

YOUR TEAM IS GOING TO RESEARCH

Service animals

and speak **for and against** animals being used in service

This brief has been produced as part of the *RSPCA's Animal Welfare: The Great Debate* and is a starting point for the research you will need to do into the subject in order to ensure a successful debate. The points for or against a subject may not be RSPCA policy and represent some of the wider thinking around the subject.

- Many animals, mostly dogs, are used in a variety of ways to help humans including Guide Dogs for the Blind and Search and Rescue Dogs to more dangerous roles with the police and armed Forces.
- These animals go through rigorous selection, training and testing over many months and years to ensure that they can do their job.
- More animals are being used to help people with a range of physical and psychological illnesses.

FOR

Here are some points in **favour of** service animals – what other points can you find?

- Animals have better senses than humans and machines, so are better able to detect drugs, weapons and people, and therefore save lives.
- Many people already have animals as they bring comfort and support – why not use animals to help people with an illness or disability?
- Outside of their work life many service animals are treated like a family pet and will get a retirement.

AGAINST

Here are some reasons why service animals **should not** be used – can you find any more?

- The types of service some animals provide means that they do not get to live as normal a life compared to a family pet.
- Some service animals are put into dangerous situations including chasing after criminals or sniffing out bombs. Is it really right for us to use them in this way?
- Little is known about how these types of service roles, for example providing medical and emotional assistance to people, affect the dogs' welfare.

Information you may want to find out

- What are the different types of roles animals carry out and how do they help humans?
- What training do service animals receive and how do the organisations that use them make sure that their welfare needs are met?
- Is there any legal protection for service animals? Are there any being proposed, such as Finn's Law?

Potential sources of information

- RSPCA website: www.rspca.org.uk
- Political Animal website: www.politicalanimal.org.uk
- RSPCA facts and figures: <http://media.rspca.org.uk/media/facts>
- Guide Dogs for the Blind: www.guidedogs.org.uk
- Royal Army Veterinary Corps: www.army.mod.uk/who-we-are/corps-regiments-and-units/army-medical-services/royal-army-veterinary-corps/

