



# Honorary Secretary for the Dog A.I.D. Board of Trustees

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## About Dog A.I.D.

Dog A.I.D. (Assistance in Disability) was established in 1992 to assist people with physical disabilities, improving their quality of life by helping them train their own pet dogs to provide assistance with day-to-day tasks. In 1996, the Dog A.I.D. Scheme was launched nationally at Crufts and today works across the U.K. from our base in Shrewsbury, Shropshire.

As at May 2024, there are currently 93 fully qualified Dog A.I.D. dogs throughout the country, with 52 more in training, supported by 88 volunteer Dog A.I.D. Trainers.

Our volunteer trainers coach their client in positive, force-free dog training techniques so that they can train their own pet dog to undertake tasks that would support them to live more independently. The partnership works through three progressive levels of assessment undertaking tasks both in the home and in public, with an independent assessor ensuring that the partnership is proficient in its tasks.

The partnership is then accredited according to Assistance Dog International (ADI) [standards](#) after completing their public access tests, meaning that the partnership can access public spaces and services, as [required](#) under the Equality Act 2010.

Dog A.I.D. is a member of [Assistance Dogs UK](#), a voluntary coalition of assistance dog charities that aims to promote the freedom, independence and rights of people with assistance dogs across the UK. All Assistance Dogs UK dogs adhere to the highest training and welfare standards as set out by ADI and the International Guide Dogs Federation.

## Case Study - Ben and Phoebe

Phoebe, a fox-red Labrador, came to my family to be our pet dog in 2018 when she was 12 weeks old. Her family had to relocate due to work and couldn't take pets to their new accommodation. She had already had three homes by the time she came to us but once I met Phoebe, we instantly had a bond.

Within about a year of having Phoebe, we started noticing that she started on her own trying to help me in day-to-day life. We found this amazing and naturally were quite curious about if we could train her.



**Dog A.I.D. (Assistance in Disability)**

**Earlyworld House, 7 Darwin Court, Oxon Business Park, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY3 5AL**  
Telephone 01743 588469 | Registered Charity in England and Wales Number 1178719 | [www.dogaid.org.uk](http://www.dogaid.org.uk)

After researching online, we came across Dog A.I.D. and were instantly interested, reaching out to them due to the fact that the charity trains dogs alongside their owners.

We started Assistance Dog training officially once Phoebe was two, working alongside Sarah (our volunteer trainer). The Assistance Dog training for Phoebe ran through 2020 and 2021.

Spending the year training her predominantly online during COVID-19 was definitely a challenge... especially with my mum trying to point the camera in the right direction to show tasks to our trainer. Phoebe completed her Assistance Dog training in July 2021.

Phoebe helps with taking my clothes off and bringing me new clothes every morning. She can open cupboard doors in the kitchen and bring me the post whenever it is delivered. She comes out with me wherever I go out and about and, in the supermarket, will help put items into shopping bags (even if it's her own treats) and will hand over items like a wallet to people on the till if I can't reach.

Training Phoebe to go round shops came quite late in the game in terms of her training due to us isolating for most of the whole of 2020. We thought this would be a challenge, but she's adapted a lot quicker than we thought.

I cannot actually put in full words the change that having Phoebe as my Assistance Dog has made to my life. Having a dog who go out anywhere with me and pick things up that I always end up dropping means that I can actually now more than ever be part of society in a way I couldn't before. However, above all the help Phoebe gives me on a regular basis, what this training has given me is a bond I haven't experienced with a pet before and due to our connection, it's safe to say me and Phoebe are true friends for life.

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# Overview of the Board

Dog A.I.D. is a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) and registered charity, number 1178719, with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. The charity is governed by a Board comprising of up to ten Trustees, who collectively oversee and have legal responsibility for Dog A.I.D.'s governance, management, values and strategic development.

Dog A.I.D.'s Board of Trustees has been led by Louise Doran as Chair since September 2024. Louise is supported by Andrew Binks as Treasurer whose financial expertise and experience has been invaluable, developing robust financial management procedures and reporting, and Deputy Chair Isobel Michael, a highly experienced fundraising expert.

