

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What are the eligibility criteria for the BRAVEHOUND programme?

The eligibility criteria for a BRAVEHOUND are:

- You must have served with the British Armed Forces
- You must have a clinical diagnosis of a mental health condition due to service.
- You must live in the central belt of Scotland

## What makes an assistance dog?

Each dog is assessed annually against the Public Access Test criteria – this test determines whether the behaviour and temperament of the dog is suitable for an assistance dog. An assistance dog should be:

- Stable
- Well behaved
- Unobtrusive to the public
- The handler should have control of the dog and should not be a hazard to the public

Dogs will be able to perform at least three specified assistive tasks that will enhance your independence, in accordance with your individual needs. These will be discussed with the at interview and during the matching process.

## BRAVEHOUND will provide the following services:

- Once your application has been successful BRAVEHOUND will find an Assistance Dog suited to your needs.
- Support you in the application process and provide continued support through the BRAVEHOUND programme
- Support you with training, in the format of 1:1 training, group training and workshops.
- Support you to ensure the welfare of the dog is maintained.
- Train you and your assistance dog to attain Assistance Dog Status

## Do I have to pay for an assistance dog?

If you apply to BRAVEHOUND for an assistance dog, we will source and provide you with a dog. The dog will remain under the ownership of BRAVEHOUND, and you will be its guardian and handler and so there is no charge for the dog. However, there are some ongoing costs which you will need to consider.

## What breeds of dogs do BRAVEHOUND use?

BRAVEHOUND has dogs of a variety of breeds and types – we will ensure that we find a dog suitable for you.

## Can you train my pet dog to be an assistance dog?

If you already have a dog, we will assess your needs for an assistance dog and assess your pet dog for suitability to be an assistance dog.

## What costs will I need to consider and be responsible for?

- We ask that veterans set up a health pet plan for the dog's annual vaccinations and their preventative care. (Around £16 per month)\*
- We also ask that veterans put basic pet insurance in place. (around £25 per month)\*
- Equipment will be initially provided but will need to be replaced from time to time (will vary)
- BRAVEHOUND can provide food for your dog, but you may want to source your own.
- Treats for training will be needed (around £20 per month)
- Travel to training sessions (we try to offer training sessions which are geographically accessible, but there will be some travel required).

*(\* In some situations, there may be funding available to meet these costs depending on individual circumstances)*

## What time will I need to commit to?

- For the first 10 weeks you will need to commit to weekly training with a BRAVEHOUND trainer plus setting aside time to practice the skills from training which will be about 10 minutes per day, plus play and exercise time with your dog
- There will be a settling in period and so you should not commit to any holidays in this 10 week period
- After the initial 10 weeks you need to be able to commit to a training programme as discussed with the training team which is likely to be every 2 weeks and then in time monthly. If you work, you may need to reserve holiday for this.
- Training and reinforcing training is continuous so daily training , play and exercise with your dog will be required.

## What tasks are BRAVEHOUNDS trained to do?

The tasks (behaviours) that dogs are trained to do will vary according to your needs. Our current BRAVEHOUNDS can do a range of behaviours that include:

- Fetch medication
- Provide comfort on cue
- Create personal space for the veteran
- Observe visual signs of a panic attack and help to relieve symptoms
- Provide the veteran confidence when out and about
- Pick up a walking stick or their own lead to save the veteran from having to bend.

(They are not trained to provide personal protection, guide for visually impaired, balance or stability work).

## Will I be able to take my BRAVEHOUND to work?

Under the Equality Act 2010 employers should make reasonable adjustments. During your application process you should discuss with your employer if you are able to take your BRAVEHOUND with you to work and we can support you in that process by giving any information to your employer that they require.

## Can I withdraw my application at any time?

You have the right to leave the application process at any time.

Once BRAVEHOUND find an assistance dog for you there will be a transition plan discussed and put into place. There is then a 6-month probationary period. If at any point you need to leave the programme this can be discussed with BRAVEHOUND, and the Assistance Dog will be reallocated.

## **What happens if I am unable to care for my BRAVEHOUND or my BRAVEHOUND has to retire?**

We will support you as much as we can to enable you to keep your BRAVEHOUND, or we will find another home for them. If your BRAVEHOUND has to retire on medical grounds, then we can discuss options with you which may include transferring ownership to you so that the dog can enjoy their golden years as your pet dog.

