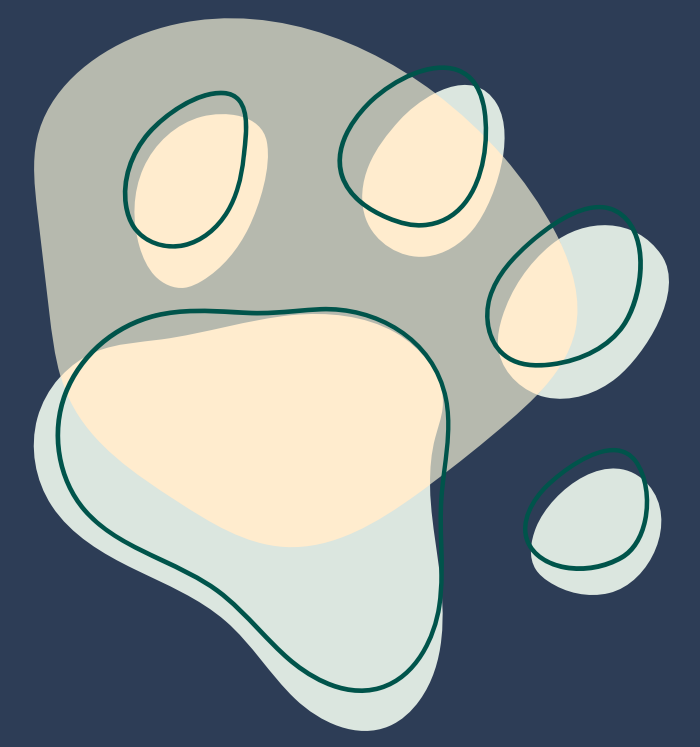


ASSISTIVE K9S – ASSISTANCE DOG TRAINING PATHWAY



At Assistive K9s, we do things a little differently.

Our program is designed around **your needs and your dog's wellbeing**, with training that is always paced to avoid frustration and disengagement. We believe that success comes from building a confident, reliable assistance dog while protecting their mental health through balance, enrichment, and downtime. Training is never one-size-fits-all – we tailor each stage to your lifestyle, routines, and the unique tasks that matter most to you. Each stage builds on the last, helping your dog grow into their role while strengthening your partnership along the way. You are supported through every step of the process – from early foundations to full accreditation.

STAGE 1 : PUPPY FOUNDATIONS (IF APPLICABLE)

- Giving your pup the best start in life with resilience, confidence, and independence.
- Building early skills like curiosity, adaptability, and learning “how to learn.”
- Establishing positive routines and habits to prevent challenges later on.
- Allowing them to enjoy puppyhood while gently exploring the world at their own pace.
- Developing a strong bond and trust between dog and handler.
- By the end of this stage, you'll have a good sense of whether your puppy is well suited to continue in the program.

STAGE 2: FUNDAMENTALS

- Learning the everyday obedience and manners that set the stage for advanced work.
- Developing good behaviour both at home and in the community.
- Beginning to understand your unique lifestyle and needs so training is tailored to you.
- At this point, you and your trainer will usually have a clearer idea of whether your dog is on the right path and what their future role might look like.

STAGE 3 : BUILDING PUBLIC ACCESS & EARLY TASK TRAINING

- Starting carefully guided public access in dog-friendly, low-pressure environments, always with a trainer alongside you.
- Gradually introducing new settings in a way that supports your dog's confidence and mental wellbeing.
- Helping you, as the handler, feel comfortable and knowledgeable about public access rights and responsibilities.
- At the same time, beginning the first assistance tasks tailored to your needs.
- Encouraging your dog to balance a working focus with appropriate downtime, so they stay happy and well-adjusted.
- This stage is about building resilience, teamwork, and confidence – for both you and your dog.

STAGE 4: PUBLIC ACCESS READINESS (IN-TRAINING STAGE)

Once you complete this stage, your team will:

- Have demonstrated the **minimum legal standards for public access** under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA).
- Hold **full public access rights**, provided behavioural and hygiene standards are maintained.
- Be issued with a **Public Access In-Training Jacket**, confirming you are ready for independent public access while still working towards PAT endorsement.

Focus areas during this stage:

- Practising in **low- to mid-level distraction environments** (already introduced during training).
- Gradually building towards higher-pressure settings at a pace that supports confidence and wellbeing.
- Beginning to use trained tasks in real-world settings.
- Establishing habits and routines that make public access smoother and more natural.
- It is recommended to approach new or very busy settings initially with a trainer until your dog is fully proofed.

STAGE 5: FULL PUBLIC ACCESS (PAT)

Once you successfully pass the PAT, your team will:

- Have formal **endorsement from Assistive K9s**, confirming that you consistently meet the highest behavioural, welfare, and tasking standards.
- Be recognised as having completed the full program and achieved the organisation's benchmark for reliability and professionalism in all public access settings.

Focus areas at this level:

- Proofing reliability across unpredictable or high-pressure situations.
- Demonstrating confidence and steadiness in challenging environments.
- Preparing for lifestyle-specific contexts such as:
 - Airports and travel
 - Concerts or large events
 - Workplace or school attendance
- Strengthening your dog's ability to handle anything life throws at you.

STAGE 6: ONGOING MAINTENANCE & SUPPORT

Accreditation is not the end of the journey – it's the beginning of a working partnership. Assistive K9s provides ongoing support to ensure long-term success, including:

- Regular catch-ups and required retests to maintain accreditation.
- Open communication for support with:
 - Changing needs or routines.
 - Addressing unexpected behavioural issues.
 - Preparing for major life changes (e.g., moving house, new workplace, travel).
 - Assistance with handling access denial incidents.
- A reliable, friendly point of contact whenever you need guidance, reassurance, or advice.

Your dog's welfare and long-term success are at the heart of everything we do. Regular off-duty activities and enrichment are just as important as training sessions, helping your dog stay well-rounded and resilient.

Not all dogs are suited to working roles, and suitability is assessed throughout their life. If concerns arise, your trainer will discuss them with you openly and as early as possible.