

Are my dog and I likely candidates for therapy dog training and work?



Check out our checklist below to see if your dog might be suitable, **and ready** to take part in a therapy dog certification course with us.

Does your dog:

- Genuinely like meeting new people?
- Feel comfortable with and confident around a range of people (children, the elderly, different clothing), behaviours and handling?
- Not react to sudden noises?
- Not bark excessively?
- Be able to chill out around other dogs and lots of people?
- Have some basic training already including a marker conditioned (a clicker or 'yes' for example); mat training; sit, down, stay; stay/wait; come when called etc.?
- Is your dog relaxed in the car?
- Does my dog have some pretty good basic manners (e.g. doesn't jump all over new people or bark at them, walks calmly on lead in most situations, doesn't steal objects off the ground/tables).
- Is my dog confident with new experiences and new environments?
- Is my dog ok with things like prams, trolleys, different surfaces, stairs, umbrellas, odd behaviour and gait, new smells, people in hats and hi-vis gear?
- Not show any possessive aggression around anything like valued toys, food, you!
- Has my dog never bitten or been aggressive towards another person or animal?
- Is my dog not a restricted breed?
- Has my dog never been declared dangerous?
- Is my dog comfortable with being separated from me briefly?
- Is my dog physically fit and healthy?
- Is my dog aged over 1 year of age and under 10 years of age?
- Does my dog know to toilet outside?
- Does my dog and I have a very strong and trusting bond?
- Have I lived with my dog for over six months?

Are you:

- Committed to force free and ethical training?
- Am I physically able to handle my dog in a workplace or community setting?
- Wanting to learn new ways to train and have fun with your dog?
- Committed to representing the therapy dog industry and our therapy dogs in a positive and kind light?
- Available to attend three days of fun and learning?
- Committed to being reassessed as a team a minimum of once every two years but possibly annually if required?
- Comfortable meeting new people with your dog by your side?

If you answered yes to all of the above (a big list I know), then you and your dog may be ready and suitable for therapy dog training. Please note that there are no guarantees of becoming certified but hopefully this guide helps with deciding if you might be ready. Please ask any questions if you're unsure.