



Operations – Rehoming Centre

Job Title:	Dog Welfare Assistant (Foundation / Skilled / Advanced)
Reporting to:	• Foundation / Skilled: Operations Manager • Advanced: Behaviour Manager
Responsible for:	Supporting dog care, welfare, behaviour and training tasks; supporting volunteers
Location:	Dublin Rehoming Centre (rota-based working including weekends and public holidays)

Job Purpose

To deliver high-quality daily care, welfare and enrichment to dogs in our centre, ensuring their physical, behavioural and emotional needs are met. The Dog Welfare Assistant (DWA) plays a key role in maintaining welfare standards, supporting safe handling, completing daily routines, recording welfare and behaviour observations, and contributing to each dog's progression through care.

DWAs operate across three competency levels — **Foundation, Skilled, and Advanced** — reflecting professional development, confidence, and responsibility. Advanced DWAs work with complex rehabilitation cases and support other team members in developing welfare, handling and training skills.

This role is shaped by Dogs Trust's design principles:

- **Human-centred:** Clear expectations, achievable routines, supported learning.
- **Future-proof:** A scalable competency framework aligned with changing welfare needs.
- **Valued & Valuable:** Recognition of capability, skill growth and meaningful contribution.

Overview of the Department/Team

Dogs Trust is the largest dog welfare charity in Ireland with a nationwide presence; our head office is based in our rehoming centre in Dublin, with regional rehoming hubs currently located in Munster, South Leinster and Connacht, supporting a growing network of volunteer foster carers across the country.

The Operations Department is responsible for achieving the mission of Dogs Trust through the intake, rehabilitation and rehoming of dogs in Ireland, as well as empowering dog owners (customers) by connecting them with other support services. The Operations department is a team of c. 50 employees and a number of volunteers across Dogs Trust's Dublin rehoming centre and Dogs Trust regional rehoming hubs that successfully helps as many dogs as possible. This department comprises over 60% of Dogs Trust staff.

The Operations Department strives to achieve excellence in logistical and rehoming processes as well as our already high canine welfare and customer experience standards.

Dog Welfare Assistants are part of the core Ops team, working alongside Behaviour Officers, Rehoming Advisors, Dog Welfare Supervisors, and volunteers to deliver excellent dog care and support efficient dog flow through our centre.

Key areas of accountability

Dog Care & Welfare

- Carry out daily kennel routines, including cleaning, feeding, enrichment, and husbandry to a high standard.
- Complete daily welfare checks and monitor dogs' physical and emotional wellbeing.
- Handle and move dogs safely and confidently using low-stress techniques.
- Support veterinary procedures, including administering routine treatments (as directed) and transporting dogs to appointments.
- Maintain high welfare and hygiene standards in line with Dogs Trust policy.

Behaviour & Training Support

- Follow behaviour guidance from Behaviour Officers and the Behaviour Manager.
- Record behavioural observations clearly and accurately.
- Apply positive, welfare-focused handling consistently.
- Undertake training tasks appropriate to level:
 - **Skilled:** complete training tasks for allocated dogs in line with plans.
 - **Advanced:** support rehabilitation of complex dogs, delivering structured plans under Behaviour Officer direction.
- Support the Behaviour team by providing accurate behavioural updates and insights.

Volunteers & Team Collaboration

- Work alongside volunteers, modelling safe and welfare-focused practice.
- Support volunteer and new-starter induction (Skilled and Advanced levels).
- Contribute to a positive, inclusive and collaborative team culture.
- Communicate effectively across Operations, Behaviour, Veterinary and Rehoming teams to support smooth dog progression.

Records, Communication & Administration

- Maintain accurate records for welfare, behaviour, training tasks, and routine updates.
- Communicate concerns promptly to supervisors, Behaviour Officers or managers.
- Ensure information flows correctly between teams to support decision-making.

Health & Safety

- Follow health and safety, biosecurity and risk-assessment procedures.
- Use PPE and equipment responsibly.
- Report hazards, incidents, and concerns in line with Dogs Trust policy.

Additional Duties

- Support enrichment events and centre activities.
- Assist with photography and media tasks involving dogs.
- Undertake any duties appropriate to the role to support the effective running of the centre.

Competency Expectations by Level

Foundation DWA

- Developing competence in core dog care routines under supervision.
- Learning safe handling, welfare checks and enrichment planning.
- Requires support in prioritising tasks and making routine decisions.
- No responsibility for training tasks or complex dogs.

Skilled DWA

- Independently completes daily routines and welfare tasks to a high standard.
- Confident handling of a wide range of dogs.
- Applies sound judgement in day-to-day welfare decisions.
- Completes training tasks for allocated dogs using guidance from Behaviour Officers.
- Supports the induction and confidence-building of volunteers and new staff.

Advanced DWA (Rehabilitation Specialist)

- Works confidently with dogs requiring complex rehabilitation plans.
- Implements structured training plans set by Behaviour Officers.
- Demonstrates advanced dog-handling and behavioural insight.
- Mentors Foundation and Skilled DWAs in handling, welfare and training skills.
- Provides behavioural observations that inform decisions on progression and wellbeing.
- Collaborates closely with the Behaviour Manager and Behaviour Officers on complex cases.
- Holds, or is committed to achieving, the AT (Animal Trainer) certification or equivalent.

Person Specification

Essential skills, qualifications, experience, and attributes

Strong interest in dog welfare and behavioural understanding.

Ability to work in a physically demanding environment.

Confidence working with dogs of various breeds and temperaments.

Good communication and interpersonal skills.

Accuracy in record-keeping and attention to detail.

Commitment to Dogs Trust's aims and objectives.

Full, clean manual driving licence.

Additional Requirements by Level

Foundation

Willingness to learn and develop dog-care skills.

Ability to follow guidance and work within established routines.

Skilled

Demonstrable experience in kennel-based dog care or a similar setting.

Strong dog handling skills and ability to support others.

Good organisational and problem-solving abilities.

Advanced

Significant experience working with dogs requiring behavioural or rehabilitation support.

Ability to mentor others and model best practice.

Strong behavioural observation and applied training skills.

Holds, or is committed to achieving, the AT (Animal Trainer) certification, which is the expected qualification for Advanced DWA roles.

Desirable Skills / Experience

Experience working in a dog-care or welfare environment.

Understanding of dog behaviour and training principles.

Experience working with volunteers.

Experience supporting rehabilitation or behaviour modification programmes.

Familiarity with digital systems and record-keeping.

Additional information

- 35 hours per week, rota-based including weekends and public holidays.
- Flexibility may be required to support operational needs.

- Emotional resilience to manage the demands of working in a welfare environment.