The current Trustees are:

Louise Doran, Chair  
Isobel Michael, Deputy Chair  
Andrew Binks, Treasurer  
Liz Drury  
Hazel Shields

*Client Representatives:*  
Gillian Kirkman  
Robert Moore  
*Trainer Representative:*  
Fran Murtaugh

Profiles of the trustees available on our [website](#).

Trustees are appointed for an initial three-year term, after which trustees would be eligible for reappointment, for up to three terms. Three roles are elected through the charity's AGM: two Client Representatives and one Trainer Representative.

The trustees meet at least four times per year. The trustees mainly meet online by Zoom or Teams from across the UK. Trustees are asked to make a commitment to attend each meeting and to represent the Board on committee(s) where they have specific interests and/or expertise. Trustees are also asked to take part in training and strategic development meetings.

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## Role Description

### Honorary Secretary

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#### Responsibilities

##### Ensure Responsible Administration

- Ensure up-to-date records are maintained of Board membership and that Dog A.I.D. complies with the requirements of the Charity Commission in terms of registration, reporting, changes to the Constitution or Trustees.
- Working with the CEO, circulate agendas and minutes of the annual general meeting (AGM) and any special/extraordinary general meetings.
- Prepare agendas for Dog A.I.D. Board meetings in consultation with the Chair and CEO.
- Receive agenda items from other Board members and circulate agendas and any supporting papers in good time, as set out in the Constitution.
- Check that quorum is present at all Board meetings.
- Minute meetings (including AGM) or ensure that another minute taker is available and circulate the draft minutes to all committee members. In the case of closed Board meetings, the Secretary will take the minutes.
- Working with the Chair, check that trustees and staff have carried out action(s) agreed.
- Maintain the summary of the Declarations of Interests from Trustees and circulate with the agenda for Board meetings.

##### Overall Trustee Responsibilities

- Ensure that Dog A.I.D. pursues its charitable objects, as defined in the Constitution, by developing and agreeing a long-term strategy.
- Ensure that Dog A.I.D. complies with its Constitution, charity law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- Ensure the financial stability of Dog A.I.D.
- Safeguard the good name and values of Dog A.I.D.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of Dog A.I.D., including having appropriate policies and procedures in place.

- Declare any conflict of interest while carrying out the duties of a Trustee.
- Appoint and support employees, monitor and review their performance.
- Use any specific expertise, knowledge or experience to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions
- Attend all meetings, scrutinise papers in advance of meetings, and attend sub-committee meetings as appropriate
- Participate in other tasks as they arise from time to time, such as representing the charity at events or other opportunities
- Keep informed about Dog A.I.D.'s activities and wider issues which affects its work

## Person Specification

- Demonstrate a strong and visible passion and commitment to Dog A.I.D., its strategic objectives and cause
- A commitment to Dog A.I.D. and its charitable objectives
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to their duties as Secretary and Trustee
- Organisational ability and an eye for detail
- Experience of committee work and procedures
- Effective communication skills.
- Strategic vision
- Good, independent judgement and a willingness to speak their mind
- An ability to think creatively
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship (*training and information will be provided*)
- An ability to work effectively as a member of the team
- A commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

## How to apply

Thank you for your interest in joining Dog A.I.D. as Honorary Secretary for our Board of Trustees and help to grow and develop this small charity to support many more people with disabilities throughout the UK to become more independent through training their own Assistance Dog.

You would be joining the Board at an exciting time as we are building the staff team and implementing our Strategic Plan, led by Belinda Johnson as CEO supported by a small but strong team. As set out in our Strategic Plan, Dog A.I.D. has great potential and ambition to grow and extend our reach to support many more disabled people throughout the UK, through increasing the network of skilled volunteer trainers, developing our training and support, and raising the charity's profile.

Dog A.I.D.'s Assistance Dogs change lives. By focusing on the existing pet/owner bond, outcomes for our clients include:

- increased independence and self-confidence;
- improved mental well-being;
- reduction in social isolation;
- reduced reliance on family members and/or carers; and
- increased opportunities, with many of our clients being able to return to work or education, supported by their accredited Assistance Dog.

In order to apply, please apply via this platform or send a copy of your CV and a covering letter to [Isobel.michael@dogaid.org.uk](mailto:Isobel.michael@dogaid.org.uk)