

## Proposal for the Pawsitive Squad Assistance Dog Program as an Educational Activity

### Introduction

Pawsitive Squad CIC is a non-profit organisation which provides canine centred services to children and young people with additional and alternative needs across Mainland UK. This proposal is for 12 months access to our assistance dog program, which is ran by me, Heather Pyne and delivered with the support of a small team of fantastic volunteers.

My relevant qualifications include:

- Post graduate Microcredential (15 credits) in Online teaching: inclusive and accessible education
- BSc Hons 2.1 Open Degree (with relevant modules including approaches to mental health, issues in research with children and young people, counselling: exploring fear and sadness.
- Level 5 Dog practitioner diploma
- DipHE Equine Psychology & sport science.

Pawsitive Squad is an ASDAN registered centre number 3988.

### Provision proposal & outcomes

Our assistance dog program offers a multi-model approach to the enable the young person to train their own dog as an assistance dog to support their independence, safety and emotional regulation as well as learning about of canine development, emotions and training through theory modules.

#### Zoom group classes

We offer a monthly timetable with 15-minute group zoom classes which support the young person to learn in parallel with others in a low demand environment. This is a vital step in enable learning in group environments. In these sessions, the young person will also develop dog training and handling skills. Once they've passed the bronze award, and the dog is therefore ready to begin assistive task training, they will also teach their dog emotional regulation, independence and safety tasks such as:

- Deep pressure therapy & tactile stimulation which can be calming and grounding.
- Indicating to signs of increasing anxiety (*which helps promote emotional awareness & enables the young person to either use other assistive tasks or other coping strategies to regulate before becoming overwhelmed*).
- Fetching regulation equipment such as ear defenders, drink, fidget toy.
- Find and lead to parent/care giver (*which often enables the young person increased independence knowing if they become overwhelmed the dog will take them straight to their care giver*).
- Alert to emergency sounds e.g. fire alarm
- Crowd buffering - stand behind or circle around handler to create space for the handler.
- Find and lead to exit if the handler is feeling overwhelmed and needs to leave quickly.
- Interrupt episodes of self-harm, destructive behaviours or dissociation
- Road safety tasks including dual handling, refusing to cross in front of vehicles, indicating to curbs, stopping automatically at curbs to prompt checking for traffic.
- Find young person if lost, eloped or hiding

The young person will choose themselves which tasks will be beneficial to them but must teach a minimum of 3 assistive tasks which support their needs for their dog to become a fully trained assistance dog. A minimum attendance of 1 group zoom per month is required.

### **1:1 virtual short support & mentorship sessions**

These sessions are to provide any additional support including going over exercises, managing any accessibility difficulties, support with motivation. The young person and family choose what they wish to cover within the 1:1. For young people under 16 a parent/ guardian over 18 must also attend. We require clients to attend a minimum of 3 1:1s while their dog is in training.

### **In person group workshops in Nottingham**

Most months we offer in person group workshops which focus on the young person learning how to teach their dog specific skills or how to manage and problem solve through specific behaviour or emotional difficulties their dog is experiencing. These sessions provide an opportunity to engage with the local community, develop their practical handling skills and meet other young people. Attendance at in person workshops are optional.

### **Virtual learning zone**

The assistance dog program consists of three assessment levels – bronze, silver & gold with gold marking the point the dog becomes a fully trained assistance dog (which usually takes anything from 14 months to 3 years). For each level the young person has to complete a virtual learning theory module and demonstrate, in whatever format they wish, that they have processed and retained the theory within the VLE.

### **Practical training zone**

The practical training zone enables the young person to take a self-guided approach to their learning, practicing exercises and teaching their dog new skills by following written and video instructional videos.

## **Quotation**

**Our monthly fee is £70 for the assistance dog training program.**

**For schools and local authorities commissioning as an alternative provision or within an EOTAS package, a payment of £840 annually, prior to access to the program being granted.**

If you have any questions or require any support, please do not hesitate to contact me at:

[enquiries@pawsitivesquad.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@pawsitivesquad.co.uk)