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**CANINE COURT**

 **COMPANION PROGRAM**

**(CCCP)**

**INFORMATION**

**BOOKLET**

WEBSITE: [www.guidedogs.com.au](file://gd-fs/CompanyData/Departments/ClientServices/Standards%20Committee%20%26%20Audits/Client%20Services%20Policies/Policies%20and%20Templates/awaiting%20FINAL%20approval/www.guidedogs.com.au)

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1. **CCCP OVERVIEW**

**OBJECTIVES**

The primary objectives of the Canine Court Companion Program are;

1. To reduce the negative impact of court attendance and support victims of crime through the medium of a specially selected and trained Therapy dog.
2. Provide nominated courthouses with Therapy dog teams who are confident, empathetic and committed to their roles.
3. Create opportunities where members of the public can be involved in their community in a meaningful way through a well-structured and supported program.

**WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A THERAPY DOG?**

Interacting with Therapy dogs has been scientifically proven to lower heart rate, increase speech and memory function and heighten mental clarity. Therapy dogs can also reduce anxiety, offer a pleasant distraction and provide non-judgemental support to those in need. In a courthouse environment emotions and stress are often at a high and victims of crime are at risk of being re-traumatised and left feeling vulnerable. Interacting with a Therapy dog can reduce these feelings and improve the wellbeing of the individual.

Previous trials of dogs used in a therapy capacity in courthouses around the world have proven to be highly successful with positive effects felt by not only the victims of crime, but their support networks and staff who work in the legal system.

**WHAT DOES THE PROGRAM LOOK LIKE?**

Therapy dog teams attend nominated courthouses on assigned days at an agreed time to offer support and interact with court users and court staff with a specially trained and selected Therapy dog.

Therapy dog teams will primarily be offering support in the public areas of the courthouse, including the safe room. Teams may asked assist police or court professionals with individuals who are anxious and may benefit from spending time with a Therapy dog.

**PROGRAM ROLL OUT**

**Where**

Metro courts

Manly, Gosford, Sutherland, Burwood and Campbelltown.

Regional courts

Lismore, Goulburn, Nowra, Orange, Wagga Wagga and Taree.

Additional courts

To be advised.

**When**

Therapy dog teams will be required to attend court for a 1.5 hour visit between 9am – 12pm (as per arranged with the court registrar). Most visits occur between 9am – 10.30am.

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**Days of Operation**

Visits occur 4 mornings per week for Metro courts and 2 mornings per week for Regional courts (this may vary). Visit days are determined by each individual court and can be Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday (no weekends). Volunteer to advise which day/s best suit their circumstances.

Please note, courts prefer female handlers for days where domestic violence and AVO cases are heard. These days vary from courthouse to courthouse (successful applicants will be advised).

**Teams per court**

There are generally four dedicated Therapy dog and Handler teams per Metro court and two dedicated Therapy dog and Handler teams per Regional court, with one or two additional Handler only or Therapy dog and Handler teams to provide support where possible. Teams share the load and create a support network so that court visits can be maintained should a volunteer be unable to attend on their assigned day. Teams may also wish to meet up for training sessions and doggy play dates.

**VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT**

Volunteers will be required to attend a mandatory training session with Victim Services at the Parramatta Justice Precinct or Guide Dog Training Centre if Metro. Regional training is typically delivered on location. Volunteers will also be asked to attend a dog handling session. This will usually occur at the Guide Dog Centre for Metro volunteers and on location for Regional volunteers. All volunteers will attend a court induction at their nominated court.

**VOLUNTEER ROLES**

We understand that volunteering, although incredibly rewarding can at times be difficult to engage in due to other commitments and personal circumstances. As such we are offering several ways you may be able to contribute your time and skills;

***I would like to Host a dog and become a Therapy Dog Handler.***

Fantastic! If you are able to commit to at least 1 day per week at a nominated courthouse and you have the capacity to care for a Therapy dog in your home we would love to have you on board!

***I would like to become a Therapy dog Handler but am unable to host a dog at all.***

In the instance you would like to volunteer as a Therapy dog Handler but are unable to Host a dog in your home we may be able to offer an alternative role. If you are willing to commit your time to courthouse visits and are able to collect and securely transport a Therapy dog who is being Hosted by another volunteer to the courthouse then this may be the role for you.

***I would like to become a Therapy Dog Handler, am unable to host a dog full time but can do temporary care.***

If you are able to volunteer as a Therapy dog Handler and you can care for a dog every now (when a full time Host goes on holidays, etc.) then this may suit you.

