

Could you train a Hearing Dog?

National charity Hearing Dogs for Deaf People is looking for volunteers to help train their VIPs (Very Important Puppies) become fully-fledged hearing dogs.

One in six people in the UK have hearing loss and the loneliness, isolation and depression which can result from it might be changed by having a canine companion. This means that deaf people can be alerted to sounds and signals such as the doorbell, telephone and smoke alarms.



Diana Harkiss, local Hearing Dog Volunteer

The volunteers commit to having a puppy for a year throughout to socialise the dog before its real training begins. Volunteers would get full support and guidance from the charity on teaching basic obedience skills.

Victoria Leedham, Volunteering Manager at Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, said: “The start of the New Year is a magical time for the Volunteering team. It’s a time when people think about new starts, new challenges, new opportunities – so what better way to start the New Year than by joining our Hearing Dogs family and help change the lives of people with hearing loss.

“Being a puppy socialiser is an incredibly rewarding and satisfying experience; these very special volunteers are fundamental to what we do. Quite simply – Hearing Dogs would not exist without them. It’s also a fantastic opportunity to learn or improve your dog-training skills – and meet lots of new friends along the way!”

Diana Harkiss, local Hearing Dog Volunteer for two years, who

is currently a Volunteer dog trainer, said: “I became a Volunteer with Hearing Dogs because I love dogs and was intrigued by the prospect of training a puppy. Being a Volunteer, you really feel part of the Hearing Dogs family; I have made tons of new friends. I would recommend anyone considering becoming a Volunteer to do so. The charity gives you excellent support and training so you will learn lots as well as your puppy. It is one of the most rewarding things you can do.”

Puppies are placed with their volunteer socialisers – who aren't required to have any previous experience – at around eight weeks of age. Volunteers then work with their puppy, at home and at training classes run by Hearing Dogs, for approximately 14 months, before they return to the charity for further, specialist training.

Volunteers should be over 18 years of age, have enough time to care for and socialise a puppy on a daily basis, own a car and have access to a secure garden. Puppy socialising volunteers receive full support from Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, as well as regular home visits and puppy training classes.

For more information [click here](#), or email volunteer@hearingdogs.org.uk