

Volunteer Role Description

Breeding Scheme - Brood Holder

Based from: The Grange, Saunderton

Coordinator: Claire Jones

What is a Brood holder?

The role of a brood holder is to foster one of our hearing dog mums and allow the dog to live long term in their home. The dog would live with your family, similar to a pet dog, with the addition of having up to 4 litters of puppies which mum would give birth to in your home. The puppies would stay under your care until they are 8 weeks of age and ready to move on to their individual socialising volunteer.

Dogs accepted onto the scheme may vary in age but are usually between 10-18 months old. All dogs accepted onto the breeding scheme will be continually assessed and may at any time be withdrawn from the scheme. This can be for temperament or health reasons. Dependent upon the age of the dog when withdrawn the holder may be able to adopt the dog in the long term. If the dog is under 3 years of age, they may be assessed for their suitability as a Hearing Dog or an alternate career.

Main tasks?

- To allow the dog to live in your home long term.
- To bring the dog to the Grange centre for mating's, this may include coming in on weekends and bank holidays.
- Visit the Grange regularly for health checks and training classes.
- To allow the brood to give birth (whelp) in your home and care for the puppies until they are eight weeks old. (This requires a degree of flexibility on the volunteer's part during these eight weeks).
- Visit the Grange regularly for training classes.

What's in it for you?

- An opportunity to help rear litters of puppies with all support and equipment provided.
- A better understanding of dog training through tailored classes.
- Professional assistance to help build a long-term partnership between you and your dog.
- The opportunity to work as part of a small close-knit team of volunteers and staff.
- The opportunity to join several social events each year.

What are we looking for?

- A suitable home and a private, secure garden with direct access is essential.
- Volunteers must have access to a computer and email.
- A non-smoking household is needed (however, outside-only smoking is fine).
- If there are other dogs in the household, they will need to be behaviourally assessed for suitability and must be neutered. Ideally no more than 2 other pet dogs in the house but more will be considered on individual basis.

Support

- We supply all the food, bedding, toys & equipment needed to look after a dog & carry out this role. We also cover vet bills & any medical expenses.
- We can help with sundry expenses and mileage.
- We can arrange short term cover with another volunteer during holidays, with advanced notice or in the case of an emergency.

What happens next?

- Once we have received and processed your application, a member of our Puppy Supply Team will contact you to arrange a time to visit you and carry out a home visit.
- Once your application is complete, we will begin to match you with the right dog. There are various factors to consider at this stage, therefore there may be a wait before receiving a dog.

Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check: Not required for this role.

Frequently Asked Questions

When is the brood able to have her first litter of puppies?

All broods must have had 1 season and be 14 months (smaller breeds) or 22 months (larger breeds) before breeding for the first time.

How often will a brood have a litter?

Each brood must have a rest season after each litter. Seasons can be between 6 and 12 months.

How do you choose which dogs join the Breeding Scheme?

All breeding scheme dogs must have a range of temperament assessments throughout socialising. If they are deemed suitable, they will have a thorough exam from a veterinarian before being accepted as a brood or stud, and annually thereafter until retirement. They must have any specialist checks done as dictated by breed type before acceptance as a brood or stud and at intervals advised by the specialist thereafter, these are often annually. Examples of these are hip scoring, elbow grading and PRA eye screening in appropriate breeds.

What breeds do you use, and can I choose what breed I get?

The breeds we use at Hearing Dogs for Deaf People are Miniature Poodles, Cocker Spaniels (Show & Working types and Show X Working) and Labradors. You can let us know what breed you would prefer. Please note there may be a longer wait for one breed than others.

How long will the brood be in the scheme for?

Broods retire in their 7th year or earlier and will have no more than 4 litters in their lifetime. After this time, you will be able to adopt the dog.

How are the puppies suitably socialised once they are born?

Litters are provided with comprehensive early socialisation programmes as appropriate to their age whilst with their mother from 3 - 8 weeks. This is then continued by the socialisation department when the pups are transferred to individual volunteer homes.

Other information:

All breeding scheme dogs and their offspring must be micro-chipped.

Broods, studs and litters receive comprehensive vaccination, worming and de-fleaing programmes.

All broods and studs must be neutered by the charity prior to retirement.