

Assistance Dog Health & Welfare Policy

Vaccination, Titre Testing, Flea and Worm Treatment

Policy Statement:

To ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all assistance dogs and to protect public health, all dogs affiliated with Lifeline K9's must be kept up to date with vaccinations or appropriate titre testing and receive regular flea and worm treatment under veterinary supervision.

1. Vaccinations and Titre Testing

- All assistance dogs must receive core vaccinations as recommended by the attending veterinary surgeon. These typically include:
 - Canine parvovirus
 - Canine distemper
 - Canine adenovirus (hepatitis)
 - Leptospirosis
- As an alternative to annual vaccinations, dogs may undergo annual titre testing to assess immunity to the core diseases (excluding leptospirosis, which cannot be titre tested and requires annual vaccination).
- If titre testing demonstrates adequate immunity, re-vaccination may be deferred in line with veterinary advice. Documentation of titre test results must be provided to the organisation annually.
- A valid vaccination certificate or titre test report must be submitted to Lifeline K9's once per year.

2. Flea and Tick Treatment

- All assistance dogs must receive regular flea and tick prevention treatment, as recommended by a qualified veterinary professional.
- The frequency and type of treatment may vary based on the dog's health, lifestyle, and the time of year, but treatment must be continuous and evidence based.
- Over the counter treatments without veterinary guidance are not considered sufficient.

3. Worming

- Dogs must be treated for internal parasites (including roundworms and tapeworms) regularly and in accordance with veterinary guidance.
- As a guideline, worming should be carried out at least every 3 months, but frequency may be adjusted based on risk assessment by the vet.

4. Record Keeping and Compliance

- Handlers or owners must maintain up-to-date records of:
 - Flea and tick treatments
 - Vaccinations or titre tests
 - Worming treatments
- These records must be made available to Lifeline K9's upon request and reviewed annually.
- Dogs not meeting these health requirements may be temporarily withdrawn from public work or training until the issue is resolved.

5. Veterinary Oversight

- All health treatments and testing must be prescribed, administered, or overseen by a registered UK veterinary surgeon.
- The organisation reserves the right to contact the vet for confirmation if necessary.

6. Annual Health Checks

- All assistance dogs must undergo a comprehensive veterinary health check at least once per year.
- The health check must be carried out by a registered veterinary surgeon and should include:
 - Physical examination (eyes, ears, teeth, skin, joints, etc.)
 - Weight and body condition assessment
 - Review of parasite control, vaccination/titre status
 - Any necessary diagnostic tests as recommended by the vet (e.g. blood tests for older dogs)
- A written confirmation or summary of the annual health check must be retained by the handler and made available to Lifeline K9's upon request.
- The annual health check is an essential part of maintaining the dog's fitness to work and ensuring early detection of any health issues that may affect their welfare or ability to perform assistance tasks.
- Where health concerns are identified, the organisation may request a veterinary report and, if appropriate, adjust the dog's working duties until the matter is resolved.