

Minimum Standards For Training Social Dog Visiting Teams

These are the minimum standards for all organisations involved in AAA/AAT/AAE 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 throughout the training and evaluation process, ensuring the welfare of both parties. The team's suitability (referring both to the skills and the aptitudes for involvement in AAA/AAT/AAE programmes) and the quality of the training of the team will be tested by the programme before the team is registered and authorised to visit.

1. 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.
2. 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/AAE programmes.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Dogs must be found to enjoy or at least tolerate certain situations such as crowding and interactions with persons with unusual or brusque movements and to generally enjoy interactions with persons, even strangers. The dog should enjoy being touched, petted and brushed by persons, even strangers. The dog should have a good level of tolerance and adaptability in unusual environments and situations.
6. By the end of training and evaluation, the handler will be able to understand the dog's behaviour and stress signals, predict the dog's behaviour and guarantee its well being, control the dog and do basic obedience with the dog. All handlers will be made aware of their responsibilities, as outlined in ADEu's Minimum Standards for Social Dog Visiting Teams, and will be trained accordingly.
7. The organisation must require the team to complete re-evaluation at least every two years in order to renew registration as an authorised visiting team. 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.

8. All 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
 - Suitability of the team with regards to skills and obedience
 - Appropriate behaviour in interacting with clients and facility staffThe standards of the above tests must be approved by ADEu.
9. Social dog public access is not recognised as canine assistance under the ADEu guidelines, however, identification of the registered social dog visiting team will be issued and will include a laminated ID card with a photo of the dog and handler and names of both and the registration expiry date. During involvement in AAA/AAT/AEE programmes, the team must be clearly identifiable as a social dog visiting team.
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. The handler must agree to abide by the Minimum Standards for Social Dog Visiting Teams.
12. Every AAA/AAT/AEE organisation will have a clearly described procedure for testing the social dog visiting 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
 - Suitability of the team with regards to skills and obedience
 - Appropriate behaviour in interacting with clients and facility staffThe standards of the above tests must be approved by ADEu.