to purchase a derelict pig farm near Loughborough in 2012 to develop a Midlands Training Centre.

The main training building was completed in 2014 which allowed us to create 31 new partnerships during that year from the Midlands site. In January 2017, we opened the kitchen and accessible accommodation and in 2020, we opened a purpose-built kennel block allowing us to house up to 40 dogs in Advanced Training at any one time.

In May 2023, we announced the closure of our Southern Training Centre, with our Midlands Training Centre becoming the new registered Head Office for the Charity. It gave us an opportunity to look at how we take the charity forward, focusing purely on creating a hub of real power, energy and vibrancy, and a single identity out of our new National Training Centre. It also meant we could look at how we develop and support our puppies, our dogs and our partnerships in different ways all around the country in a really mobile, flexible and agile way. The work continues at the National Training Centre, with the latest project of the newly refurbished bungalows for staff, volunteers and partners to use as accommodation on site.



Our Organisation



Please find the latest organisation chart on the volunteer portal by scanning the QR code or visiting caninepartners.org.uk/volunteer-portal

(see page 29 for the password)



Trustees and Patrons

Our Royal Patron HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO

We are honoured that HRH The Duke of Gloucester has been Patron of Canine Partners for many years and holds our charity close to his heart, regularly supporting a variety of events. His Royal Highness is an active supporter of the cause and particularly enjoys meeting our partners and their dogs.



Our Chair of Trustees Clive Elwood MA Vet MB MSc PhD MRCVS

Clive was appointed as Chair of the Trustees in May 2021. He qualified as a veterinary surgeon from Cambridge University in 1989 and became a specialist in Internal Medicine following a postgraduate degree at The Royal Veterinary College. In 1998 he joined the private referral practice Davies Veterinary Specialists, becoming Managing Director in 2010. Clive brings veterinary expertise to our trustee board whilst also bringing experience of managing a complex organisation. Clive is also Treasurer of the British College of Veterinary Specialists.



To see a full list of our Patrons and Trustees please see our website: caninepartners.org.uk/patrons-and-trustees

Who we help

Canine Partners is a registered charity that transforms the lives of people with physical disabilities by partnering them with assistance dogs. Our amazing dogs bring a greater independence and quality of life to their partners, offering security, companionship, and practical help with everyday household tasks. These life-changing dogs also provide psychological and social benefits including increased independence, confidence, social interaction and self-esteem.

Our assistance dogs are trained to meet the needs of individuals with even the most complex physical disabilities. We currently help adults aged 18 and over (both civilians and former service personnel) who have a physical disability or condition that affects their daily life and limits their independence.

Some of the disabilities and conditions we work with are:

- Multiple sclerosis
- Cerebral palsy
- Spinal injuries and head injuries
- Stroke
- Osteoarthritis and scoliosis
- Arthritis and rheumatoid arthritis
- Ehlers-Danlos syndrome
- Friedrich's ataxia
- Fibromyalgia
- Muscular dystrophy
- Spina bifida
- Osteogenesis imperfecta (brittle bones)



We are working in partnership with Help for Heroes, The Royal British Legion and other services organisations to provide assistance dogs for veterans and those wounded in service.

We receive no government funding and rely solely on donations from the public and legacies to help us continue our life-transforming work.



Alan Edbrooke and Hamlin

Alan was partnered with canine partner Hamlin in July 2015. This is his story:

“I’m Al, I’m 50 years old and I have canine partner Hamlin. We’ve been together since July 2015. I have Parkinson’s disease, which affects me in that I shake quite a lot and find it hard to walk properly sometimes. My coordination in the right hand side of my body is very poor. I also experience depression, anxiety and panic attacks.

Before I was partnered with Hamlin I was very depressed and very isolated. I didn’t really feel brave enough to venture outside as I was too anxious and would get panic attacks. I was looked after quite a lot by friends and family. They were always checking up on me and making sure I was okay. I would always find it quite taxing being out in the open, particularly when I was shaking, as I would find it quite embarrassing. I thought people would be staring at me.

One of the main things Hamlin does for me is that he keeps me walking straight otherwise I would stagger and stumble a lot more. I occasionally freeze, which doesn’t mean I can’t move but everything seems to shut down for a second. When this happens, Hamlin just head-butts my leg, which brings me back to attention. He picks up my keys and wallet which I constantly drop. He loves closing the dishwasher door, which saves me bending down because I can get quite dizzy. He loves opening the washing machine and dragging the washing out and there are countless other things he helps me with.