***I currently own a dog from Guide Dogs NSW/ACT and am interested in becoming a Therapy Dog Handler.***

If you Puppy Raised a dog for Guide Dogs NSW/ACT and it was deemed unsuitable to be placed with a client in one of our programs due to a minor health or temperament/behavioural concern and you would like to volunteer, please contact us further to discuss.

***I would like to volunteer with my own Labrador or Golden Retriever.***

Although the majority of the dogs used in the CCCP are from Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, should you wish to have your dog assessed for the program we would be happy to discuss this further with you.

**WHAT DOES HOSTING A THERAPY DOG ENTAIL?**

Ideally Hosts will live close to a nominated courthouse to reduce travelling time and encourage compliance with visits.

Hosts are expected to allow the dog in their home, sleep inside their home and provide adequate exercise and mental stimulation. The Host will not leave the dog in most cases for more than 4 -5 hours a day by itself. The Host will also have adequate outdoor shelter and a dog-safe yard, gates and home to ensure the welfare of the dog. The Host will be responsible for the dog’s physical health i.e. maintain advised weight, ensure clean coat and nails clipped, etc. The Host will be expected to make the dog part of their family.

Although when ‘off duty’ Therapy dogs are encouraged to have down time to relax and play, it is the Hosts responsibility to maintain basic training skills and home manners.

Hosts can apply if they have existing pets providing they are dog-social.

Hosts will be supported and trained in dog care, dog handling and welfare by Guide Dogs NSW/ACT.

**WHAT WILL GUIDE DOGS SUPPLY FOR THE DOG?**

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT will supply the Host with a Therapy Dog Kit (see Section 6).

For the duration of the dog’s working life the Host will also be provided with dog food, veterinary care and preventive medications (see Section 7).

The Host will be expected to provide adequate bedding and a bucket for water.

**WHAT WILL GUIDE DOGS SUPPLY FOR THE HANDLER?**

A uniform consisting of a polo shirt and jacket, and a training pouch. A Therapy dog vest for the dog and name tag.

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT will provide dog care, dog handling and dog welfare training. Guide Dogs NSW/ACT and Victim Services will provide training on courthouse etiquette, what to expect, procedures and debriefing.

1. **STEWARDSHIP OF THE THERAPY DOG**

Therapy dogs who are placed with volunteer Hosts will remain under the ownership of Guide Dogs NSW/ACT for the duration of court program. Should the Host commit 12 months of service (weekly visits) to the program they will be offered permanent ownership of the dog upon ceasement of their volunteer period.

 **3. ABOUT THERAPY DOGS**

Our dogs are the result of careful and selective breeding through Guide Dogs NSW/ACT Breeding Program. Pups are reared in loving home environments with a trained volunteer until they are around 4 weeks of age. At this point, mum and pups are bought into the Breeding Centre situated at the Guide Dog Centre in Glossodia NSW, where they receive age appropriate handling and exposure as well as lots of love and support.

At 7 - 8 weeks of age the pups are placed with volunteer Puppy Raisers. Puppy Raisers provide safe nurturing homes for our pups, and with ongoing assistance from our Puppy Development Advisors (PDA’s) and our Successive Training and Enrichment Program (STEP) help to raise healthy and happy dogs.

At 12 – 14 months of age our dogs are returned back to the Guide Dog Centre for assessment and training. It is at this time dogs are matched to roles best suited to their individual strengths, although reconsideration of roles may occur at any time during assessment and training.

Because we want the best dogs possible in our programs, the Breeding Program is given initial consideration. After this, consideration is given to our Guide Dog program. Guide dog work is unique and a specific skill set and temperament is required from a Guide Dog. Because of this, not all dogs coming through our Puppy Raising program will suit this program but will shine in other roles including Pets As Therapy, Canine Court Companion or Ambassador Dog Programs.

**What do we look for in a CCCP Therapy Dog?**

Dogs selected for the CCCP have been identified as having a calm and predictable temperament with an engaging demeanour and the capacity to work happily in a stressful environment with high human traffic without causing disruption to court proceedings.

**What Training do CCCP Therapy Dogs Receive?**

All dogs raised in Guide Dogs NSW/ACT Puppy Raising program have undergone supervised training from 8 weeks of age. During the first year of the dog’s life the dog will learn basic obedience including sit, drop, stay, stand, wait (for meals), ‘on your bed’, and ‘quick quicks’ (for toileting). They are trained to walk on the left side of the handler and be manageable and responsive on lead. During this time pups are also exposed to new and interesting environments to ensure they are confident and adaptable.

