

What You Can Expect from Your Trainer and Your Training Sessions

1. We're a team! Your trainer will work together with you, your dog and your family, personalising task-work, location visits and settle practice – all within locations to suit you personally.
2. Your trainer will have regular communication with everyone involved to ensure continuity of training across all parties. If you are under 16 years and are with Helpful Hounds as part of your alternative learning provision, it is essential that you as a parent/carer accompany your child, initially, to all sessions. This is to ensure that you are fully involved and knowledgeable of what we're doing. This will enable you to help your child continue the training exercises/tasks (homework!) between our sessions. Our trainer and your child will help to identify when you can drop out. For individuals over 16 years, it is important that you work on training yourself in-between sessions, with any support needed being provided by your family or PA.
3. Your trainer aims to provide experiences in multiple locations such as parks, independent shops, supermarkets and large stores, garden centres, cafés, hospitals, doctors and dentists' waiting rooms. These locations are tailored to your individual needs. Some travel may be involved, either accompanying the trainer in their car, or meeting at the location. We like to give you the opportunity to choose what environment you'd like to train in. However, distance and travel times must be considered a reasonable use of the trainer's (and your) time. For example, if there is a garden centre 30 minutes away – we will train here rather than another one that may be an hour away. Exceptions to this would be required trips to colleges, universities or hospitals that may be further afield.
4. We must always train at your dog's pace. Sometimes this is slower than families expect and can be frustrating. However, steady training leads to a more rounded, reliable and resilient assistance dog overall. If a trainer feels that an environment is placing too many demands on a dog, we will leave that environment and work on confidence building in a quieter location.
5. Immersion into different environments should be gradual and at a pace both you and your dog are happy with. Families should not push trainers to do more than, in their professional experience, they think your dog will be happy doing.
6. If we make a plan for a session and you feel it may be too challenging for you that day, please contact your trainer as soon as possible and we will endeavour to adapt the session.

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7. For children in particular (alternative provision), we aim to make the experience of visiting different places interesting and fun, with the aim of increasing independence. It must be remembered, however, that the main purpose of all sessions is to build a strong connection between you and your dog, and to train that dog to fulfil your individual needs.
8. Your trainer will stay in regular contact with you and your family. Trainers are easily accessible by phone/text/WhatsApp. We would ask that unless it's an emergency, communication is kept to within working hours as much as possible. However, if you have a mental health emergency you can call your trainer / Helpful Hounds anytime and we will point you in the direction of the help you need.
9. Please advise your trainer if your dog has been unwell – or even just a bit under the weather. If they're not feeling 100%, they won't be up to intense training or very busy environments, and we will adjust your session plan accordingly.
10. Working together as a team is really important to us and we will always do our best to fulfil your requirements during every training session. It should be noted that we are unable to offer PA or driving duties.

MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL - WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU, YOUR DOG AND YOUR FAMILY AND ARE EXCITED TO SEE ALL THE PROGRESS WE WILL MAKE TOGETHER.