“ Life with Hamlin now means I’m more confident, I’m happy to go out of the house, I can talk to people in public and I don’t feel that self-conscious any more. ”

If I am feeling depressed or anxious he will come and put his chin on my knee. He can tell that I’m feeling low. If I’m feeling panicky he will give me a hug by launching himself on to my lap and staying there while I calm down. He’s made me more confident and he has made the depression less of an issue most of the time. He’s given me more independence, people don’t have to check up on me quite so often because they know I’m safe and being looked after. He gives me the drive to get out of the house and he makes me do things, whereas before I would just stay in and watch TV or sleep in late all the time. He wakes me up every morning at 8 by grumbling by the bed until I get up and give him his breakfast. He gets me started every day.

Having Hamlin has genuinely changed my life for the better in all ways. He’s got a cheeky character, which just makes him even more appealing, and he’s always happy to help from the moment I get up.”



Assistance Dogs UK

Canine Partners is fully accredited with the regulatory organisation Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK). Over 7000 people rely on a highly trained assistance dog from one of ADUK’s members, enjoying the additional emotional benefits and greater independence that such dogs bring.



Assistance dogs are highly trained to support disabled people and people with medical conditions in a variety of ways. ADUK is a coalition of assistance dog organisations that have been accredited by Assistance Dogs International (ADI) and/or The International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF). ADUK members are non-profit organisations that work to the highest standards of assistance dog training and welfare. From guide dogs to medical alert dogs, from autism dogs to hearing dogs, our members train assistance dogs that change, and often save, the lives of their owners.

ADUK provides excellence in assistance dog training. All ADUK dogs adhere to the highest training and welfare standards as set out by Assistance Dogs International and the International Guide Dogs Federation.

The accreditation assessment process is rigorous and looks at all aspects of how an organisation operates, thereby ensuring that dog training and welfare, client support and the supporting infrastructure all works to very high standards. ADUK is open to any UK-based organisation that is an accredited member of ADI or the IGDF. ADI and IGDF are both membership organisations where assistance dog programmes are the members, not individual’s trainers.

The members of ADUK believe that assistance dog partnerships/teams are, by definition, highly trained and fully supported throughout the life of the partnership, with responsibilities towards the dog remaining for the whole of its life. Members believe that supporting the welfare and wellbeing of dogs is vital both to protect the dogs and ensure they are safe around members of the public.

Assistance Dogs International (ADI) is the international arm of this work: Assistance Dogs Europe (ADEu) is one of the Regional chapters of the ADI; and Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK) work within the UK with accredited assistance dog charities. The ADI, ADEu and ADUK do not train assistance dogs, they are coalitions of international and regional charities who work together to improve access to assistance dogs, the recognition of the importance of their work and uphold and continuously improve existing rights and laws.

assistancedogs.org.uk

Our commitment to volunteering

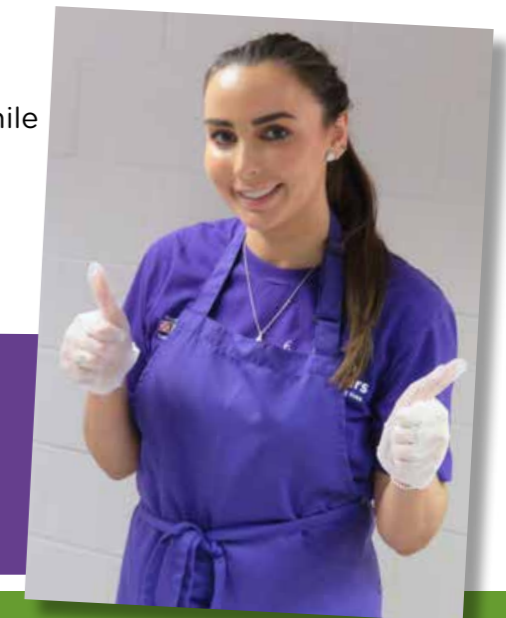
Volunteers are a crucial part of our charity, helping us to deliver every aspect of our work. Without you, we simply couldn't make the difference that we do to individuals and their families. Volunteering is a partnership and we are committed to creating the best possible environment for volunteers to share their skills, knowledge and experiences, as well as ensuring that every volunteer is valued and recognised for their time and expertise. Our commitment is to do the best we can to make your volunteer experience with us a positive and rewarding journey. Ensuring you have a good experience is very important to us.

We've outlined below what you can expect of us if you become a volunteer, along with the expectations that we would have of you as a volunteer.

