



NEWS RELEASE

Does your dog have what it takes to become your canine carer?

Do you live with a physical disability and have a pet dog that has the potential to become your canine carer?

If so, Sheffield-based national charity Support Dogs would like to hear from you.

Support Dogs' aim is to improve the quality of life and independence of people with a wide range of physical disabilities such as cerebral palsy, MS, fibromyalgia or spinal cord paralysis, by training their own pet dog as a disability assistance dog.

And on the week commencing March 12 the charity is holding an initial information day for people who might be interested in applying for an assistance dog to come along and find out more about what it entails, and information about eligibility.

Pet dogs need to be between one and three years old to be eligible to be accepted as a disability assistance dog.

Disability assistance dogs are trained to assist and support their owners by carrying out tasks which are specifically tailored to their needs, for example:

- Opening and closing doors
- Picking up objects
- Raising the alarm
- Dressing and undressing
- Operating control buttons
- Loading and unloading the washing machine

"Our dogs can make an unbelievable difference to someone's life," says support Dogs' chief executive Rita Howson. "As well as the practical support they offer around the house, they also give people greater confidence and help them lead a more active life and have greater social interaction.

"This increased independence also has a positive impact on our clients' relationships with friends and family members. It often releases family members from their roles as primary carers and in many cases can enable them and the client to return to paid employment."

The open day is the first step in the application and training process for people with disabilities.

Throughout the day there will be group presentations as well as an opportunity to speak to the assistance dog training team one to one. Lunch and refreshments will be provided and the Support Dogs training centre in Brightside is fully accessible.

To attend the information day you must book in advance. Please call Support Dogs on 0114 261 7800 or email info@supportdogs.org.uk

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