

Infinity Dogs Community Interest Company

Registered company: 14947355

Risk Assessment Policy 9(1)

This policy establishes the framework for identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks at Infinity Dogs CIC. As an organisation led by, and for, disabled and neurodivergent individuals, this policy balances public safety, high-standard canine welfare, and the core principles of the social model of disability.

1. Policy Purpose & Scope

This policy applies to all directors, trainers, volunteers, assessors, handlers, (including guardians/carers) and dogs participating in the Infinity Dogs CIC Assistance Dog Programme.

- **Environments covered:** In-home support, private training venues, public access environments, and community scenario-based settings (e.g. public transport, medical facilities)
- **Core Mandate:** To ensure that no training activity compromises human safety or canine physical and emotional well-being.

2. Key Risk Management Principles

- **Force-Free Training Methodologies:** Under no circumstances will aversive equipment or fear-based training methods be permitted. Aversive techniques introduce unpredictable public safety and behavioural risks.
- **The Social Model of Disability:** Risk mitigation must focus on environmental modifications and reasonable adjustments rather than forcing a handler to adapt to inaccessible spaces.
- **Strict Anti-ABA Stance:** Training environments for neurodivergent clients must remain safe spaces, entirely free from Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) frameworks.

3. The Screening and Risk Assessment Framework

No dog-and-handler team may advance to public settings without completing the staggered safety evaluations outlined below:

1. **Local Preliminary Assessment:** An initial evaluation by a Trainer or volunteer behaviour specialist ensures the dog shows no obvious signs of public safety risks or severe stress.
2. **Behavioural Screening:** A rigorous review to confirm the dog is comfortable with assistance work and does not display reactive, aggressive, or phobic behaviour.
3. **Veterinary & Insurance Screening:** Handlers must submit a veterinary health certificate confirming physical fitness. Handlers are required to maintain active **Public Liability Insurance** to cover third-party risks.

4. Operational Risk Matrix & Control Measures

Hazard Identified	Potential Impact / Who is at Risk?	Mandatory Control Measures & Protocols
Dog Reactivity or Aggression/other dogs at risk	Public, staff, or other handlers bitten or knocked over.	• Immediate removal of any dog displaying warning growls or stiff posturing. • Handler must retain physical control on a static lead at all times.
Canine Welfare Distress / Fatigue	Dog develops behavioral issues, physical injury, or shuts down.	• Dogs are given the definitive right to "walk away" from distressing scenarios. • Zero attendance if a dog is fatigued, injured, or recovering.
Complex Public Environments	Disorientation, panic, or accidents in high-demand spaces.	• Strict progression: Teams must complete at least 15 hours of training in high-demand settings before a Public Access Test (PAT).
Exempted High-Risk Specialisms	Severe medical risk due to inaccurate alert training.	• Exclusion Policy: Infinity Dogs CIC does not train for anaphylactic allergen detection or sole sight-loss guidance.
Banned Breed / Legal Issues	Seizure of dog by authorities; public distress.	• No UK-illegal breeds (e.g., XL Bully) bull or brachycephalic breeds are accepted.

5. Safeguarding and Confidentiality Exceptions

While [Infinity Dogs CIC prioritises client confidentiality](#), trainers and directors must bypass confidentiality protocols and alert emergency services or relevant authorities if a risk assessment indicates:

- A member or handler poses an imminent **danger to themselves or others**.
 - There is suspected or confirmed **abuse of another person or an animal**.
 - Information is disclosed regarding a **crime being committed**.
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6. Review and Reassessment

Risk profiles change as teams progress. To maintain public safety, all graduated teams must undergo an **Annual Reassessment**, which includes a repeat of the Public Access Test (PAT) to confirm safe, happy working behaviours across multiple public scenarios.

7. Policy Review and Associated Documents

- **Cross-Reference:** This document must be read in full, in conjunction with the **Conduct and Behaviour Policy 2 (1)** and **Safeguarding Policy 1 (1)**
- **Policy 5 (1)**
- **Effective Date:** June 2026
- **Next Review Date:** June 2027 (or sooner if legislative changes occur).

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Dynamic Risk Assessment Form

Infinity Dogs CIC

Instructions for Trainers / Assessors: Complete this form prior to beginning any training session or workshop in a new or changing environment (e.g., home visits, community settings, or public transport hubs).