We will support you as a volunteer in the following ways. We will:

- agree tasks and roles and be clear about the standards required to carry out your role.
- provide induction, support, guidance and training to assist you in meeting the responsibilities of your role.
- ensure that you know who you are responsible to and who should provide you with support should you face any problems.
- provide a welcoming and supportive environment that ensures you enjoy your volunteering.
- ensure you are treated with respect and courtesy in line with our commitment to equal opportunity and diversity.
- listen to and respect all volunteers' views and contributions.
- reimburse pre-agreed volunteer expenses and pay them in a timely manner.
- ensure the confidentiality and security of personal information.
- ensure a safe working environment and provide appropriate and reasonable insurance for you while volunteering with Canine Partners.
- provide opportunities to contribute to the future development of the charity, by sharing ideas and experiences.

“
*I am proud to say I volunteer
for Canine Partners*
”



Section 2: How to become a volunteer



Ways you can become involved

There are many ways you can help us with our different types of volunteering roles.

They include roles such as:

- Dog Breeding Volunteer
 - Puppy Parent
 - Advanced Training Foster
 - Foster roles
 - Office Support
 - Home-Based Admin
 - Driver
 - Reception
 - Speaker
 - Events
 - Kitchen assistant
 - Housekeeper
 - Gardener
 - Site maintenance
 - Kennel Assistant
- And more.



All of our volunteer roles make a significant positive impact and support the vital work we do.

Even a few hours of your time will make a huge difference!

Puppy Training Satellite Groups

We currently have the following puppy training satellite groups around the UK:

- Bedford
- Birmingham
- Derby
- Hull
- Leicestershire and Notts
- Newark
- Staffordshire and West Midlands
- South Hampshire
- West Berkshire
- West Sussex and Surrey



“ I’m happy to volunteer for Canine Partners. It’s fun - everyone gets on so well together! ”

Doug - Office and corporate event volunteer

Local community groups

Join our growing band of volunteer community groups nationwide, doing their bit to raise money or awareness for Canine Partners. You can help organise and support fundraising events and activities in your local community. Here are just some of the things our local community groups do:

- Organise fundraising events such as coffee mornings, dinner parties or walks
- Represent Canine Partners at local events or shows
- Collect funds on behalf of Canine Partners and look after collecting tins, together with community donations
- Sell merchandise



Every person who volunteers for us does have one thing in common: they're absolutely vital to our work

Volunteering provides many benefits

Volunteers become involved for a variety of reasons. Some want to make a difference, others want to develop new skills and some simply want to meet new people and have fun.

Here are some of the reasons our volunteers choose to volunteer for Canine Partners:

- Share expertise and skills
- Meet new people/network/friendships
- Wellbeing and self-care
- Community Involvement
- May lead to employment and a new a career
- Provide a sense of purpose
- Personal growth and development
- Have fun and many more



We can provide a reference for any volunteering you do, after you have volunteered for us for three months.

Expressing your interest as a volunteer

We do not discriminate against any volunteers in the registration process.

The acceptance of volunteer assistance is made on merit, the selection criteria being the individuals suitability to do the specified task, subject to the restrictions of the task and location.

Selection procedures for individual volunteers must protect the Charity's interests and therefore, references will be sought and that may include a Disclosure Barring Service check if deemed appropriate for the role applied for.

Volunteers are the bedrock of our charity and we are incredibly lucky to have so many who support us in a variety of ways, from speaking around the country to raise the charity's profile, raising much needed funds and caring for our dogs in their homes. Without our volunteers we would not be able to provide the services we do. Those who donate their time want to know it is well spent, that their work, events and activities are well organised and their contribution is valued. It is important volunteers are clear about their roles and the support they can expect from our organisation. Organisations need to have systems and procedures in place to ensure their volunteers have a rewarding and great experience.

Our recruitment process includes completion of an information form, informal discussion (usually over the phone) and we ask for one reference.

The referees must not be a family member nor live in the same household as you, or both referees live at the same address. Canine Partners are committed to Safer Recruitment and as part of our commitment we ensure we have as much information which will enable us to make the right decisions for our organisation.

We need to ensure the wellbeing of everyone so a thorough recruitment process helps us to do this. We will advise you what level of knowledge about safeguarding you will need for your role.

At the beginning of your volunteering journey, you will receive a copy of your volunteer role description(s). It is important to us that all volunteers feel comfortable and confident in their roles. All volunteers will be provided with relevant information, training and induction as appropriate to their role. Training will be held internally or, if appropriate to the volunteer role and if possible, externally.



You may want to develop new skills or strengthen established ones; we can offer a range of ways for you to do this.

Where possible volunteers will be encouraged to take on new roles if they so choose. We are committed to giving you a fully supported volunteering experience.

We hope you will feel that you are valued every time you volunteer. We are committed to keeping you up to date with information and news about the Charity by newsletters, email updates and publications if you choose to receive these.

