



**Build
Train
Empower**



The new regional centre in Redbridge will be within easy reach of people across east London, Essex and the surrounding areas – helping us fill the gap in services and have a lasting impact on the lives of local people with sight loss, and their families.

We are asking friends of Guide Dogs to support our new Build the Future Appeal to create life-changing regional centres on four of our sites across the country.

With your help, these new centres will allow us to better train the guide dogs of the future, and achieve our vision of empowering more people with sight loss to live the life they choose.



Build the Future Appeal

Every six minutes in the UK, one more person loses their sight. Every day, 250 more people join the 2 million already living with sight loss. And this number is set to double.

If people with sight loss are to get the support they need to lead full and independent lives, we need to adapt and expand our work – offering holistic support that’s personalised, that recognises everyone has different circumstances and different dreams.

That’s why we’re launching the Build the Future Appeal.


Everyone with sight loss deserves to live with the same freedom, independence and connection to the community that we all value in our lives. Guide Dogs has the expertise and determination to make this a reality – but we can’t do it without the help of generous friends and partners like you.

It starts with our outdated Redbridge centre on the edge of London. With your help a transformation will begin. We will train more guide dogs, invest in our children and young people’s services and reach more people who need us.

By supporting our Build the Future Appeal, you will help adults and children with sight loss, just like Nell (right), live the life they choose.

2 million people are living with sight loss in the UK and this number is set to double by 2050.

Photo credit: Birmingham Live



Rachel's daughter, Nell, was born with glaucoma.

"When Nell was born and I found out she was blind, I promised her that she would be able to do whatever she wanted to do. Guide Dogs has been an amazing support in that. We got Nell the help she needed early and she's already incredibly independent as a result. She's a bottle of pop and nothing stops her!"

More families like Nell's will be supported through our new regional centres, which will include early-intervention services, and provide training as children like Nell grow, to help them become as independent as possible.

A word from our Chief Executive

Guide Dogs Chief Executive Tom Wright CBE shares his vision for the future of people with sight loss, and why your support for the Build the Future Appeal is so important.



For many of us, sight loss is our greatest fear. It can turn worlds upside down, affecting people's ability to visit family and friends and lead independent lives. It has a huge effect on confidence and

wellbeing. With the recent Covid-19 crisis, the impact on those living with sight loss and their families has been even more pronounced – increasing isolation, reducing access to services and support, and creating financial challenges.

And yet it doesn't have to be this way. We believe that sight loss shouldn't hold anyone back. Guide Dogs is here to help people live actively, live independently and live well – achieving their hopes and ambitions, and living life to the full. But if we're to realise this vision, we must change the way we work – helping more people, in more ways, than ever before. The demand for our services has never been higher.

We therefore have plans to develop four state-of-the-art centres, each one acting as a 'hub' for each of their communities. These centres will make a life-changing difference to people living with sight loss. We'll be able to increase the number of new guide dog partnerships. We'll deliver even more support, including vital services for young children and their families. And, crucially, we'll be able to tailor what we do around each person's individual needs and goals.

To achieve all this, we need £30 million. We are fortunate to have £10 million in reserves to dedicate to the project, and expect to raise another £10 million by selling some land around our existing property.

We are asking our most generous supporters like you to support our Build the Future Appeal to help us raise the remaining £10 million. Your gift will help us build a future without limits for people with sight loss and their families. I hope you will be a part of it.

Tom Wright CBE
Chief Executive



-  Fundraising: £10 million
-  Proceeds from Sale of Property and Land: £10 million
-  Cash Reserves: £10 million



"Since having Unity it feels like my life opened up before me. I've had the opportunity to study at university for a degree and then a master's degree, as well as gaining employment and going on my travels. With Unity I am able to work at my job and grow my freelance career. I am able to travel, visit new places and have a social life. My world became a lot wider since having Unity and I'm forever grateful she's in it."

Emily was partnered with her guide dog Unity when she turned 18. Redeveloping our centres will allow us to improve training facilities to help provide more guide dogs for people like Emily.



Why building the future at Redbridge is so vital

Harvey White has given the first donation to our Build the Future Appeal towards the redevelopment of the Redbridge Centre.

After an unexpected bout of illness, Harvey was left with very limited vision which meant he couldn't continue looking after his wife, who has dementia, and struggled to get around.

"I couldn't go anywhere by myself, and I couldn't visit my wife in her care home. Then three and a half years ago I had the privilege of being partnered with my first guide dog, Sunny. Since she came into my life I have enjoyed greater independence, mobility and companionship.

"She takes me all over London and allows me to visit my wife using public transport. Even escalators and tubes at rush hour pose no problem to her. I was a surgeon and I'm still involved with lots of committees – which I couldn't do without Sunny.

"I'm proud to have given the first donation towards redeveloping the centre in Redbridge, because I feel that one has a responsibility to give back to society.

"Having become so dependent on Sunny, my fear is of being without such a vital companion. Were anything to happen to her, I would be lost.

"The programmes being undertaken at Redbridge are, therefore, of paramount importance. Partnership with a guide dog is, for those with sight loss, a partnership for life. The development of Redbridge will enable Guide Dogs to continue their life-changing work, training dogs, creating partnerships and improving the lives of people living with sight loss for many years to come."

Despite the devastation caused by sight loss, 70% of adults receive no support within the first 12 months of diagnosis.






This architectural rendering shows how the redeveloped Redbridge centre may look. Our regional teams are working with architects to ensure the new centres use cutting-edge design allowing us to enrich the lives of more people with sight loss.

The centres have been designed to minimise environmental impact and maximise efficiency, using insulation and renewable energy sources such as solar power where possible. These improvements will reduce running costs, while providing a modern, fit-for-purpose space that both people and dogs can enjoy.

