

ThinkDogs

Training & Behaviour



OWNER-TRAINED **ASSISTANCE DOGS**

www.thinkdogstraining.co.uk | 2024

INTRODUCTION

This handout was last reviewed in February 2024.

We at ThinkDogs Training & Behaviour offer a range of services for independent owner-trained assistance dog partnerships.

We provide training, assessment and behaviour support for owner-trained assistance dogs at all stages of their training journey.

We are experienced, qualified and proudly disabled-led, specialising in autism and psychiatric assistance dogs.

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HOW DOES IT WORK?

Our owner-trained assistance dog scheme is designed to support clients throughout the whole process – from the selection of a suitable assistance dog prospect to their final qualification and assessment.

Accreditation is offered to partnerships who have met the relevant criteria and demonstrated a suitable level of training.

We support disabled individuals in training their dogs as assistance dogs, teaching the dogs tasks to help assist and support their disabled handlers and meeting the necessary level of training for safe public access work.



TRAINING STAGES

Intake/Selection Assessment



Acceptance



Assistance Dog In Training



Task Skills Assessed
Public Access Test Completed
Signed Off On Health



Qualified Assistance Dog





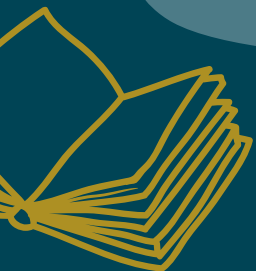
WHAT IS THE LAW?

Assistance dogs are protected under the **Equality Act 2010** and are considered auxiliary aids for disabled people.

Assistance dogs are **highly trained** to assist and support their disabled handler. They can be charity, organisation or owner-trained.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's advisory document on assistance dogs states, in regard to an assistance dog's behaviour, that the dog:

- will **not** wander freely around the premises
- will **sit or lie quietly** on the floor next to their owner
- is **unlikely** to foul in a public place





ACCREDITATION

There is no register or certification process for assistance dogs in the UK.

ThinkDogs Training & Behaviour offer an independent assessment and qualification scheme to provide evidence that the owner-trained assistance dog has met the required level of training and has a suitable temperament to safely perform their role.

To be endorsed as a qualified assistance dog partnership, the partnership must have demonstrated they have met the relevant requirements in terms of **Task Skills, Public Access Testing, Health & Welfare, and Legal Responsibility.**

GETTING QUALIFIED

Partnerships are offered qualified status when:

Task Skills have been assessed by a professional.

Public Access Testing has been completed and passed.

Health & Welfare of the dog has been checked over and signed off.

Legal Responsibility and public safety are understood by the handler.



YOUR RIGHTS

If your dog mitigates your disability, they are considered an auxiliary aid and it is illegal to deny you access.

Our qualification process is the recommended route for the partnerships we support, but there is no legal requirement to complete any assessment for your dog to be considered an assistance dog.

We offer independent task skill assessments and Public Access Tests, which include written reports with an overview of the areas that your dog was assessed in and what the assessor's impression was.

We can also refer our clients to external Public Access Test assessors where appropriate or necessary.



CHECKLIST

As members of our owner-trained assistance dog scheme, we ask that our partnerships:



Insure their dog with third-party public liability cover that includes assistance dog work.



Keep their dog's vaccinations up-to-date and have routine annual veterinary checks.



Commit to only using modern, humane training methods that are force free.



Stay in contact with their trainer for ongoing support, even after qualification.





RESOURCES

For more information on our assistance dog services, please visit:

<https://thinkdogstraining.co.uk/our-services/assistance-dog-training/>

If you want to find out more about the rights of owner-trained assistance dogs in the UK, we recommend looking at **Assistance Dogs UK's website**, which has a page on the law, and the **CATE UK website**.

