

Minimum Standards For Training Individual Residential Social Dog Teams

These are the minimum standards for all organisations preparing Residential Social Dog Teams that wish to be affiliated with ADEu. All organisations are encouraged to strive to work at levels above the minimum. Emphasis is placed upon the standard of service to both the handler and the dog as a team and the client throughout the training and evaluation process, ensuring the welfare of all parties. The team's suitability (referring both to the skills and the aptitudes for involvement in AAA/AAT/AE programmes) and the quality of the training of the team will be tested by the organisation before the team is registered.

An individual residential social dog is a dog who is permanently placed with a handler and an individual with a disability and/or social handicap to provide therapeutic benefits to the individual in AAA/AAT/AE programmes.

In the case of "owned-dogs", dogs will be carefully assessed before commencing advanced training to ensure that the correct standards of socialisation and social behaviour have been achieved.

1. Dogs will have a thorough medical evaluation to determine that they do not have any physical problems that would cause difficulty for a dog involved in AAA/AAT/AE programmes and, in countries where routine neutering of dogs is accepted by the veterinary profession, every residential social dog will be neutered prior to placement.
2. Dogs must be trained with voice and/or hand signals to respond to the following commands: sit, down, stay, come, heel and recall. The handlers must be able to predict their dog's behaviour, give necessary support to the dog when necessary and be able to control their dog. The dogs must have good household skills.
3. Dogs must show social behaviour skills as follows: no aggression, no inappropriate barking, no biting, no mouthing, no snapping/growling, no begging, no inappropriate jumping on people and no inappropriate sniffing of people.
4. Social dogs must generally be socially attracted to people and open to interactions with them. Individual social dogs should enjoy the mode of interaction of the individual with whom the dog is placed. The dog must enjoy being touched, petted and brushed.
5. Student handlers must be given instruction in the upkeep of the social dog during a placement period. This may take place at the organisation's premises, in the home of the individual with whom the dog will work, or both.

By the end of the placement, the student will be able to correctly praise, motivate and discipline the dog, care for the dog, predict the dog's behaviour, control the dog and enforce obedience skills. During the placement, the trainer will accompany the student and the dog to train in public places, including shops and restaurants. The organisation's trainer will also accompany the student/dog team to a meeting with a local vet. All handlers will be made aware of their responsibilities, as outlined in ADEu's Minimum Standards for Residential Social Dog teams, and will be trained accordingly.

6. The organisation must require the team to complete re-evaluation at least every two years in order to renew registration. The organisation will be able to offer further training and advice as required. Organisations will withdraw ID, or not renew ID, of any teams failing to meet the correct standards and/or in the event of re-evaluation proving unsuccessful.
7. Residential social dog public access is not recognised as canine assistance under the ADEu guidelines. ID and equipment is not necessary, but may be issued at program's discretion if access laws are understood by the individual and/or handler. Identification of the registered residential social dog team may include a laminated ID card with a photo of the dog and handler and names of both and the registration expiry date. If there is involvement in AAA/AAT/AEE programmes in institutions, the team must be clearly identifiable as a social dog team while in the institution.
8. All residential social dog teams must pass testing by the organisation in a number of areas before being registered:
 - Dog welfare and health
 - Suitability of the team with regards to aptitude and skills
 - Obedience, both on and off lead
 - Appropriate behaviour in interacting with clients and facility staff
9. The standards of the above tests must be approved by ADEu.
10. The staff of the organisation must demonstrate general knowledge of various disabilities and or social handicaps of clients with whom they work as well as other relevant medical conditions. Organisations shall make available educational material on different disabilities, social handicaps and types of facilities in which programmes might be conducted.
11. For dogs placed in a home/family situation, the organisation must demonstrate knowledge of the individual disability, of the AAA/AAT/AEE programmes and the handler's capabilities of implementing such programmes, if the handler is responsible for such programmes.
12. The handler must agree to abide by the Minimum Standards for Residential Social Dog Teams.

13. Every AAA/AAT/AE organisation will have a clearly described procedure for testing the social dog team in the following areas on a regular basis, for the remainder of the team's working life:

- Dog welfare and health
- Suitability of the team with regards to aptitude and skills
- Obedience, both on and off lead
- Appropriate behaviour in interacting with clients and facility staff

The standards of the above tests must be approved by ADEu.