



Assistance Dogs UK Advisory Panel

Candidate Pack
January 2026



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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in joining the Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK) Advisory Panel.

As an organisation we work relentlessly to break down barriers and champion standards for disabled people who rely on highly trained assistance dogs.

Over the last 2 years, we have made significant steps forward towards our strategic aims, which you can read more about in this candidate pack. This has included the growth of an effective and dedicated staff team, who are focused on calling for legislative change, to better define and protect the rights of assistance dog partnerships and cement the standards that keep people and dogs safe.

But we can't do it alone. We need to work together and bring expert voices to the table from a range of sectors including legal, policy, and strategic communications, and that's where you come in. We are seeking to create an Advisory Panel to help us explore the current legal framework, identify gaps, challenges and opportunities, and support us in making legislative reform a reality.

We want to hear from individuals who will strengthen our external credibility by being an independent, expert voice, with the ability to guide and influence change and advocate for disabled people who rely on highly trained assistance dogs across the UK.

As the coalition of and the knowledgeable advocate for accredited assistance dog charities in the UK, ADUK unites our members, champion high standards and systematically change minds. We work with a range of stakeholders, from policymakers to service providers, through to sector professionals and the public using evidence-based advocacy and education to further our objectives. When understanding shifts, access improves - and that's how we create meaningful changes for disabled people who rely on these life changing canines.

We don't train dogs ourselves, but our badge - carried on over 6,000 assistance dogs nationwide - signals something important. It shows that a dog has been trained to internationally recognised standards by one of our member organisations. This provides vital reassurance to service providers and the public alike that the dog is highly trained. However, many assistance dog owners still face discrimination, their rights misunderstood or ignored.

If you have experience in change-making, lobbying, and/or influence, gained in the disability space, then we want to hear from you. We look forward to receiving your application.



Pat Stafford, MBE
Chair of Assistance Dogs UK

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About us



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About us

Assistance Dogs UK

Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK) is the coalition of assistance dog organisations that have been accredited by Assistance Dogs International (ADI) and/or The International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF). We work to the highest international standards of assistance dog training and welfare.

Every day across the UK, thousands of disabled people rely on assistance dogs to live more independent lives. These remarkable canines complete vital tasks. They can guide people with visual impairments, alert those with medical conditions to danger, and provide vital support with mobility. In short, they play an extraordinary role in helping people live more independently.

As the umbrella body for 14 assistance dog charities, our approach balances expertise with accessibility. We're knowledgeable without being complicated, principled without preaching and determined without being divisive. We educate, advocate, and collaborate with diverse stakeholders, so together we're creating a more inclusive society where assistance dog partnerships can live without barriers.

Through evidence-based approaches and constructive engagement, we're building a future of practical, inclusive approaches to standards. These uphold training excellence and welfare while maintaining independence for disabled people. We're not just supporting today's partnerships - we're shaping tomorrow's landscape to ensure everyone who relies on a highly trained assistance dog can access all the services and opportunities they are entitled to.

ADUK is led by an Executive Director and a small and dedicated staff team, with strategic oversight from a Board of Trustees. The Board is currently made up of representatives from our member organisations, with an independent Chair of Trustees, with plans to diversify further ensuring a greater breadth of voices, diversity of thought and lived experience.

Meet the ADUK staff team, trustees and ambassadors [here](#).

Review ADUK's latest accounts [here](#).

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About us



Meet our ambassadors

ADUK currently has 8 ambassadors, who rely on highly trained assistance dogs trained by some of our members. Our ambassadors play an essential role in bringing user voice to our mission. Meet Jordan and Sophie and hear about how their assistance dogs have impacted their lives.

"I am ex-military and current Paramedic. I have Complex PTSD and due to this I have an assistance dog from Service Dogs UK. Teddy is a Golden Cocker Spaniel, and is a cheeky, loving lad who just wants to please and love. Teddy was from the Dogs Trust and since we were partnered, he has certainly saved my life. The impact Teddy has had not just on my life but to my whole family can't be put into words, which is why being an ambassador not just for ADUK & Service Dogs UK but for all assistance dogs is so important. My assistance dog gives me the strength and motivation to support others facing the same or similar issues. He is my reason to get up every day and without Teddy I simply wouldn't be here."

Jordan, ADUK Ambassador, partnered with Teddy (Service Dogs UK)



"Tashi means saying yes: to scary things, to opportunities and to a safe and happy existence. A magic dog with a magic job, and my absolute partner in crime. Being accompanied by Tashi is essential, and why tackling access refusals is so important to me."

Sophie, ADUK Ambassador, partnered with Tashi (Medical Detection Dogs). Tashi is trained to alert Sophie to sudden Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (PoTS) episodes, keeping her injury free, out of hospital and helping to get her life back on track after years of being housebound.

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About us

What we do and our strategic aim

We champion the high standards our members work to and support collaboration and knowledge-sharing across the sector. We also work to break down the barriers that assistance dog handlers face - whether that's through public education, supporting candidate organisations to reach accreditation, or working with service providers to improve access.

But education alone isn't enough. Many handlers still face discrimination, and too often, their rights are misunderstood or ignored. That's why we are now calling for legislative change.

Stronger laws are needed to clearly define and protect the rights of assistance dog partnerships and enshrine the standards that keep people and dogs safe. To support that, we're bringing together expert voices - not just from within the assistance dog world, but from legal, policy, and related fields - to help us explore the current legal framework, identify gaps, and shape a clear path forward.