Canine Partners understands that, although volunteers do not seek monetary reward, they do appreciate recognition and support. We encourage the discussion of progress and contribution on a regular basis. This will provide the opportunity for both the charity and each volunteer to discuss any problems or concerns that may arise and ensure volunteers are valued and happy with their role. Please do let us know as early as possible if you are unable for whatever reason to carry out your volunteering duties. Sometimes volunteers need to take a break from volunteering. Please keep us informed of any decisions you make.

We don't have an upper age limit, although in some cases we may ask you to change roles if health issues are considered a risk.

The charity would be irresponsible if it permitted volunteers to continue beyond a point where volunteering may be detrimental to their or others' health and safety and may decide it would be appropriate for a volunteer to reduce or cease their contribution.



Section 3: What you need to know when volunteering



Equal Opportunities

We are committed to 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.

Expenses

We don't want you to be out of pocket while volunteering for us, so we are happy to reimburse expenses that have been pre-agreed with your Staff Point of Contact. All pre-agreed expenses should be submitted on a monthly basis. Please contact volunteer@caninepartners.org.uk if you would like to receive our expenses form via email or post.

Expenses will require receipts, including fuel for mileage which is paid at 45p per mile. When submitting the claim, you should include a description of what and why the expense is being claimed, for example 'attended training at the National Training Centre'. Claims should be sent to the member of staff that supports you for approval and then submitted to - finance@caninepartners.org.uk. Your expenses will be paid within 30 days.

Expenses are paid by BACS so we will require your bank account details ie. **Account name, Account number, Account sort code**

Volunteering while on benefits

If you are receiving state benefits, you can still volunteer. However, there are some rules that you need to be aware of to ensure that your volunteering doesn't have an impact on the benefits you receive. If you are receiving benefits, contact your local Volunteer Centre, or speak to your employment support worker or benefits advisor for further advice and help. If you are worried about anything in connection with your volunteering, talk to your Volunteer Manager - we can help you. We can also provide a letter to your Local Employment Service that confirms you are volunteering for Canine Partners.

Work Experience

We offer work experience placements throughout the year; each placement lasts for 5 days, Monday to Friday. You will help and support our Specialist Advanced Training and Dog Welfare Teams. There will be a variety of tasks including kennel duties. Throughout your week, you will also spend time with the Fundraising and People Teams, to provide an insight into the ways we work together to transform the lives of people with physical disabilities.

To be considered for a work experience placement, you need to have an interest in our charity and want to work and spend time with people and our dogs. You need to be 16 years of age and above and ideally live close to our National Training Centre in Osgathorpe, Leicestershire. Sometimes we do accept applicants from further afield, but you will need to arrange and pay for your own transport and accommodation for the duration of your placement.

Section 4: Health and Safety

Volunteers with specific responsibilities for health and safety, will receive training and guidance to help them to fulfil their responsibilities. Suitable risk assessment(s) must be prepared for all activities being carried out.

Canine Partners is committed to ensuring:

- A healthy and safe working environment for all staff, volunteers, partnerships and visitors
- That the necessary information, equipment and training is provided.
- The full collaboration and co-operation of everyone who works at Canine Partners and that everybody's individual responsibility to ensure they keep themselves and others safe is fulfilled.

It is the responsibility of every volunteer to:

- Take all reasonable care for the health and safety of yourself and others.
- Co-operate in observing safety guidance and complying with any measures designed to ensure a healthy and safe working environment
- For our dog volunteering roles, you will receive information and guidelines about smoking and vaping.
- Inform your member of staff that supports you with your role of any personal health and safety requirements that you have.
- Disclose any health conditions/pregnancy/personal risks to us, in case we need to carry out individual risk assessments for them and their specific role

If you have any doubts regarding your health and safety role or responsibility please speak to your staff contact or Volunteer Manager.

We don't have an upper age limit, although in some cases we may ask you to change roles if health issues are considered a risk. The charity would be irresponsible if it permitted volunteers to continue beyond a point where volunteering may be detrimental to their or others' health and safety and may decide it would be appropriate for a volunteer to reduce or cease their contribution.

