



BUSINESS CASE  
INFORMATION FOR  
THE RESTART DOGS  
PROJECT





# Restart

DOGS



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## Business case information for establishments considering hosting The Restart Dog Project.

What is Restart Dog Project?

A course such as the Restart Dog Project not only provides prisoners with a vocational qualification which could lead to work experience and job opportunities upon release but also enables them to understand the influence their behaviour has on others, develop feelings of self-worth and self-awareness which in turn will have a positive impact on others around them and provide a more stable environment within the prison.

There is also evidence that dog training programmes increase participants' self-control, anger management, and patience. Cooke and Farrington (2016) reports that prisoner dog trainers are more willing to adhere to prison policies and exhibit increased patience with the demands associated with incarceration. Button (2007) mentions how a participant reported becoming frustrated with their dog, but this individual sat down and counted to ten instead of showing their anger towards the dog, because of wanting to be loving towards the dog.

The Restart Dog Project has been running in a young offender since 2019 then in an adult estate since November 2021 and has been very well received at HMP Dovegate by prisoners, staff, and visitors. The project has also gained the support of the National Dog Inspectorate and has been widely praised on social media by members of the public who fully support the work carried out by HMP Dovegate, Werrington and the Restart Dog Project.

The success of training dogs to become assistance dogs is a difficult one, only 30% of dogs make it through the arduous tasks set for them, as such the waiting list is very long, up to six years for a person living with a disability. We hope to increase the success rate of the dogs through the scheme, to 50% with any that fail the tests being rehomed as family dogs within the community.



The Restart Dog Project is accredited by the Animal Assisted Interventions International. As such we have a very strict welfare policy which we adhere to.



## **What do we want to do?**

The Objectives of the programme are:

- To provide vocational education to prisoners in the dog training and behaviour field. Offering an qualification of a level 4, along with extensive practical skills in running dog training classes and 1-2-1 coaching. We aim to network among dog training professionals and bring workshops hosted by them into the prison estates.
- To help the students develop feelings of self-worth and self-awareness through achieving training goals, cooperating with others, and performing vital services for unwanted/at risk animals as well as service animals.
- Provide motivation and an opportunity to learn acceptable behaviour patterns, as well as help to meet each participant need for acceptance and affection through the emotional bonding between them and their dog.
- Help the students understand the influence their behaviour has on the outcome and success of an animal's learning, welfare, and overall stress.
- Develop skills to influence and change the outcome using positive reinforcement strategies as opposed to force and aversive models of behaviour.
- To serve the community by placing assistance dogs and trained companion animals into homes.
- To train and care for dogs attending day care including liaising with the owners, designing training plans and gaining insight into the profession.

## **How will we do it?**

The programme aims to give the students a thorough grounding in the basics of the following topics. This content is delivered through visual learning, observation of real dogs, demonstration and coaching and workbooks/handouts.



**Knowledge - An Animal Trainer with Restart Dogs will gain a comprehensive understanding of:**

1. current legislation, including health and safety and animal welfare, workplace policies and procedures
2. the 5 welfare needs of animals:
  - its need for a suitable environment
  - its need for a suitable diet (and water)
  - its need to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
  - any need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals
  - its need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease
3. how to carry out risk assessments related to the training environment
4. how the needs of animals under your duty of care may be assessed and addressed
5. their responsibility, accountability, and autonomy for duty of care of animals under the current animal welfare legislation
6. the natural behaviour patterns, body language and communication methods of the animal
7. the signs that indicate problems with animals' health and welfare and the actions that should be taken
8. the suitability, action, welfare and ethical considerations of training aids/equipment and techniques for the species and animals' physical and mental capabilities
9. how training will impact on animal welfare and how to analyse whether it is in the best interests of the animal involved
10. the factors which may affect the progress and success of training, such as exercise, nutrition, life stage
11. the importance of routine/preventative health/veterinary care
12. anatomy, physiology and health to include conformation, biomechanics, mental (behavioural) health, reproduction and common inherited abnormalities
13. the process of establishing measurable goals and objectives for the training of animals
14. how to formulate training plans based on the available resources and the objectives agreed between the trainer and others
15. the importance of reviewing and revising a training plan to meet the objectives