Once at the Guide Dog Centre the PAT Team, in addition to solidifying basic skills, familiarise the dogs to mobility equipment, noises, traffic, car travel, cafés, children, other dogs, residential areas, rural areas, parks and water ways to name a few. Additional behaviours may also be taught to Therapy dogs to encourage engagement with court attendees such as ‘shake’, ‘bow’ or ‘visit’.

All training throughout our dogs’ lives is undertaken using positive reinforcement via food, physical and verbal rewards.

Dogs deemed unsuitable for our programs due to health or temperament are offered back to their Puppy Raiser in the first instance as a pet dog. If the Puppy Raiser is unable to take the dog as a pet, the dog is placed on our Pet List and is matched and offered to the most suitable Pet List applicant.

1. **THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

**Pre Application:**

Applicants first need to read this **Information** **Pack** in its entirety. If the applicant is satisfied that they meet the criteria for one or more of the volunteer options they should proceed with completing the **Application**.

**Application:**

1. Upon receipt of Application to the Guide Dog Centre an Acknowledgement Letter will be sent.
2. If an Application is deemed unsuitable the decision will be communicated outlining why the Application has been deemed unsuitable. The applicant has the right to appeal the decision should this occur.
3. If the Application is deemed suitable the applicant will be contacted by a Client Services Officer (CSO) to discuss the Application and to arrange an assessment date and time.
4. The assessment will be conducted in the applicant’s home and generally takes up to 1 hour to complete. If the applicant moves residence after the assessment but before receiving a dog the new residence will need to be assessed. Family members, friends and advocates are welcome to attend the assessment.
5. Following completion of the assessment, the CSO will make a recommendation to the CCCP Team. The decision of the CCCP Team will be communicated to applicants in writing or via a phone call.
6. Successful applicants will be placed on the CCCP Waiting List until the role best suited to them can be offered. Priority will be given to applicants who are able to both host and handle a dog as part of a Therapy Dog Team.

Any personal information collected by Guide Dogs NSW/ACT will be treated as confidential. Access to this information will be limited to management and team members involved with service provision.

1. **DECLINED APPLICATIONS**

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT is committed to providing quality and meaningful services to assist those in need. However, not everyone will be suited to our programs and whilst every effort is made to ensure applicants are treated fairly and their applications considered holistically, some applications may still be declined.

Should your application be declined you will be notified in writing by our CCCP Team. The letter will state the reasons why the application has been declined. Recommendations encouraging applicants to develop particular skills or improve environmental conditions may also be provided so that should re-application occur the applicant might be successful in the second instance.

Applicants who have been declined will have the right to appeal.

1. **CANINE COURT COMPANION PROGRAM AGREEMENT**

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT has an ongoing responsibility to ensure the Host, Handler and Therapy dog have the best possible experience through suitable training and ongoing monitoring. The welfare of the dog is an important responsibility of both Guide Dogs NSW/ACT and the Host and Handler, with the dog largely reliant on its Host and Hander to ensure its wellbeing. As such an Agreement has been developed to outline some of these responsibilities and you will be asked to sign this Agreement upon successful application to the program.

Please find on the following page a copy of the Canine Court Companion Program Agreement.

In return for your commitment Guide Dogs NSW/ACT will provide for the duration of the volunteering period for ‘full time’ volunteers (commit to weekly court visits) with the following:

Premium dog food: $110 per bag

Heartgard: $76 per 6 pack

Nexgard: $40 per 6 pack

All wormer: $20 1 x 3 month dose

Yearly vaccination: $90 - $130

Canine Court Companion Theraoy dog Handler uniform (polo and jacket)

Canine Court Companion Therapy dog vest

Lead, collar, martingale collar, Therapy dog tag and treat pouch.

Adequate training

\*Prices based on average 2019 product search.

**CANINE COURT COMPANION PROGRAM AGREEMENT**

The breeding and training of a Canine Court Companion Therapy Dog is a significant investment in time and expense by Guide Dogs NSW/ACT and the benefactors who support these costs. The success of the program is largely reliant upon volunteer compliance and commitment. As such, the CCCP Therapy Dog handler is asked to sign this Agreement to demonstrate acknowledgment and acceptance of responsibilities as outlined below.