1. Assessment Overview

- **Trainer / Assessor Name:** _____
- **Handler Name:** _____
- **Dog's Name & Breed:** _____
- **Location / Venue Name:** _____
- **Date of Assessment:** ____ / ____ / 20____
- **Session Type:** ☐ Home Visit | ☐ Public Access | ☐ Sports Workshop | ☐ Group Session

2. Risk Matrix Reference Guide

Use this matrix to calculate the **Risk Score (R)** by multiplying **Likelihood (L)** by **Severity (S)**.

Likelihood (L)	Severity (S)	Risk Score (R) = L x S	Action Required
1 = Highly Unlikely	1 = Insignificant (No injury/minor stress)	1 – 3 = Low Risk	Safe to proceed. Monitor environment.
2 = Possible	2 = Moderate (Minor injury/canine distress)	4 – 6 = Medium Risk	Implement controls before training.
3 = Probable	3 = Major (Severe injury/safety breach)	8 – 9 = High Risk	Do NOT proceed. Change venue or abort.

3. Dynamic Hazard Assessment

Evaluate the venue against the following standard variables. If a hazard is present, score it, apply controls, and recalculate the residual risk.

Hazard Category / Examples	L S R	Specific Control Measures Applied	Residual Risk (L×S)	Proceed? (Y/N)
Physical Space Barriers (e.g., narrow aisles, broken glass, lack of escape routes)				
Environmental Triggers (e.g., high noise, crowds, moving vehicles, food drops)				
Canine Welfare & Stress Indicators (e.g., panting, lip-licking, extreme heat/cold)				
Handler Access / Health Needs (e.g., lack of seating, sensory overload, steep stairs)				

Third-Party Interference

(e.g., loose off-lead dogs,
unsupportive staff/public)

4. Handler & Canine Welfare Status (Pre-Session Check)

- Does the handler feel safe and ready to proceed? ☐ Yes | ☐ No
 - Is the dog showing any signs of illness, injury, or fatigue? ☐ Yes | ☐ No
 - Is the dog's aversive-free equipment fitted safely and securely? ☐ Yes | ☐ No
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5. Sign-Off & Approvals

By signing below, the trainer confirms that the environment has been dynamically assessed and that training will immediately cease if the dog exhibits signs of distress or if public safety is compromised.

- **Trainer Signature:** _____
 - **Date:** ____ / ____ / 20____
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Incident and Public Access Refusal Log

Infinity Dogs CIC

Instructions: Use this form to document any unexpected safety incidents, canine welfare issues, or public access refusals under the Equality Act 2010. Submit completed logs to the Director within 24 hours.

1. Incident Overview

- **Date of Incident:** ____ / ____ / 20____
 - **Time:** ____ : ____ ☐ AM | ☐ PM
 - **Location / Business Name:** _____
 - **Logged By (Name & Role):** _____
 - **Handler & Dog Name:** _____
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2. Incident Category (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ **Public Access Refusal** (Denied entry to a business or service)
 - ☐ **Third-Party Interference** (Challenged by public, loose dog approach)
 - ☐ **Canine Welfare Issue** (Dog injury, sudden extreme stress/shutdown)
 - ☐ **Safety/Behavioural Breach** (Dog snapped, lunged, or caused injury)
 - ☐ **Handler Medical/Sensory Emergency**
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3. Detailed Description of Event

Provide a factual account of what happened, including specific words used if a refusal occurred.

4. Public Access Refusal Specifics (If Applicable)

- **Name / Job Title of Staff Member:** _____
 - **Reason given for refusal:** _____
 - **Did you present ID/Working Vest?** ☐ Yes | ☐ No
 - **Was the Equality Act 2010 mentioned?** ☐ Yes | ☐ No
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5. Action Taken & Immediate Mitigation

How was the situation resolved safely? (e.g., Team left area, dog given a break, business manager spoken to).

6. Review & Follow-Up (Office Use Only)

- Risk Assessment Update Required? ☐ Yes | ☐ No
- Formal Complaint Required? (e.g., to business HQ/licensing) ☐ Yes | ☐ No
- Director Sign-off: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / 20____