Section 4: Health and Safety

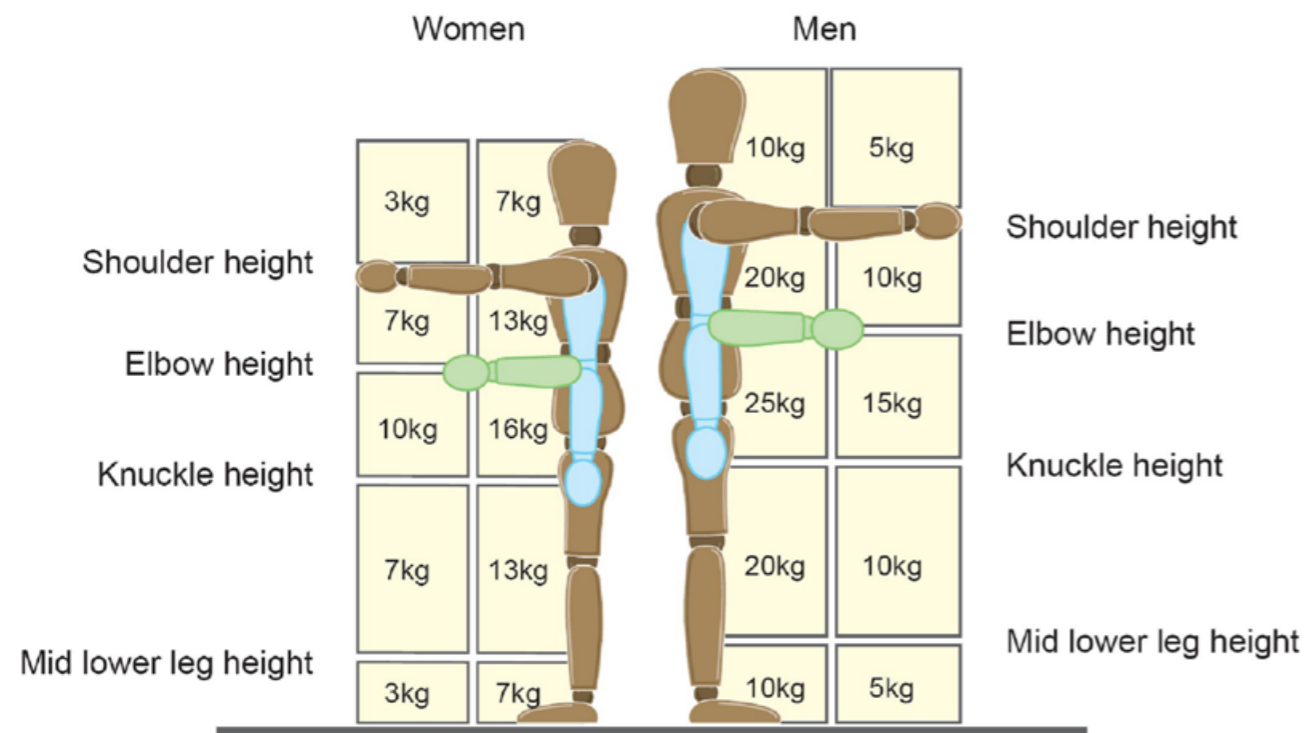


A guide to safer manual handling

This information has been produced to provide you with an overview of best practice guidance to assist you in undertaking manual handling activities safely.

Definition of manual handling

The transportation or supporting of a load by hand or bodily force including, lifting and lowering, holding and carrying, pushing and pulling, throwing.



Guidance weights

There is no such thing as a “completely safe” manual handling operation, but the health and safety executive (HSE) has issued the following guidelines on levels of loads that are unlikely to pose hazards for most people

These weights are NOT what HSE say people must lift, but loads which are unlikely to cause the average person harm. These figures assume that the load can be gripped with both hands, lifting is infrequent, the person is in good health and of average strength and build and there is no twisting.

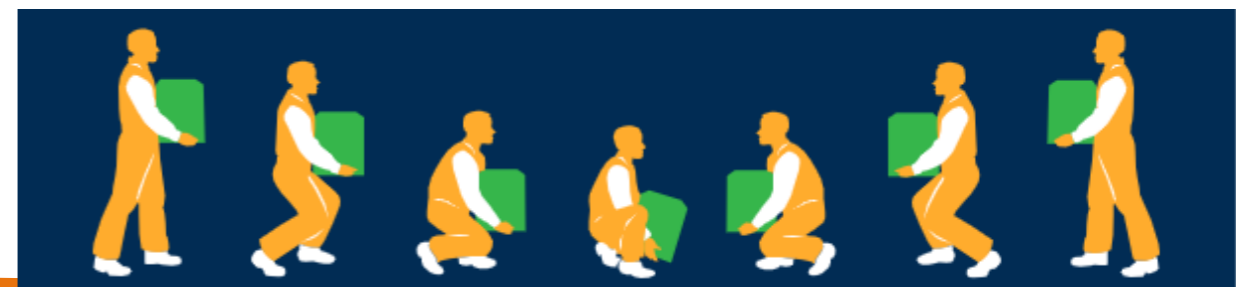
Think about it before you undertake manual handling

Before you undertake any manual handling you should first think about the operation to make sure that you are physically capable and the load is suitable to be moved. Do not undertake any manual handling if you have an existing muscular-skeletal problem i.e. bad back, shoulder, arm etc. Always remember that you should be in charge of the load and never the load in charge of you.

