

Trustee Role Description

Areas of interest – Trustee and Committee

Canine Partners trains assistance dogs to transform the lives of adults with physical disabilities and their wider community of family, friends, and colleagues. Our values are excellence, respect, passion, teamwork, innovation and ‘the personal touch’. The charity has a training hub in Leicestershire, and a national network of staff and volunteers, supporting and developing our dogs from birth through to partnership then retirement and beyond with their welfare and care prioritised throughout.

Our teams work with adults with a wide range of complex physical disabilities as they partner with dogs and benefit from the deeply rewarding bonds that are formed. The Canine Partners team of over 90 staff includes occupational therapists, highly skilled dog trainers, experts in dog breeding, veterinary professionals, and skilled support teams working alongside around a thousand volunteers who help at every stage of the journey to creating life-changing partnerships between dogs and people.

This is an extraordinary opportunity to make a positive and sustained difference, not only to the lives of adults with disabilities, but also to their families and communities. If you share our values and you have experience or knowledge in the following areas, we would love to hear from you;

- Dog training/behaviourist or experience within the assistance dog sector
- Fundraising
- Working with people with disabilities e.g., health care sector

What is involved in our Trustee role for Canine Partners

The Canine Partners Trustee Board is diversely talented, highly engaged and united in its purpose. It works closely with the Chief Executive and senior leadership team to ensure Canine Partners effectively delivers its mission and is governed to the highest standards.

We are seeking to attract new Trustees who will use their skills, experience and expertise to make a real difference to our well-respected and growing charity. You will possess strategic vision, organisational acumen and a passion to support adults with disabilities and their network.

Trustees of Canine Partners will possess the right balance of skills, commitment, interests and motivations to serve the needs of the charity at the time. This will be determined in line with the strategic needs and the profile of the other members of the Council of Trustees.

We ask for a commitment of attendance at our meetings, five to six board meetings per year. Our meetings are a combination of online and face-to-face.

We ask you to read associated documentation and contribute to discussions. During our meetings, we debate important decisions robustly, drawing on many different perspectives, and always prioritising the interests of our beneficiaries. Decisions made in these meetings are delivered with collective responsibility, so it is important that Trustees feel empowered to question the Officers and Executive accordingly.

In addition, Trustees may be asked to offer their skills, expertise and insight into specific projects and/or support Executive arms of the Charity in determining and delivering strategic objectives. This offers the opportunity to both broaden and deepen knowledge and understanding of the work of Canine Partners and, more broadly, a complex skills-led organisation.

The board celebrates the charity's values and leads by example.

Knowledge, Experience and Attributes - What we require from you

Charitable Trustees have a general obligation to:

- Act in the charity's best interests
- Manage the charity's resources responsibly
- Act with reasonable care and skill

Trustees should understand the purpose and activities of the charity and ensure they are in line, and complying, with the governing documents (the Memorandum and Articles of Association). Potential future Trustees must be over 18 and will be appointed following the procedures outlined in the charity's governing documents.

A Trustee must have:

- A commitment to Canine Partners vision and mission
- A willingness to meet the minimum time requirement
- Integrity
- Strategic vision
- Good, independent judgement
- An ability to think creatively
- Willingness to speak their mind and understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- To work effectively as a member of a team and to take decisions for the good of Canine Partners
- Enthusiasm and curiosity
- Support and challenge the senior leadership team

We are particularly keen to hear from people with experience or knowledge of:

- Dog training/behaviourist or experience within the assistance dog sector
- Fundraising
- Working with people with disabilities e.g., health care sector

From time to time, formally or informally, Trustees may have to represent Canine Partners to a wide range of current or potential stakeholders. Trustees are expected to ascribe to the Canine Partners values of Excellence, Respect, Passion, Teamwork, Innovation and The Personal Touch and conduct themselves accordingly.

Trustees are expected to commit the necessary time and resources to fulfil their obligations. It is recognised and accepted, however, that individual capacity may vary from time to time.

Support and Training

We will provide opportunities for you to learn new skills and grow your expertise as we develop and deliver our new five-year strategy. We encourage a culture of learning among our trustees, encourage, and support them to develop existing skills, which will help you to flourish as a trustee on our board.

We will provide an induction that makes you feel valued and welcome. Your induction will include:

- Meetings with key staff individuals, full board members and partners to gain an overall picture of how our charity works and our purpose
- Documents to read - Board approved policies, financial information, board papers
- Access to portals and shared drives to access information electronically
- Ongoing meetings with the chair to discuss your role and confirm additional support

Benefits for you

This is a volunteer role so no material rewards are offered. Benefits are non-material and include experience, the opportunity to contribute, to learn and to become part of a thriving community. You will gain lasting relationships, insight into a complex and dynamic organisation, experience of non-executive leadership and the rewards of contribution. We will provide opportunities for you to learn new skills and grow your expertise as we develop and deliver our five-year strategy.

Reimbursement of pre-approved expenses, if requested

Liability

Canine Partners is a separate legal entity (it is Incorporated) and this acts as mitigation to any personal liability.

Nevertheless; Trustees can be held liable to their charity for any financial loss they cause or help to cause. This applies to any type of charity whatever its legal form.

The law generally protects trustees who have acted honestly and reasonably from personal liability to their charity. The Commission and the courts:

- can relieve trustees from liability if they have acted honestly and reasonably and have not benefited from their actions
- rarely enforce liability on an unpaid trustee who has made an honest mistake
- expect higher standards from trustees who act in a professional capacity or are paid for being trustees.

From: **The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do.**
Charity Commission for England and Wales

Our Terms of service

Trustees are elected to serve terms of three years with an expectation that they will service no more than 2-3 terms of three years (6-9 years in total), with the exception, that service as an Officer might over-ride this.

Further Reading and Information

For further information on the duties and responsibilities of charity Trustees, please click [here](#).

For further information on Canine Partners, visit:
<https://caninepartners.org.uk/what-we-do/>

We encourage applications from all sections of society and locations and are keen to ensure continued diversity brings constructive challenge and adds to the governance and work, of the charity.

- CV
- Covering letter

Contact Volunteer@caninepartners.org.uk if you have any questions or require further information.

Closing date for expression of interest: Friday 28 June 2024.

First stage interviews (virtual): Week commencing 9 September 2024.