16. current and relevant terminology/theory including classical and operant conditioning
17. the need to guard against unintentional classical and operant conditioning creating undesirable behaviour
18. when training is inappropriate
19. appropriate enrichment methods and equipment for the species of animals concerned
20. socialisation and effects on animal learning and behaviour
21. the factors relating to the movement of animals
22. the human animal bonds
23. human training skills and relevant theories including lesson plans, learning styles, feedback, and coaching
24. problem solving tools to support solutions

**Skills – A Restart dog Trainer graduate will be able to:**

1. continually assess, maintain, and evaluate a safe working environment following relevant legislation, workplace policies and procedures
2. continually assess, maintain, and evaluate the 5 welfare needs of animals whilst under your care
3. Be responsible for minimising risks and dealing with potential incidents and emergencies including implementing appropriate controls
4. assess the risk of disease transmission and implement appropriate bio-security controls
5. carry out a dynamic risk assessment relating to the training environment and the animals' welfare and act appropriately
6. approach all interactions with the animals in a manner that reinforces desirable behavioural patterns and avoids creating undesirable behavioural patterns
7. analyse data and review and implement plans accordingly and update records
8. prepare the animal, resources, and environment for the training session to aid the achievement of agreed learning outcomes
9. obtain and interpret relevant information regarding the animals from the appropriate sources, i.e., life history, physical capabilities
10. assess the potential animal welfare consequences, of the training method and equipment such as physical and mental harm



11. create and implement a training plan based upon the individual animal with realistic targets for a desired behaviour based upon the principles of learning and the intended outcomes of the training
12. assess the progress of the training session against the plan at regular intervals and take action to resolve situations where training activities, methods or resources are found to be inappropriate
13. communicate training plans effectively to others, such as colleagues and clients recognising individual learning styles and relevant learning theories of delivery and support them to apply these plans in practice
14. solve problems using independent critical thinking to modify the training plan as needed to consider the response of the animals and other factors
15. balance the conflicting demands of animal welfare, societal expectations, and the safety of the public in deciding the future of animals under their care
16. make autonomous decisions that may impact on the future of the animal

## **Behaviours**

### **Safe Working**

Promote and monitor safe working practices, which must be always adhered to with constant situational awareness and adaptability to ensure the safety of the animals, themselves, and others.

### **Work Ethic**

Have a strong work ethic, be a good role model and mentor for others. Be respectful, punctual, reliable, trustworthy, and diligent. Work effectively and encourage efficiency to meet time deadlines and organisational requirements. Take pride in their work showing commitment and loyalty whilst conducting themselves in a professional manner. Make the most efficient and effective use of materials, resources, and time.

### **Responsibility**

Assume a role of responsibility in the workplace. Organise themselves, delegate tasks, supervise and monitor others and the animals in their care. Show compassion, respect, patience, and tolerance in all situations to people and animals. Work with methods that reduce risk of injury to the animals, themselves, or others. Recognise own limitations and seek qualified professional advice as necessary/when required. The ability to operate as the advocate for the animal and to balance this against societal expectations and the safety of the public.

## **Teamwork**

Work independently and as part of a team, showing leadership and initiative as appropriate. Understand their role within the team and their impact on others and animals. Promote good working relationships, reduce, manage and report conflict within the team when necessary. Contribute to and support the training and development of others.

## **Communication**

Respect the need for confidentiality and adhere to data protection policies. Confidently and respectfully communicate with colleagues, volunteers, visitors, clients, industry specialists and animals. Show good interpersonal skills and accurately report any concerns, incidents and abnormalities. Know when to ask for, offer and give advice and guidance. Use social media responsibly.

## **Professionalism**

Have a strong and professional ethic including pride in their appearance and work. Attention to detail; integrity and time management; have a flexible attitude to work; have a safety mindset to self and others; demonstrate initiative. A commitment and willingness to learn and to contribute to their own continuing professional development.

Students will keep a daily journal/log of training exercises performed and outcomes achieved. The students will be encouraged to explore alternative strategies to achieve the goal and analyse why an approach isn't working. They will seek to try different approaches, encouraging problem solving and creativity in the student.