Good handling technique for lifting

Stop and think – plan the lift

- Where is the load to be placed?
- Do you need help with the load?
- Use appropriate handling aids if possible
- Remove obstructions from your route
- Is there a long distance to travel?
- Consider resting the load mid-way on a table or bench in order to change grip



POSITION Position the feet Adopt a stable position with feet apart and one leg slightly forward to maintain balance.

POSTURE Adopt a good posture at the start of the lift, slight bending of the back, hips and knees is preferable to fully flexing the back (stooping) or fully flexing the hips and knees (squatting).

GRIP Try to keep the arms within the boundary formed by the legs. The best position and type of grip depends on the circumstances and individual preference; but it must be secure. A hook grip is less tiring than keeping the fingers straight. If you need to vary the grip as the lift proceeds, do it as smoothly as possible.

All accidents and incidents must be reported to your staff contact as soon as possible. If you feel that it's a real emergency, please contact the emergency services immediately.

Lifting and moving

- Try not to flex the back any further while lifting
- Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways
- Shoulders should be kept level and facing in the same direction as the hips
- Turn by moving the feet not the body
- Keep your head up when handling
- Move smoothly, try not to jerk
- Keep the load close to the trunk of your body for as long as possible.

Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the trunk. If a close approach to the load is not possible, slide it towards you before trying to lift. If precise positioning of the load is necessary, put it down first then slide it into position.

Good handling technique for pushing and pulling

To make it easier to push or pull, you should keep your feet well away from the load and go no faster than walking speed. Lifting may be replaced by controlled pushing or pulling in certain cases, such as sliding or rolling an object along. However uncontrolled sliding or rolling, particularly of large or heavy loads, may introduce additional risks thus increasing the risk of injury. For both pulling and pushing a secure footing is necessary and the hands need to be applied to the load between waist and shoulder height wherever possible.

Mechanical handling

Mechanical assistance involves the use of handling aids – an element of manual handling is retained but bodily forces are applied more efficiently, reducing the risk of injury. A trolley, sack truck or roll conveyor can greatly reduce the effort required to move a load horizontally. Aids such as barrows and trolleys should have handle heights that are between the shoulder and waist. Devices should be well-maintained and comply with any relevant standards, with wheels that run smoothly. Refer to your staff point of contact for manual handling when asked or choose to lift a dog, they can advise about ramps and additional resources.

Personal safety

On your application form you will have provided us with an emergency contact, who we will contact in the unlikely event of an emergency.

When you are volunteering at our National Training Centre, all volunteers must add themselves to the signing in iPad in reception and mark themselves in and out. In the event of an emergency evacuation, this list will be used to establish who may be in the building.

National Training Centre First Aid Kit and Accident Book Guide

Main First Aid Kit:	Mounted to the wall in Reception
NEW Defibrillator heart recharger:	Located at the entrance gate on the driveway
Smaller Kits:	Bungalow Kitchens Dining Room Kitchen (above hand washing sink) Main Arena cupboard Class Room shelving unit Kennels cupboard All CP vehicles
Main Accident Book:	The main accident book is stored with the main first aid kit in reception.

To comply with GDPR all completed accident report forms should be posted either in internal mail or by tracked mail to either Gemma Smailes or Clive Murray so that they may be locked away securely.

First Aiders:	Ann Paskouis	Laura Loftus
	Chrissie Hyland	Joanne Edis-Clark
	Kathy Russell	Katie Peters

Actions to be taken if you discover a fire or hear the smoke alarm

1. Immediately raise the alarm by shouting 'Fire' and operate the nearest break glass alarm to warn all staff, volunteers and visitors.
2. Trained staff will go to their nearest 'Fire Marshall Point' to collect their high vis vests, clipboards and equipment.
3. The Fire Marshalls will proceed through the building ensuring each area is clear. Please leave the building via your nearest fire exit - Do not stop to collect any personal belongings and be sure to close all doors behind you to help to isolate the fire.
4. Report to the Muster Point (staff car park at both centres)

Do not re-enter the building until given permission by the Fire Marshalls or the Fire Service

Section 5: Representing Canine Partners



ID card

You'll be issued with a Canine Partners volunteer ID card which you should always have with you when volunteering for us. Your ID card helps our supporters know that you are part of the Canine Partners team. Providing volunteers with ID cards are an important step in ensuring safer volunteering for you.

What we wear

As a volunteer for Canine Partners, you're also an ambassador for the organisation. You're responsible for presenting a positive image to visitors, partners and the community. Please use your judgement to dress appropriately for the activities you're asked to carry out. We can provide a branded polo shirt for you to wear. If you're ever unsure what to wear, ask your staff point of contact.

