



Lort Smith
caring for animals

LORT SMITH PET THERAPY

INFORMATION AND FAQs – VOLUNTEER ENQUIRIES

Lort Smith Pet Therapy involves volunteers taking their dogs to hospitals, residential aged care, youth facilities and other settings to bring comfort and relief to people experiencing illness, adversity and loneliness.

REQUIREMENTS

- **Dogs must be** at least 18 months old, in good health and up-to-date with all vaccinations, flea and worm treatments. They must display genuine interest in socialising and receiving affection from people and must be calm and approachable around new environments, people and other dogs.
- We **do not accept** restricted-breed dogs, working assistance/service dogs, dogs trained in guard or protection work, dogs that drool excessively or dogs with any history of aggression.
- Pet Therapy dogs whose **diet includes raw food** (including muscle or organ meat, bones or raw food treats) **are not permitted to visit facilities where clients' are at higher risk of infection**. This includes hospitals, aged care facilities and services that support young children.
- **Volunteers** must have great communication skills, empathy, resilience and self-awareness.
- The **relationship between volunteers and dogs** must be positive – dogs must be responsive to handlers and handlers must be proficient at reading and responding to their dog's body language.
- You must be willing to commit to the role for a **minimum of six months**, making 1-2 hour visits either **weekly or fortnightly**. *Please note dogs must be washed before each visit.*

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Attend a **Volunteer Information Session**
2. Complete online [Volunteer Application and Agreement](#)
3. Attend a **Group Assessment and Interview**
4. Complete [Dog Health Form](#), [Police Check](#), [Stat Dec](#) and [Working With Children Check](#)
5. Complete **Buddy Visit** with your Pet Therapy Mentor
6. Attend **Volunteer Training** (volunteers only) – a combination of online and in-person training
7. *Some teams will also need to complete a short **Facility Assessment***

Volunteer intakes are held periodically – please check the Lort Smith website for information about our next intake dates: www.lortsmith.com/volunteer/pettherapy

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **What kind of facility will I visit?** You will be matched with a facility based on current need, your preferences and experience and your dog's past exposure and response to different client groups.
- **Will I be able to take my dog on public transport?** Becoming a Lort Smith Pet Therapy dog will not give your dog extra permissions on public transport.



Lort Smith
caring for animals

- **Will I get a 'therapy dog' certificate?** Lort Smith does not provide certificates authorising dogs to visit other facilities – you and your dog will be certified to visit your matched facility only.
- **Will the program enable me to take my dog to work with me?** No. Lort Smith assesses teams to visit matched facilities only. We do not train teams to use their dogs as part of their own work.
- **Can I bring my cat or other animal?** No, Lort Smith Pet Therapy currently involves dogs only.
- **Can I visit with more than one dog?** No. While you are welcome to have more than one dog assessed, you can only take one dog each visit.
- **Can I visit with a Lort Smith shelter dog?** No. You must reside with and have a well-established relationship with the dog.
- **Can I bring my kids on visits?** No. Only active volunteers are allowed to visit.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact Lort Smith Pet Therapy via **(03) 9287 6423** or pettherapy@lortsmith.com