I \_\_\_\_\_ of: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Therapy Dog Handler’s Name Address

Received CCCP TD (name) \_\_\_ Dog Code: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

on (date)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and agree to the following:

1. Fulfil all visitation commitments at the agreed location, agreed time and on agreed days.
2. Advise GDNSWACT immediately if the commitment is no longer able to be fulfilled.
3. Advise GDNSWACT immediately if you are unable to attend a visit.
4. Advise GDNSWACT immediately if your circumstances change.
5. Ensure exceptional health, presentation and care of the dog at all times by:
6. Maintaining the weight of the dog as advised by GDNSWACT Veterinarians;
7. Having the dog examined by a Veterinarian at least once every twelve (12) months;
8. Following health and care guidelines as provided by Guide Dogs NSW/ACT;
9. Engaging in positive training and behavioural reinforcement;
10. Undertaking regular grooming, bathing and nail clipping.
11. Maintaining the emotional and mental health of the dog by providing adequate and appropriate exercise, socialisation, down time and affection.
12. Ensuring the dog is safe from abuse and discomfort.
13. Comply with all legislation and local by-laws relative to the keeping of dogs.
14. Maintain personal neat and clean appearance when attending courthouse visitations.
15. Maintain cleanliness and neatness of the dog coat provided.
16. Wear the uniform provided by GDNSWACT to all visitations and public events when acting on behalf of GDNSWACT.
17. Ensure the dog is wearing the coat at all visitations.
18. Comply with any requirements and standards as outlined by the courthouse.
19. Maintain current Working With Children Check and National Police Check.
20. Complete any logs or paperwork as required by GDNSWACT.
21. Veterinary Services:
22. GDN shall provide veterinary services to eligible dogs at Guide Dog Centre, 1 Spinks Rd, Glossodia, NSW, 2756 when available. Services will be without charge to the Volunteer during the term of this Agreement. The treatment of the dog will be at the direction and discretion of GDN’s Staff Veterinarian/s.

 b) It is the Volunteers responsibility to secure all necessary veterinary care, including emergency care, for the dog as needed.

1. Veterinary care obtained for a dog at a non-GDN veterinary clinic may or may not be eligible for reimbursement through GDN.
2. Veterinary care not eligible for reimbursement is that sought for injury, ingestion or inhalation. Such issues can be prevented with attentive dog management.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Privacy Policy**

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT is committed to protecting the personal information of our clients, members, donors, supporters, customers and other individuals we deal with. We recognise that individuals have a right to control how their personal information is handled. Providing personal information is an act of trust that we take seriously.

Personal information is information about you, like your name, contact details and records of your dealings with us. Personal information may in some cases include sensitive information, like your health information or membership of a professional or trade association.

***For more details please see our full policy on http://www.guidedogs.com.au/privacy-policy***

1. **THERAPY DOG PLACEMENT**

Once a dog has been matched, offered and accepted, a time and date for placement will be agreed upon. On the day of placement the CSO will deliver the Therapy Dog to the home of the Host whereupon training and living with the dog begins.

Receiving a dog from any of our programs requires a commitment of both time and energy. For the best possible outcome Hosts should clear their schedules during the placement and training period so that they can fully focus on receiving information and assist with settling the dog into its new home. It is recommended that non-essential visitors be asked to keep visits to a minimum if at all during the first few days of the initial bonding period so that the dog has adequate time to settle into its new routine and the host has time to develop the skills and confidence required to manage their new dog.

Placements are tailored to suit the Host’s needs and skillset and are monitored carefully to ensure a positive outcome. The amount of time spent on a placement varies in accordance with both the Host and the dog’s needs. Most placements however take 2 hours.

**What Happens at a Therapy Dog Placement?**

The CSO will first deliver the Therapy Dog kit and dog food to the home. The CSO will then give the Host a dog treat and ask them to sit in a comfortable spot whilst retrieving the dog from the car (during hot whether the dog will accompany the CSO to the door in the first instance). The CSO will then introduce the dog to the Host at which time they can feed the dog the treat to initiate a positive connection. After this time the CSO will ask the Host to show where the dog will be toileted and the dog will be asked to eliminate so as to initiate a toileting routine.

After this time, the dog will be shown its water bucket and allowed to investigate its new surroundings on lead, then off lead under supervision, dependant on the environment and dog. The CSO then discusses the Pre Allocation Health Summary and Manual. After the CSO has discussed the general care and management of the dog, grooming, obedience and feeding will be demonstrated and the dog will be introduced to its sleeping area. This will be followed by a walk with the dog to introduce the dog to its new area as well as acquaint the Host with managing the dog on lead. Once the CSO and the Host are confident the Host has acquired adequate knowledge and skills to manage the dog independently, the CSO leaves and the placement begins.

