

# Canine Allies CIC

## Assistance Dogs

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## Dog Welfare policy

### 1. Introduction

Canine Allies CIC recognises that all dogs involved in our programs reside in the homes of their owners/handlers. We are committed to ensuring the highest standards of dog welfare, working in partnership with these handlers to promote the physical and psychological well-being of their dogs. This policy outlines our principles and practices for supporting dog welfare within the home-based environment.

### 2. Core Principles

- **Partnership with Owners:** We recognise the owners as primary caregivers and work collaboratively with them to ensure dog welfare.
- **Education and Support:** We provide owners with the necessary education, resources, and support to meet their dogs' needs.
- **Standards of Care:** We establish clear standards of care and provide guidance to owners on best practices.
- **Monitoring and Assessment:** We regularly monitor and assess the welfare of dogs through owner communication, home visits (when appropriate and agreed), and behavioral assessments.
- **Ethical Treatment:** We expect all owners to treat their dogs with compassion, respect, and in accordance with ethical principles.

### 3. Physical Health (Owner Responsibility, CIC Support)

- **Veterinary Care:**
  - Owners are responsible for providing regular veterinary check-ups, vaccinations, parasite prevention, and dental care as recommended by a qualified veterinarian.
  - Canine Allies CIC will provide resources and information on appropriate veterinary care.
  - Canine Allies CIC will request proof of up to date vaccinations, and will request information regarding any ongoing health issues.
  - All handlers wishing to undertake mobility work must gain veterinary clearance before committing to the training.
- **Nutrition:**
  - Owners are responsible for providing a high-quality, balanced diet appropriate for their dog's age, breed, and activity level.

- Canine Allies CIC can provide guidance on appropriate nutrition and feeding schedules.
- **Exercise:**
  - Owners are responsible for providing regular, appropriate exercise tailored to their dog's individual needs and abilities.
  - Canine Allies CIC can give guidelines on appropriate levels of exercise, and will consider the dogs breed and age.
- **Hygiene:**
  - Owners are responsible for maintaining their dog's hygiene, including grooming, bathing, and waste disposal.
  - Canine Allies CIC can offer advice on training for grooming.

#### **4. Psychological Well-being (Owner Responsibility, CIC Support)**

- **Socialisation:**
  - Owners are responsible for providing appropriate socialisation with relevant stimuli, and undertaking appropriate desensitisation
  - Canine Allies CIC can provide guidance on socialisation techniques and opportunities.
- **Enrichment:**
  - Owners are responsible for providing a variety of enrichment activities to stimulate their dog's mind and prevent boredom.
  - Canine Allies CIC can offer advice on enrichment.
- **Training:**
  - Owners are responsible for providing consistent and positive reinforcement training.
  - Canine Allies CIC will provide training resources and support, including workshops and individual sessions.
  - Canine Allies CIC will ensure that all training methods used by owners are positive reinforcement based.
- **Stress Management:**
  - Owners are responsible for recognising and minimising stressors in their dog's environment.
  - Canine Allies CIC will provide guidance on stress management techniques.
- **Home Environment Assessments:**
  - Canine Allies CIC, with prior agreement from the dog owner, may conduct home environment assessments, to check the dogs living conditions, and ensure that the environment is safe for the dog.

#### **5. Competence and Training of Owners/Handlers**

- **Training and Education:**
  - Canine Allies CIC will provide thorough training and education to owners on dog handling, behavior, welfare, and emergency procedures.
  - Ongoing support and resources will be provided to ensure owners remain up-to-date on best practices.
- **Assessment:**
  - Owners will be assessed for their competence in dog handling and welfare.

- Regular reviews and feedback will be provided to ensure adherence to this policy.
- Assessment takes place throughout the stages process.

## **6. Monitoring and Review**

- **Regular Communication:**
  - Canine Allies CIC will maintain regular communication with owners to monitor the welfare of their dogs.
  - Regular check-ins will be made, and records will be kept.
- **Incident Reporting:**
  - Owners are required to report any incidents of concern regarding their dog's welfare to Canine Allies CIC immediately.
- **Policy Review:**
  - This policy will be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect current best practices and legal requirements.

## **7. Emergency Procedures**

- **Emergency Contact Information:**
  - Assistance dog handlers must provide Canine Allies CIC an emergency contact of an individual who can handle the dog in the event of an emergency.
- **Emergency Protocols:**
  - Canine Allies CIC will provide guidance on emergency protocols for handling injuries, illnesses, or behavioral incidents.
  - A veterinary professional must be part of the emergency protocol.

## **8. Code of Conduct**

- All owners/handlers working with Canine Allies CIC are expected to adhere to this policy and to treat their dogs with respect, kindness, and understanding.

## **9. Policy Dissemination**

- This policy will be made available to all owners/handlers and relevant individuals.