Criminal convictions

Volunteering should be accessible to everyone and we won't unfairly discriminate against anyone on the basis of any criminal convictions they may have. Sometimes certain disclosures may impact on certain roles within the charity because of our duty of care to staff, volunteers and partners. If we are made aware of an unspent conviction you didn't disclose to us when you applied to become a volunteer, this may affect your eligibility to volunteer. Any decisions made will be totally confidential between us and you.

Safeguarding

The charity actively promotes the empowerment and wellbeing of 'adults at risk'. As part of the volunteer recruitment process, you must be familiar with the Charity's Safeguarding policy and procedure. Staff and volunteers have a duty of care towards the 'adults at risk' with whom they come into contact. This is any person aged 18 or over (aged 16 or over in Scotland) who may be unable to take care of or protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation. This may be due to a mental health problem, a disability, a sensory impairment, is old, frail or has some other illness. If someone can overcome their barriers to tell you about abuse, you have a duty to pass on that information to help protect or support that person.

Confidentiality is an important principle that enables people to feel safe in sharing their concerns and to ask for help. However, the right to confidentiality is not absolute. Sharing relevant information with the right people at the right time is vital to good safeguarding practice. Report any concerns, suspicions or doubts to your staff support or safeguarding lead as soon as possible.

Smoking, alcohol and drugs

Smoking is only permitted on Charity premises in designated areas. Volunteers and staff are asked not to be seen smoking whilst representing the charity and/or wearing charity uniforms. Canine Partners do not allow any dog, of any age, to be within an enclosed space with someone who is smoking or vaping. Canine Partners insists that any smoking products are always kept out of reach of puppies and dogs. For more information on our Smoking and Vaping policy, please speak to your main point of contact at the charity.

Alcohol is not allowed, nor is it to be consumed on the premises without the permission of the CEO. Any volunteer who appears to be under the influence of alcohol will be immediately sent home, and may not be permitted to continue volunteering. Illegal drugs or other restricted intoxicating substances are not permitted and should not be used on the premises. Any volunteer who appears to be under the influence of drugs will be immediately sent home, and may not be permitted to continue volunteering.

Data protection and confidentiality

When you begin volunteering for us, in an admin support role, we will advise you of the Canine Partners Data Protection policy and procedures. As a Canine Partner volunteer, we need to capture your data to process your volunteer enquiry, your volunteer application and to communicate with you about your volunteering role and the organisation. Canine Partners will store information about you, on paper and on computer. Before we can collect, store or use data about you, the law requires us to ensure that individuals consent for us to do so. The way we do this is by using what we call 'Data Protection statements' Our statements comply with the Data Protection As a valued volunteer, you need to be clear and comfortable with how we collect your personal information and what we do with it. All volunteers are asked for Emergency Contact details, so that we have a record of who to contact.

Your information is safe with us and will never be released, sold or shared to companies outside Canine Partners. Our privacy policy explains how we keep this promise. To find out more about how we manage your personal data, please read our Privacy Policy at caninepartners.org.uk/privacy

As a Reception and Admin Support volunteer, when you begin volunteering for us, we advise you of Canine Partners Data Protection policy and procedures. We will also ask you to complete an online Data Protection module.

Please follow our Data protection and confidentiality and maintain confidentiality at all times.

We are very excited to share with you the launch of an online portal for volunteers. This portal will give you online access to all the resources you need to support you in your volunteering role. To log in, please visit caninepartners.org.uk/volunteer-portal/ and use the password: C@n1ne1990!

Media guidelines

Before taking part in any media coverage when representing Canine Partners please let the Marketing Communications Team know. Our staff will be able to help and advise you. It is important to remember that we are all ambassadors for Canine Partners and any social activity that we engage in reflects on the Charity.

Using social media presents an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of Canine Partners. Volunteers should feel free to talk about their association with the charity and the volunteer work they take part in, but are requested not to discuss individuals, partnerships, charity dogs or training methods unless prior approval has been given by a relevant member of staff. If you have any photos of Canine Partners fundraising events, puppies, advanced dogs or partnered dogs, please send them to the Marketing Communications Team on:







news@caninepartners.org.uk

Please do not send any photos that feature people who have not given their permission for them to be used.

Unless you have clear written consent from a parent or guardian, do not upload photos or videos of children to the internet.

Social media

To keep up to date with the latest information at Canine Partners, please do follow our official accounts on all social media platforms, listed below.