The next day a follow up call or visit is conducted to check on the progress of the dog. During this time any concerns or questions may be raised and addressed.

**Therapy Dog Kit**

Therapy Dogs are placed with a kit suited to their individual needs. All Hosts however will receive a kit which includes a flat collar, martingale collar, lead, dog bowl, brush, heartworm prevention, intestinal worm prevention, and flea and tick prevention as well as a bag of premium dry dog food. Once these items run out or become worn out, it is the Host’s responsibility to advise Guide Dogs so that they can be replaced in a timely manner.

Prior to placement the Host will be responsible for sourcing an indoor bed (we recommend a soft but supportive rectangle bed suited for a large size dog), an outdoor bed (we recommend a trampoline bed), a bucket for the dog’s water (9L buckets are best), a pooper scooper and bin for back yard toileting, poo bags to pick up toileting on walks, and dog nail clippers (unless you plan on outsourcing this task). You may also wish to purchase toys.

**A Word on Toys**

Many Labradors enjoy chewing and willingly accept toys. They are however able to destroy soft and stuffed toys, tennis balls and rope toys with little to no effort. As such these types of toys should be avoided as internal injuries from ingesting broken parts may result. Hard wearing toys such as Kongs are recommended.

1. **SUPPLIES**

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT is happy to supply full time volunteers whom conduct visits on a regular basis (1 x weekly) the following supplies:

Premium dog food: $110 per bag

Heartgard: $76 per 6 pack

Nexgard: $40 per 6 pack

All wormer: $20 1 x 3 month dose

Yearly vaccination: $90 - $130

Canine Court Companion Therapy dog Handler uniform (polo and jacket)

Canine Court Companion Therapy dog vest

Lead, collar, martingale collar, Therapy dog tag and treat pouch.

\*Prices based on average 2019 product search.

\*\*Please note for dogs remaining under Guide Dogs NSW/ACT Stewardship, all vet care will be covered EXCEPT for the three ‘i’s as per CCCP Agreement:

1. Veterinary care not eligible for reimbursement is that sought for injury, ingestion or inhalation. Such issues can be prevented with attentive dog management.

\*\*\* For dogs under Volunteer ownership (i.e. using their own dogs) preventative medications will be covered as will veterinary care should the dog acquire an injury at the court.

1. **THERAPY DOG HANDLER TRAINING**

How the dogs are managed in the courthouse environment is important to both their welfare and longevity as a Therapy dog. As such Handlers will undergo offsite and onsite (courthouse) training with the Therapy dog, including supervised sessions, to ensure confidence and ease of handling when on the job.

Handlers will be taught basic cues used with a CCCP dog, how to reward a dog effectively to encourage desired behaviour and how to identify stress in dogs so that the dog remains happy in its environment. Other areas of training will include information on the conduct of CCCP visits, court procedure, ethics and confidentiality, occupational health and safety, human health and communication, healthcare, infection control, court user rights and animal welfare. This training will be conducted in collaboration with Victim Services.

Induction, information sessions and training will be conducted at locations convenient to the Hosts and Handlers and will be delivered in a flexible and supportive manner.

1. **COMPLAINTS**

Volunteers are encouraged to provide feedback including dissatisfaction with services provided by Guide Dogs NSW/ACT.  There will be no disadvantage in respect to ongoing or future services as a result of any complaint made.

**Complaint Procedure**

1. Volunteers will be informed at the commencement of a program that there is a procedure for complaints.
2. Dissatisfaction with Guide Dogs NSW/ACT or its staff or with services should first be raised with the staff member providing the service. If a volunteer feels unable to raise the issue directly with this person, the matter can be raised with the staff member’s supervisor or by contacting the Client Feedback Officer on 0466 306 827 or email feedback@guidedogs.com.au.
3. Wherever possible complaints will be resolved by the staff member receiving the complaint. More serious complaints will require investigation. The volunteer will be kept informed during the complaint process.
4. The complaint will be investigated and the volunteer informed of the outcome of the complaint. If the volunteer is unhappy with the resolution of the complaint it will be reviewed by the Client Services General Manager.
5. If the volunteer remains dissatisfied they can take the complaint to the NSW Ombudsman, for residents of New South Wales (NSW), or the ACT Human Rights Commission, for residents of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).
6. Documentation of complaints is confidential and recorded in a secure register. Details of complaints raised are not recorded on volunteer’s records.