



# Visiting older dog lovers

At home, in hospital or in care



# Ending loneliness for older dog lovers

## About us

We enable professionally assessed volunteers and their special dogs to safely visit older dog lovers across the North East of England. We are currently the only visiting dog charity to visit people in their own homes as well as in care and medical establishments.

## Asking us to visit

Home visits must be referred to us by a professional organisation involved in social care, for example, your local adult social services, the British Red Cross, the NHS, your GP or medical practice. They make the referral online and they accompany our Visiting Wag Team on their first visit. For more information visit our website [wagandcompany.co.uk/ask-us-to-visit](http://wagandcompany.co.uk/ask-us-to-visit)

Northumberland referrals can also be routed through Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust by calling their support planners on **01670 536400**.

Many care and medical establishments also ask us to visit. For more information visit our website [wagandcompany.co.uk/ask-us-to-visit](http://wagandcompany.co.uk/ask-us-to-visit)

## Home visiting

Our home visits are for dog lovers over the age of 65, people who have always had a dog, but who can't have one of their own any more and who miss that contact.

We are a 'visiting' charity, so no one should have an expectation of outings or walks. These are sometimes possible but for reasons of health and risk management, they shouldn't be expected.

We never charge for our visits in case those most in need miss out. Instead, we rely on donations, so if you value our service and can afford to contribute please help us in whatever way you can, donating, fundraising or becoming a Friend of Wag.



We're working with the following organisations



Northumbria Healthcare  
NHS Foundation Trust



Stockton-on-Tees  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



BritishRedCross

## Why it matters

“My client is bed bound at home receiving palliative care. Sadly she all too often voices her wish to be ‘put to sleep’ as she has no quality of life whatsoever. Since Friendship Dog Poppy started to visit she told me excitedly that at least now she has something to live for. I can’t tell you how emotional I felt. I hope your volunteer fully understands just how much the visits with her gorgeous dog have meant. Thank you Wag & Company for all your hard work and dedication.”

**Amanda McWilliams, Home Instead Senior Care, Newcastle upon Tyne**

“My background is secondary care, doctors, machines, tablets, treatment plans, all very important to staying well. But the work Wag does is just as important because when people are lonely and isolated it’s next to impossible to stay well.”

**David Dawson, Older Person’s Specialist, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

“Referring to Wag & Company is a great way for older people who can no longer care for a dog of their own to have contact with a dog and friendship with its owner. Staying well and recovering from illness is more than just tablets and treatment, it’s about having quality and frequent interactions with other humans and pets.”

**Julie Leddy, Support Planner at Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

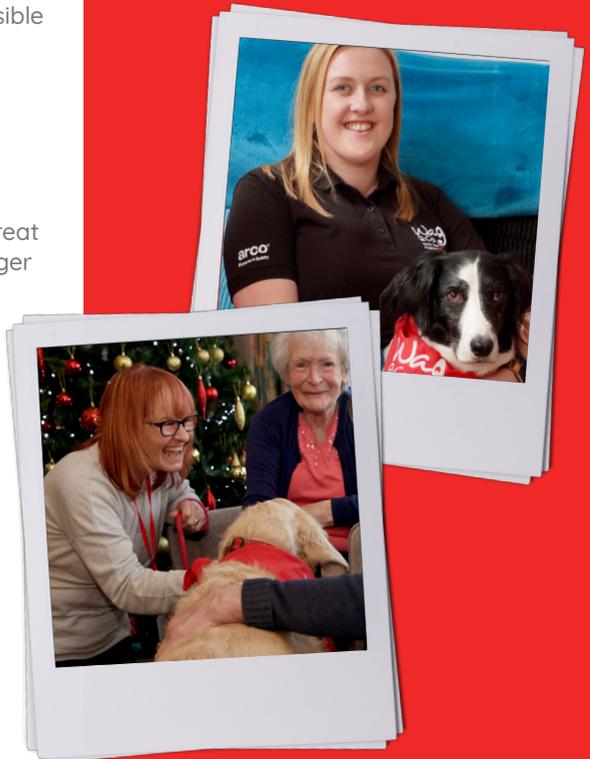
## Visiting Wag Teams

We visit people wherever they need us, so ensuring everyone’s safety is of paramount importance.

Visiting Wag Teams all have Enhanced DBS checks including the Adults Barred List, references, face to face induction sessions and dogs are assessed by a small list of appropriately qualified dog trainers. Assignments are risk assessed, first visits are accompanied and routine monitoring protocols are followed.

We work to professional standards of safeguarding, health and wellbeing, specifically created by and for Wag & Company.

There’s quite a lot to it, but the most important thing is pretty straightforward, a regular chat, a cuppa and a cuddle with a lovely dog for our elderly friends.



# Across the North East

Every day, we see the positive impact our visits have in our communities



## Lynn's story

Lynn lives alone in Killingworth having lost her husband in 2009 and her German shepherd, Sasha, in 2017. Lynn has severe arthritis, chronic lung disease and depression and her poor health prevents her from having a dog of her own any more. In August 2018, she was matched with Gemma and springer spaniel cross border collie "Bentley" Lynn tells us:

"I really look forward to seeing Gemma and Bentley every week, I'm very lucky and privileged to have them. Wag & Company have saved my life, a million thank yous."

## John's story

John lives alone in Cramlington having lost Nora, his wife of 64 years and best friend Mick, his 20 year old border terrier. John said when he looked around him at four walls he thought his life was 'empty'. In March 2018 Visiting Wag Team, Sean and Alfie the labrador started visiting John on referral from Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust; John told us:

"I had nothing and now I have a wonderful relationship with these lovely friends and my life has completely changed. I do get lonely living on my own and I couldn't manage to have a dog of my own now. This is the best of both worlds. It's fantastic, like winning the Pools."