-  Facebook: facebook.com/caninepartners/
-  X: x.com/canine_partners
-  Instagram: instagram.com/caninepartnersuk/
-  LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/canine-partners
-  YouTube: youtube.com/user/ukcaninepartners
-  TikTok: tiktok.com/@caninepartnersuk

We have developed some helpful guidelines and regulations to ensure our social media communities stay safe, informative and enjoyable for all of our fans and supporters!

Canine Partners has an official Volunteers Facebook group. If you would like to join, or if you have any questions or suggestions, please email: socialmedia@caninepartners.org.uk.

If you decide to leave Canine Partners as a registered volunteer, you will no longer have access to the Official Canine Partners Community Facebook Group

Keeping information up to date

Please let us know if your contact details change. On occasions, we will ask you to confirm your details, as well as asking for any ways we could improve the way we work together.

Insurance

Registered volunteers are covered by Canine Partners public liability insurance. This covers against liability for injury experienced by registered volunteers or staff as a direct result of their involvement with Canine Partners activities. It covers Canine Partners legal liability to pay compensation for injuries or illness to a third party or damage to the property of third parties, which are due to our negligence at fundraising or other events. It does not cover pure accidents (eg if a spectator at an event trips over their own feet, or malicious damage or deliberate damage to equipment). Your personal property is not covered by Canine Partners insurance. You are advised to ensure your possessions are covered by your own personal insurance.

Driving

If an activity requires the use of a personal vehicle, it is strongly recommended that you inform your own insurer. We provide a template letter to send to your insurance company, to inform them of your intent to drive as part of your role (even if you are only travelling from home to where you normally volunteer to ensure you are covered). The majority of insurance companies will agree to cover these 'Volunteer' vehicle journeys at no extra charge as it is seen as social, domestic and pleasure use. As part of the driving volunteer role, we will ask you to provide a DVLA license check code so we can verify your license and MOT details. We'll also need to see a copy of your motor insurance certificate. We will complete a vehicle check to ensure your vehicle has an MOT test certificate in place and we will ask to see your certificate of insurance for all roles which include transporting one of our dogs to training, vets, or to the National Training Centre. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that the vehicle they are driving is in a road worthy condition each and every time they use it.

When you use your car or a Canine Partners Fleet vehicle, we recommend you carry a torch, charged mobile phone and not to stop at an incident unless it is safe to do so.

Problem solving

We love to hear from you when everything is going well and you are enjoying your volunteering. Despite everyone's best efforts and intentions, sometimes problems sadly do arise. We value your contribution as a volunteer and want to resolve any problems quickly, amicably and fairly. If you encounter a difficulty with any aspect of the role, please talk to your staff support contact as soon as possible for advice and support.

If you leave us

We are committed to continually improving the quality of the service offered to volunteers. If you decide to leave our charity, we would really appreciate and welcome your feedback and suggestions. This information will be used to inform our future work and help us to ensure that we maintain an excellent level of volunteer experiences at Canine Partners. Please contact your Volunteer Manager at volunteer@caninepartners.org.uk to complete an exit form or to organise a phone call. Please remember to hand in your ID badge and charity resources you have.

Useful contacts and web pages

For general queries and anything related to being a volunteer, email:

volunteer@caninepartners.org.uk

For any fundraising queries or comments, email:

fundraising@caninepartners.org.uk

For any queries about giving talks and presentations, email:

talks@caninepartners.org.uk

For any communications or media queries or comments, email:

news@caninepartners.org.uk

For Work Experience placements, email

workexperience@caninepartners.org.uk

For any new application enquiries, application forms, agreements,

GP reports, medical reports, email

applicationsenquiries@caninepartners.org.uk

caninepartners.org.uk/rehoming-faqs

For expenses, invoices, statements, direct debit instructions,

payment enquiries including vets chasing payment, email

finance@caninepartners.org.uk

Grief can come in many different forms and can invoke a range of emotions. For Bereavement Support information, please visit

caninepartners.org.uk/bereavementsupport

For wellbeing information, please refer to our 'Looking after your mental health' booklet on the volunteer online portal **caninepartners.org.uk/volunteer-portal**

For Scotland events and volunteering opportunities, please visit

caninepartners.org.uk/scotland

Keep up to date on our latest events at **caninepartners.org.uk**

and on our social media channels.



You can update how you hear from us, including telling us if you do not wish to receive occasional direct mail or calls from Canine Partners by visiting:

caninepartners.org.uk/keepintouch or call 03456 580480

Help us to promote volunteering

if you'd like to share your experience to help inspire others to become involved, please get in touch by contacting the volunteer email.

It doesn't matter how much time you can commit; everyone can become involved. We look forward to working with you and welcoming you to our team!



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Canine Partners, registered charity in England and Wales (803680) and Scotland (SC039050).

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