

# **Dementia Dog Project**

*A collaboration between Alzheimer Scotland and Dogs for Good*

## **Job Description**

### **Dementia Specialist – Dementia Dog Project**

#### **Purpose of the post**

Alzheimer Scotland and Dogs for Good are collaborating on a project called Dementia Dog Project, to further explore the ways trained dogs can support people with dementia, their carers and family in the community.

The Dementia Dog Project has secured a National Lottery grant from the Big Lottery Fund, enabling the team to take their learnings beyond an individual assistance dog approach to trial different approaches to help support people with dementia in community settings.

This grant will be fully funding this part-time post. This role is a unique and exciting opportunity to join the Dementia Dog Project team and help pioneer new ways to support people who are living with dementia in the community.

It will allow the project to build on its existing dementia assistance dog program, and previous community-based trials, to pilot a small-scale series of 'Dog Day' community events and goal-oriented therapy intervention pilots in Scotland and trial areas in England, using trained dogs.

The Dementia Specialist role will be dedicated to development of the Dementia Dog Project, to provide primary dementia expertise to inform a range of animal assisted intervention pilots. This role will involve occasional working from the project's operational base at HMP Castle Huntly near Dundee.

Successful applicants will have a positive and proactive approach to making a difference for people living with dementia. A flexible attitude, appetite to innovate and strong people skills will be vital to this exciting role, as well as a willingness to travel. Relevant qualifications and/or experience of working with people with dementia would be an advantage.

#### **Accountability**

The Dementia Specialist will report to the Project Manager.

## **Posts managed**

The Dementia Specialist will not manage any posts.

## **Main duties and responsibilities**

1. To provide specialist dementia knowledge, expertise and advice to the project team to ensure all project activity meets the requirements to ensure a safe and positive environment for people living with dementia in line with standards and values set out by Alzheimer Scotland.
2. To assist in assessment and identification of suitable clients living with dementia to be involved in the pilot.
3. To assist in development of suitable dog and handler assessments for providing safe and effective therapy activities in dementia environments.
4. To liaise with Alzheimer Scotland's staff network in the localities of the project trial areas.
5. To act as a conduit to local dementia support services, liaising with appropriate support services/community resources and local partners in the area to ensure clients are signposted to appropriate support where required.
6. To provide light-touch short-term individual support as necessary doing therapy intervention pilots, note that the post holder will not be expected to undertake casework.
7. To help ensure the Dementia Dog Project links in with local relevant dementia networks including Alzheimer Scotland service and collaborations such as Dementia Friendly Communities and local/national strategies.
8. To liaise with and promote the Dementia Helpline as a resource for people with dementia, their carers, families and professionals working with them.
9. To initiate, develop and maintain effective working relationships with other professionals working in the field of dementia, in the voluntary, statutory and private sectors in the area.
10. To work closely with the project evaluators to contribute towards capturing evidence-based outcomes of the activities.
11. In conjunction with the Dementia Dog Project team, to identify gaps in service provision for people with dementia and their carers, avoiding duplication of existing services.
12. To act as a professional ambassador at all times for the Dementia Dog Project and partner organisations when dealing with colleagues, members of the public, funders, the media and wider project stakeholders such as statutory, voluntary and community organisations.
13. Provide support to other staff members, as required by line manager.
14. Liaise with and provide support for volunteers who assist the charity.
15. Any other task agreed with your line manager.

## Key Competencies

1. Ability to provide high quality personal judgement in relation to the following:
  - Client support including therapy activities, welfare and safety and appropriate time for referral to others
  - Dealings with clients and members of the public
2. Excellent interpersonal communication and ability to work as part of a small dynamic team
3. Ability to positively embrace change by not only being flexible towards the ideas of others but also putting forward ideas to colleagues that will enable the project's work to develop. This will involve creativity in problem solving and making appropriate responses to new ideas and unexpected situations.
4. Ability to plan work, be organised and ensure that time is utilised effectively for yourself, colleagues and clients.
5. Ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with a wide range of people internally and externally. This will include clients and their families, other professional service providers, members of the public, the media, managers and other colleagues.
6. No known allergies to dogs and to feel comfortable in the company of dogs (no direct handling is required).
7. Data management and data entry skills.

## Knowledge in the following areas:

8. Activities of Alzheimer Scotland and Dogs for Good
9. Activities of the Dementia Dog Project to date
10. Comprehensive understanding of dementia and current strategies/policies
11. Client/service user interview and selection procedures
12. Health and safety procedures and risk assessments for working in dementia environments

## Other Requirements

1. You will be required to hold a full UK Driving Licence.
2. As you will be working with vulnerable people, you will be required to undergo an enhanced DBS check and adhere to all of the charity's Safeguarding policy and procedures.
3. As part of the role, you may be required to work and stay away from home for short periods. Therefore a flexible approach to travel is essential.
4. Flexible working hours may occasionally be required in some instances to facilitate the effective delivery of the work.

All responsibilities and duties are to be carried out according to Alzheimer Scotland's standards, policies and procedures as described in the organisation's manuals and Practice Standards and the Animal Assisted Intervention standards, National Care Standards and Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice.

Pattern of hours: The working hours will be 17.5 hours per week and be flexible.

**Salary: The post is graded £25,000 – £26,522 (pro rata)**

The post holder will be subject to Enhanced Disclosure Scotland checks.

***This job description is open to review by the organisation***

# Alzheimer Scotland

## Dementia Specialist – Dementia Dog Project

### Person Specification

This person specification should be read with the job description for the post of Dementia Specialist. Please note that the competencies are not ranked in priority order.

The following criteria will be used in short-listing candidates and in appointing the successful applicant.

	Essential	Desirable
<b>Attributes and values</b>		
Self-motivated, dynamic, and able to work without close supervision.	√	
Understanding of and empathy with the organisation's aims and values.	√	
Ability to respond quickly to arising needs and meet deadlines	√	
Full and valid driving licence and access to a vehicle during working time.	√	
Willingness to travel within defined geographical areas	√	
Ability to problem solve and positively embrace change	√	
Basic understanding of the principles, values and practice of community care service for vulnerable adults.	√	
Shows a commitment to and understanding of equal opportunities, the elimination of discrimination and the empowerment of individuals and groups.	√	
<b>Education</b>		
Good general education.	√	
Knowledge of current and developing health and social care policy agenda		√
<b>Experience and knowledge</b>		
Understanding of Animal Assisted Intervention therapy		√

approaches		
Understanding and/or experience of working with/ supporting people with dementia and their families.	√	
An understanding of relevant key dementia strategies and policies in Scotland and England	√	
Understanding of the support services for people living with dementia	√	
<b>Service users and carers</b>		
Ability to relate purposefully and sensitively, communicate well and advocate on behalf of service users and carers in a range of settings.	√	
An understanding of the needs of people living with dementia and their carers	√	
<b>Communication</b>		
Approachable, with excellent listening skills, tact and the ability to offer support and encouragement in a non-judgemental manner.	√	
Ability to communicate and liaise effectively with external and internal teams.	√	
Excellent interpersonal and communication skills both verbal and written.	√	
<b>IT skills</b>		
Ability to input data accurately, use email and other computer packages.	√	
<b>Personal qualities</b>		
Good organisational skills and proven ability to manage own time and workload.	√	
<b>Team work</b>		
Ability to work effectively as member of a small team.	√	