

Our behaviours

Guide Dogs exists to help people with sight loss to live the life they choose.

Guide Dogs people are:

Person-centred

We are a group of people working to help each person affected by sight loss. We listen, and recognise that every individual is different in where they've come from and where they're going. We are open, empathetic and inclusive. We place the person at the centre of every decision.

For example, we:

- listen without assumptions, to really understand one another
- listen to service users to discover what's important to them so that we can offer the right support for them
- help others without expecting anything in return
- treat people in a way they wish to be treated rather than the way we wish to be treated
- ensure our actions are consistent with our words
- partner with others to share information and knowledge
- communicate honestly and openly
- find roles to suit volunteers, as well as volunteers to suit roles
- respect other people's beliefs and ways of thinking
- encourage everyone to share their story
- empathise, and convey empathy
- make sure the person (or a persona) is at the centre of all fundraising, campaigning and/or marketing communications
- ensure everything we do is accessible and inclusive to all
- challenge pre-conceptions and pre-conceived ideas.

Expert

We are specialists in what we do. We are committed to excellence and will never stop innovating. We respect our history, but seek out ways to adapt and improve, and are always willing to learn.

For example, we:

- pursue a 'can-do' attitude in all that we do
- suggest new and practical ways of doing things
- embrace new technologies and new ways of working
- keep up to date with latest news, changes and innovation linked to our work
- take pride in achieving personal targets and goals
- adopt and promote a learning culture
- ensure we understand everything the organisation does and can do, and how things fit together
- continuously seek out ways to learn new things: courses; shadowing; networking; reading; reflecting on action; trial-and-error; memberships and certification; research
- prioritise personal development and learning, and don't allow work pressures to override
- freely share our knowledge with colleagues
- freely ask for help
- adapt and improve processes
- try stuff - take some risks
- value others' work and trust in expert opinion.

Optimistic

We are relentless in our belief that people with vision impairment can lead the life they choose. We are passionate about helping each person, committed to challenging barriers, and proud of who we are and what we achieve.

For example, we:

- always assume good motives, including when something is done or said that we don't agree with
- understand right from wrong and practise this in all we do
- stay in good spirits and accept requests without complaint even when we are frustrated
- are prepared to put the extra effort in because we have a real passion to get it right for our service users!
- express genuine affection towards Guide Dogs and the service we offer
- take account of Guide Dogs reputation when deciding what action to take... share positive stories of how Guide Dogs has helped people with sight loss to lead the life they choose

- are optimistic and positive about the future (#GlassHalfFull) and... maintain a positive, can-do attitude even when facing challenges and barriers
- maintain a positive, can-do attitude even when circumstances are challenging
- willingly challenge unacceptable behaviour in a constructive way
- have confidence in our own abilities and expertise
- always keep our purpose in mind...and aim high!
- take care to ensure our communications are positive and optimistic, avoiding negative stereotypes.

Partner

We only change lives when we collaborate. We build valued relationships with donors. We work together with our service users and colleagues, volunteers and partners - and our dogs, of course - to deliver great outcomes. We support and develop each other.

For example, we:

- involve others to deliver a better outcome, seeking their views and valuing their input
- take time to get to know each other and build good working relationships
- support agreed team decisions
- deal constructively with other viewpoints and behaviours
- celebrate success
- value differences
- trust each other
- adopt positive reinforcement in our work with each other - assume good intent and team-work, collaborate and co-create
- provide an early indication of when we will need help from a partner
- break down barriers internally and externally, and constantly look to build new connections
- actively work with Local Authorities
- share information willingly
- keep partners informed of things that are happening within Guide Dogs
- involve Volunteers as much as possible outside their primary role.

Lead-by-example

We can all be a guide. We take the lead and then hand it over, empowering people to make progress independently. We gain trust by

having faith in others, and influence by example. We do what we say we will.

For example, we:

- create a positive lasting impression on people we encounter
- encourage positive behaviour and enjoy engaging with others
- empathise, irrespective of our own opinions
- are down to earth
- find solutions to problems and offering constructive advice for those who come to us with theirs
- work to find win-win solutions with others for the good of our customers and partners
- trust those with responsibility to deliver in their area of expertise to get the work done... share our expertise by showing and doing rather than telling
- actively go outside our comfort zone
- approach requests for help thinking “how can I help you?”
- educate and empower people - including those who we support - to help themselves
- recognise that we are all fundraisers, campaigners and advocates at all times
- prepared to be the voice for those that find it hard to speak.

Engage

We cannot change lives if we look on from the side-lines. We get involved, take ownership, and feel responsible for all we do, think and say. We celebrate wins big and small, and we hold ourselves and each other to account.

For example, we:

- can be relied upon to do what we say we will
- proactively take action
- use initiative to solve problems
- acknowledge when we make mistakes and take responsibility for addressing them
- stay focused, putting energy and commitment into getting our work done
- have a clear view of what success looks like

- ensure that our purpose and behaviours are upheld and act when this doesn't happen
- take responsibility for our own learning and development
- surprise people, and help them and ourselves to think differently
- make a fuss about success and impact, so people see it and feel good about it
- align our priorities so we are all working towards the same goal
- comply with requirements that are in place to protect people and the organisation
- trust decisions made by people whose job it is to make them, and ask when we need to understand more to be able to do that
- hold ourselves accountable for the little things: answer emails promptly; turn up to meetings
- regularly discuss - with managers and colleagues - if and how we're demonstrating Guide Dogs' behaviours.

Together, we are Guide Dogs.

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