

# **VOLUNTEER PUPPY Socialisers SCHEME FAQs**

Thank you for your interest in the Medical Detection Dogs Puppy Socialisers Scheme.

Please read through this information carefully. If after reading it, you wish to apply to be a volunteer puppy socialiser, please complete and return an application form.

## **What is the Medical Detection Dogs Puppy Socialisers Scheme?**

Puppies and young dogs from 8 weeks old acquired by Medical Detection Dogs are placed in family homes during their training. They usually begin advanced training at around 12 - 14 months old.

Medical Detection Dogs will look after all food and veterinary costs associated with looking after the puppy. As a fosterer, you will take care of the puppy and ensure it attends training classes, regularly walked and socialised so that it is suitable for training.

## **Why be a Medical Detection Dogs puppy socialiser?**

Looking after a puppy should be an enjoyable and personally rewarding experience for individuals and the entire family. By following the advice and support given by Medical Detection Dogs trainers you will help maximise your pup's chances of being a suitable candidate for medical alert dog training.

## **How do I become a Medical Detection Dogs puppy socialiser?**

1. Complete and submit an application.
2. Receive advice from Medical Detection Dogs that you are being considered.
3. Medical Detection Dogs will arrange a mutually convenient time to visit you, this will give you the opportunity to discuss the programme and any queries you may have.
4. Following Medical Detection Dogs visit you will receive confirmation as to whether you have been accepted as a voluntary puppy socialiser.

## **What is the role of the socialiser?**

Socialisers are vital to nurture the healthy growth of the pup and provide the needed socialisation required for their future working life.

## **Why and how often do Medical Detection Dogs visit?**

A Medical Detection Dogs Puppy Co-ordinator/Trainer will visit approx once a month at a pre-arranged time.

During these visits, the co-ordinator can offer suggestions on ways to improve any problem areas. On these visits food/equipment required will be delivered if needed. It is also a good opportunity to discuss any concerns or questions.

You will always have telephone and e-mail access to our puppy co-ordinators and trainers

### **How long do I keep the puppy for?**

Generally pups are cared for by a foster family for anything up to 14 - 18 months. During this time you will be encouraged to take 'your puppy' to regular local dog training classes. It is expected that all of our puppies and young dogs will take part in the Kennel Club Bronze and Silver obedience schemes.

### **What happens to the pup after this time?**

Pups will be moved to homes near to our training centre where they will be assessed to determine their suitability for a future career as a medical alert dog. Suitable dogs will undergo a period of training with an Instructor to train the dog to detect target scents/odours.

## **SOCIALISATION**

As a volunteer socialiser, you will provide essential environmental conditioning to develop the puppy into a well balanced confident adult who is suitable for detection training as well as ensure the pup is healthy and happy.

### **Why should I socialise my puppy?**

Medical Alert Dogs work in many areas from someone's home to shops and busy airports. In order for them to feel comfortable in these environments it is vital they be well socialised and accustomed to different noises, situations and people. This can be achieved by exposing the puppy to as many different and challenging environments as possible.

### **How do I socialise my pup?**

There are many areas that you can take your puppy. This includes shopping centres, train stations and crossings, schools, busy roads playgrounds, local sporting events, and different types of stairs and surfaces.

Puppies should become accustomed to travelling in cars, slippery floors, confined spaces, vacuum cleaners, lawn mowers, and loud noises. The greater the exposure to a wide variety of things, people and other animals, the better equipped your puppy will be.

### **What about children?**

The pup should be allowed to regularly play with children to familiarise them with the quick and unpredictable movements children often make. A dog that has not been well socialised with children from a young age is often nervous around them in later life.