Students are encouraged to understand how their mood and mind state influences a dog's behaviour and how they can manage this to maximise success and relaxation with their dog. They also learn to overcome frustration and develop influence outside of force or violence.

At the end of the dog's training course, the student will need to work through a test, achieving a set standard of behaviour with their dog, overcoming fear of failure, and assessing when both they and their dogs are ready.

The criteria for the participants to attend is:

- Minimum of 2 years left to serve
- Level 2 English and Maths
- A desire to work with dogs
- Offences that do not include cruelty towards animals
- No health or allergies that could be exacerbated by being around animals
- A willingness to sign the behavioural contract, created by Restart Dogs.
- Ability to attend the course daily and to care for a puppy
- Ability to attain clear mandatory drug testing (other than controlled medications)
- Ability to engage and learn, taking instruction from the training team.

Prisoners wishing to take part in the course will need to complete an application form and interview prior to being selected.

### **Restart Dog Project Team Members**

#### **Lead Trainer/Behaviourist:**

To ensure the welfare needs of the dogs are met and satisfy welfare and risk requirements, the Lead Trainer on Restart Dog Programmes is a qualified and accredited dog behaviourist

#### **Dog Trainer:**

The Assistant Trainer has several years' experience delivering both 1-2-1 coaching and various pet dog classes. Superb relationship skills will be a priority.

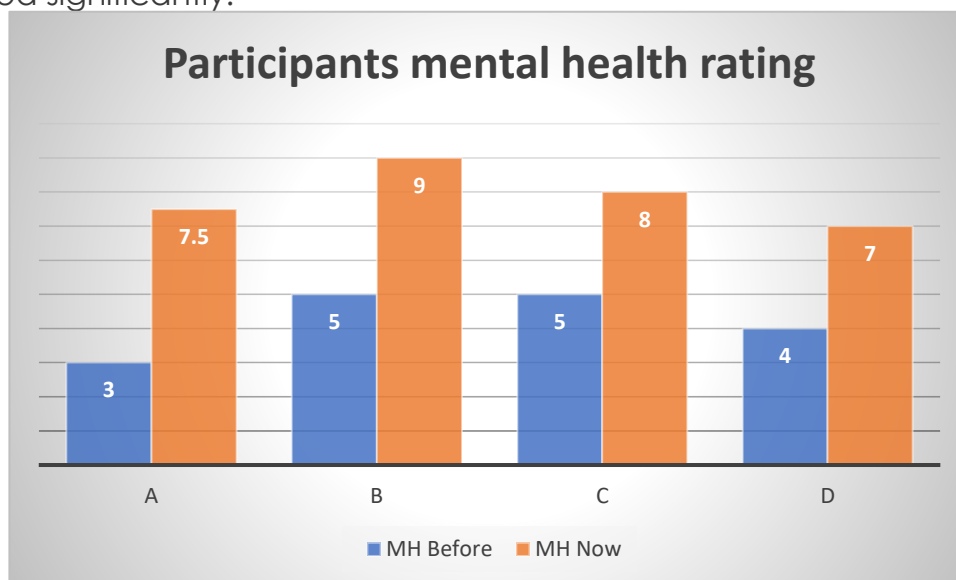
#### **Administration Support, PR, and Business Development Professional:**

Due to the nature of the programme, support for administration, PR and organisational development purposes is required.

## Who will benefit and how will delivery be monitored?

The proposal allows up to 8 prisoners to take part in the Restart Dog Project over a minimum period of 18 months.

A research study was carried out on the first term of the Restart Dog Project and found that the mental health of the prisoners involved with project had improved significantly.



When asked about their relationship with staff since being on the course, all the participants stated there had been an improvement. They felt like they had more to talk about staff and they liked it when staff took an interest in what they were doing.

Participant B stated

***“Much more amicable, I feel I have something to talk to them about”***

Participant C stated

***“Safer custody staff I get on with, my key worker excellent. Wing staff seem more interested in what I do, and the restart dog staff are excellent and get on with them, we get treated like human beings which goes a long way, they are caring/ kind”.***

Over the course of the project, the interactions with staff have changed. They are now confident in giving a full handover to the staff collecting the dog, they are having full conversations and the topics have changed, becoming more personal and sharing stories that are not related to the dogs. They are comfortable giving advice and guidance to the staff members about the dogs and have been giving them training advice about how to overcome challenging behaviours with the dogs. The prisoners are not just more comfortable with the staff member fostering their dog but also the other members of staff involved in the project, and they have worked together to establish training plans for each of the dogs.

