



## Volunteer as a Dog Walker

Volunteer dog walkers are usually employed by the likes of animal shelters and the RSPCA. They are able to provide the means by which a dog can take exercise and enjoy the socialisation and affection that all confined dogs need badly so that they remain healthy and happy animals. This is all done so that one day, they can, hopefully, be re-homed and be looked after by a loving and caring family.

### Why Are Dog Walkers Needed?

Although dog shelters and other humane animal organisations do their utmost to care for dogs which are staying there because they have nowhere else to go, it's important to remember that due to the sheer numbers of abandoned and mistreated dogs, they all need to be confined to cages. Here, prolonged isolation and extremely limited activity means that a dog's quality of life is dramatically reduced and because that results in increased poor health and behavioural problems, the longer it persists, the less likely the chances are for a dog to be re-homed. Therefore, you'd be amazed at the amount of good you would be doing if you became a volunteer dog walker. Furthermore, you cannot fail to be moved by a dog that recognises you who is going to display sheer joy at seeing you, each time you drop by to take it for a walk.

### How Do I Get Involved?

The easiest way to get involved as a volunteer is to telephone your local dog rescue or animal shelter centre or your local RSPCA. You will be able to find out the contact details in the phone book or on the internet. You don't need to have owned a dog before as you will be given an orientation, training and guidance as to what to expect before you actually take a dog out on your own. Initially, you'll also be taken out on a walk with a dog and one of the dog shelter's staff members so that you can get more of an idea as to the dog's personality and advised what you should and shouldn't do in any given situation.

Volunteer work as a dog walker is very flexible so, whilst it's very beneficial for a dog to get used to forming a relationship with you, you can fit the activity in very easily around your other existing commitments.

### What Are The Benefits?

There are so many benefits to undertaking volunteer work as a dog walker. At the most fundamental level, you'll bring much needed joy into a dog's life. Exercise and companionship are crucial to a dog's fundamental existence and you'll have made a loyal friend who will always be glad to see you. Furthermore, dog walking is also often a good way to make other friends of the 'human' variety too.

You'll stop and speak to far more people when out walking with a dog than you would have otherwise previously done so it has social benefits for you too. However, what is important is that you will be helping to prepare the dog for the ultimate aim of it being adopted by a loving family.

Dog walking is also a good way of getting some gentle exercise, especially if you need to ease your way back in to exercise after illness or an operation and getting out into the fresh air is proven to be both physically and emotionally beneficial.

Any kind of volunteer work is also looked upon favourably by potential employers and volunteer work as a dog walker might be a good place to start if you're thinking of entering any kind of profession which involves animal care.

You'll also learn new skills you probably thought you never had and it will bring out some personal qualities in you that you never knew existed. You may even find that it is the catalyst for wanting a dog of your own – maybe you'll even decide that you can't bear to be apart from your new four-legged friend and decide to re-home it yourself. That's not expected however.

Ultimately, as a volunteer dog walker, it's all about the love and time you'll be able to give a dog in need. And, you can be certain that for whatever time and effort you do give, you'll get back far more in return from your new four legged friend in terms of lovely experiences and warm memories which will last a lifetime.

By Jeff Durham, 8 Feb. 2021

<http://www.voluntaryworker.co.uk/volunteer-dog-walker.html>