These conversations are an important part of strengthening our approach, bringing in new perspectives, and helping us consider campaign strategies and legal routes we may not yet have explored. Legislative reform isn't just something we're aiming for - it's a necessary step toward breaking down the barriers assistance dog handlers face, and ensuring the standards we champion are properly understood, recognised, and protected in law.



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About us

Our members



Autism Dogs
Charity



For more information on our members, please visit [here](#).
For more information on our candidates, please visit [here](#).

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Role

description



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Role description



ADUK Advisory Panel

ADUK is seeking to establish an Advisory Panel to provide expert insight and strategic guidance as we work toward influencing legislative and regulatory changes that support disabled people who rely on highly trained assistance dogs. These changes will focus on access rights, consumer protection, public safety, and high training and welfare standards for assistance dogs.

Assistance dog partnerships continue face persistent barriers. Access refusals are common, and legal rights remain confusing. Even well-established partnerships frequently hear “no dogs allowed” at the doors of supermarkets, restaurants, taxis, and other public places. People with less visible disabilities often face intrusive questioning. “You don’t look disabled” is a phrase heard all too often.

The lack of clear legal definitions compounds these problems. Poorly trained dogs sometimes get misrepresented as assistance dogs, which creates further challenges for highly trained partnerships. We’re addressing these challenges head-on and you could be a part of this change by joining our Advisory Panel.

Purpose

The Advisory Panel will advise on and support the strategic development of ADUK’s approach to legislative and regulatory change.

Core objectives of the Advisory Panel

Panel members will add tangible value to ADUK’s strategic aim by:

- Providing guidance on ADUK’s legal interpretations and external public policy positions.
- Supporting ADUK in developing a credible, well-modelled approach to legislative and/or policy reform.
- Attending events e.g. parliamentary receptions, and harnessing networks, personal contacts and own influence to drive change.

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Role description



Panel member responsibilities

- Contribute your expertise, challenge thinking, and collaborate on solutions.
- Act as a sounding board and flag emerging challenges and opportunities.
- Review draft proposals or policy positions - reviewing and challenging assumptions or approaches constructively.
- Provide insights grounded in experience, evidence or expertise.
- Attend events and utilise own networks to ensure appropriate guests are engaged and invited.
- Maintain confidentiality as appropriate.

Time commitment

- Estimated time commitment: 15-20 hours per year.
- Initial term will be 12 months (reviewed annually).
- Quarterly meetings (with ad hoc input as needed) - virtual and in-person meetings. In-person meetings will be held in London and/or at ADUK member sites.

Panel operations & support

- Chaired by an independent member or ADUK trustee/staff member, likely the current Chair of the Trustee Board.
- Induction and briefing materials for all Advisory Panel members.
- Recognition of contributions in ADUK reports, events, or publications (with consent).
- Administrative support will be provided to ensure efficient and inclusive panel operation.
- Meetings scheduled in advance (quarterly as standard).
- Open dialogue encouraged in a respectful, inclusive environment.
- Emphasis on collaboration, not consensus: disagreement is welcomed where it supports better outcomes.
- Feedback mechanisms to close the loop on how advice is used (you said we did).
- Minutes and actions recorded and shared.

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Person
specification



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Person spec



Skills and experience sought

By joining our Advisory Panel, you'll be championing a vision of a society where disabled people who rely on assistance dogs face no barriers. A world where standards matter, legislation is clear and understanding is widespread. With your support we can build this more inclusive future.

To achieve this, we seek an expert voice in the disability space with some or all of the following:

- Lobbying and changemaking
- Advocacy
- Rights and access

Panel members are expected to:

- Demonstrate high levels of personal credibility, bringing relevant experience, skills and knowledge.
- Conduct themselves with integrity, objectivity, openness, and honesty.
- Demonstrate their capability to be personally effective, with excellent communication skills, and the ability to influence, and actively contribute.
- Harness relevant networks as required.

Training will be provided on assistance dog standards and/or ADUK policy context.

If you're really excited about this opportunity, but your experience doesn't align with the skills and experience sought, we still encourage you to get in touch to tell us what you can offer the ADUK Advisory Panel.

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How to Apply



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How to apply



ADUK is working exclusively with Charisma Charity Recruitment.

Expressions of interest should be submitted through the [Charisma website](#), and include:

- A comprehensive CV
- A supporting statement, explaining how you believe you match the requirements of the role and describing any potential conflicts of interest.

For an informal and confidential discussion about the role, please contact:

Katherine Anderson-Scott, Executive Director of Charisma Charity Recruitment on 01962 813300 or email info@charismarecruitment.co.uk

Closing date: Monday 23 February 2026

Charisma vetting interviews will need to be completed by lunchtime on Friday 27 February in preparation for shortlist submission by EOD.

Interviews with ADUK are expected to take place in early March.

ADUK is committed to recruiting people who reflect our diverse society.

ADUK values diversity in all respects and strives to provide a workplace where everyone can be themselves. We welcome applications from candidates with a variety of backgrounds, skills, life experiences and needs, especially from people who identify as disabled or those who have lived experience with assistance dogs.

If you have any adjustments to enable you to access this information or the application process, please contact us on 01962 813300 or email info@charismarecruitment.co.uk



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