The trainers on the project have reported that the prisoners have opened up to them on the course, sharing personal details about their lives and reflecting on the situations they have found themselves to be in. Often the conversations

arise when they are discussing the behaviour of their dog and they can reflect on their own behaviours which are similar.

One of the trainers stated

*"It's wonderful to see how the prisoners have bonded with their puppy, they have a great working and personal relationship together and it has given the prisoners responsibility for another living being which has greatly improved their mood and mental health. You can clearly see the change in the prisoners attitude since the project started, they are determined to rehabilitate themselves and now feel they have a purpose in life and have a future career ahead of them when they are released and are determined not to reoffend, their general behaviour in the prison has also improved as they know they will not be allowed to continue on the course if they are involved in any incidents around the prison."*

After a recent visit by Baroness Fox, she submitted a question to the house of lords as she was so impressed by the program.

*"At a recent visit to HMP Dovegate (a privately managed prison by Serco on behalf of the MOJ) I witnessed a truly wonderful and innovative program where prisoners are trained to become fully qualified dog trainers. The course involves prisoners having to attend the course for 18 months and the dogs being trained as assistance dogs, which are then donated to those who are in need (eg. a recently trained dog was given to a young man who is diagnosed with Autism to help him adjust to society).*

*Would HMG agree to take a look at this scheme as a best practice initiative combining both rehabilitative potential (prisoners training in an honourable vocation and guaranteed employment at the end of their sentence) as well as socially valuable outcomes for those in need in society? "*

A further research project has been commissioned to be carried out by an independent researcher, Dr Danielle McDermott, which will further explore the impact and outcomes of the Restart Dog Project at HMP Dovegate. The secondary aim of the research is to identify areas of good practice which can be used to formulate criteria for success and used to develop similar interventions with a dual focus of wellbeing and reducing reoffending. This research is being completed and funded by parties outside of Serco and HMPPS to ensure there is no bias.

## **Requirements to host**

The program needs a dedicated classroom which will be sufficient for up to eight dogs and up to eight student handlers.

- The dogs settle next to the students' desks as they study so this requires space for a desk and a dog bed, providing adequate distance so that the dogs can escape from each other and rest.
- Electrical PowerPoints for laptop usage in the classroom.
- Cleanable none slip flooring (we have a contractor for this if required)
- Access to laundry facilities, a main laundry or washing machine and dryer within the classroom set up.
- A room with no through traffic to allow the dogs to have a safe peaceful rest area with no disturbances, where they can rest over lunchtimes etc.
- 2 x room aside from the classroom where 1-2-1 training can take place. This also provides a reflection space if a student needs to have some time to escape the busy environment.
- Secure dedicated training areas outside, accessed from the building at ground floor level. This needs to be accessed and used without any requirements for movement permissions from Coms.
- kitchen area.
- This is for the storage and preparation of the dog's food and enrichment, but also to allow the preparation for human food, we eat breakfast together to simulate a café or restaurant environment so that the dogs will be able to practice appropriate behaviours.
- Outside storage area for wheelchairs, obstacles, and training aids
- Toilets- for staff and students
- Access to various areas and environments on the estate by prior arrangement- this to provide differing environments to train the dogs.
- Staff will need radio and key training along with local security framework training as required.
- 24 month contract/service agreement



**Costs based on 24-month contract/service agreement**

Initial set up costs are £14,000 which will cover equipment purchase, staff training, educational materials, risk assessments and insurance. Mobilisation costs may be required dependent on location.

The following are monthly charges invoiced

Month 1	7,400.00		
Month 2	7,400.00		
Month 3	7,400.00		
Month 4	7,400.00		
Month 5	7,400.00		
Month 6	7,400.00		
Month 7	7,400.00		
Month 8	7,400.00		
Month 9	7,400.00		
Month 10	7,400.00		
Month 11	7,400.00		
Month 12	7,400.00	Total annual cots	£88,000+vat
Continuation of fixed monthly costs for year 2			



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