Build



Key:

-  Regional Centre
-  Proposed New Centre
-  National Breeding Centre
-  Central Office

Building a network of support

Our aim is to more than double the number of people with sight loss who we're able to reach. A crucial step on this journey will be to create four new centres, which will link into our wider network. The project will involve a combination of major refurbishment of existing buildings, and building entirely new centres where necessary.

The Build the Future Appeal will allow us to expand our services to reach more people with sight loss and their families, in more ways, than ever before. Each new centre will be purpose built to support more people with sight loss to live actively, live independently and live well.

For example, babies, very young children, and their parents, will be able to access our new early intervention services in the new centres, which will include

specialist facilities like sensory rooms to help children develop and grow. We aim to reach 720 families per year by 2023 through this service alone.

The new centres will also help more people with sight loss to be partnered with a life-changing guide dog, by providing better facilities to train more dogs and reduce training times. The designs will also include shared spaces for dogs, people with sight loss, families, and volunteers – providing a flexible, enriching space that will encourage learning from one another and growing a like-minded community where everyone benefits from shared experiences.

We hope our dedicated supporters will help us realise this ambitious plan to build this exciting future for people with sight loss, their families, friends and all of us. With your help, each and every person who steps into a centre could have their life transformed, thanks to your generosity.



A new centre for Redbridge

The current Redbridge centre on the outskirts of London is ideally located for people in north and east London, Essex and the surrounding areas, but the current building is out-dated, expensive to maintain and only offers very limited Guide Dogs services to people in the area. People who want to learn essential life skills or how to get out and about independently currently have to travel into London or Hertfordshire, for example, as the centre isn't set up to offer this.

Also, there is currently very little support in the area for families of children with sight loss – meaning many may be missing out on crucial early support that can affect their development. This new centre will provide a home for our children and young people services – and allow us to offer technology workshops, assessment groups, and parent and child play sessions.

The current site also doesn't have the facilities necessary for our improved training technique for guide dogs. The redevelopment will have specialist training areas and capacity for 65 dogs at any one time – allowing us to train our guide dogs more effectively, so more people can benefit from the wonderful independence and companionship a guide dog provides.



Train

Training that matters to people with sight loss

Each centre will provide training tailored to the needs and wants of people with sight loss – whether they want to learn to use a white cane, be more independent in their own home, or use technology to get back to work or enrich their lives. The centres will also provide a home for specialist training that helps families support their child with a visual impairment, and dedicated spaces for volunteer training. And, of course, they will allow us to train more guide dogs, to help match more people like Priya (left) with a guide dog like Sidney.

Priya dealt with sight loss for most of her life – but it was her baby daughter that inspired her to apply for a guide dog.

“I’d always been independent, but after my daughter was born I felt extremely anxious leaving the house with a pram. I was ready for a guide dog – in fact I was desperate.

“I never wanted my daughter to feel responsible for taking care of me, and since I’ve had guide dogs, she can concentrate on living her own life as a young woman.

“My guide dog, Sidney, helps me walk to work, use public transport across London, and go to yoga and dance classes. It’s wonderful that I can do all these activities. I lead such a full life with Sidney’s help.”

– Priya

Transforming training in our new centres

The new regional centres will include facilities for our improved training method called STEP (Standardised Training for Excellent Partnerships). This programme reduces training times and increases success rates for guide dogs and their owners.

This new method requires flexible spaces and both indoor and outdoor areas – something our new regional centres will provide. Your support could help us adopt this new training method – getting more guide dogs to more people.

Every day 250 people start to lose their sight.



"Having a guide dog is my passport to an independent life, and I'm phenomenally grateful to Guide Dogs for enabling me do all the things I love."

Priya and her guide dog Sidney

Empower

Empower more people like Caitlin

The new regional centres will bring our services together – including support for children, young people and their families, along with our guide dog services. Sensory rooms, assistive technology and expert staff will all be available to help more children like Caitlin to live the life they choose, and provide holistic support to help the whole family.

Caitlin was born with serious vision impairment, and has been receiving

Some 80% of a child's learning takes place using vision. Every day without support can affect their development.

support from Guide Dogs since she was five. She learned to use mental mapping to get around her school, and received white cane training so she can go out and meet friends. She's even been able to read her favourite stories in large print books provided by Guide Dogs. Today a determined teenager, Caitlin has a real passion for music and for judo – she hopes to someday compete at the Paralympic Games.

It's vital that people with sight loss and their families receive the support they need as soon as possible. Our Build the Future Appeal will allow us to expand our services, providing support that's tailored to each individual and their family, ensuring people can achieve their own goals – whatever they may be.

“ I definitely feel more confident working with Guide Dogs. I wouldn't have gone out at night otherwise, and the mobility skills have helped improve my judo too! ”
– 16-year-old Caitlin



Will you join us and Build the Future?

You'll be part of the team:

People with sight loss and their families

The people who best understand the difference the centres will make, are people with sight loss. That's why their insight and experience has influenced the development of every stage of the project.

Volunteers

Our wonderful volunteers have given freely of themselves in vital roles like My Guides and Puppy Walkers. They play a critical part in delivering our services so we can help more people across the UK.

You

Guide Dogs relies on your generosity and understanding to make ambitious projects like this a reality – and we hope you will join us to build this bright future. We would be very glad to recognise your support within the new centres – please get in touch to discuss your options in more detail.



Your support is crucial to build the future at Redbridge

If we are to meet our aim of helping more people with sight loss than ever before, your help is urgently needed to upgrade out-of-date facilities at Redbridge, and to expand our services to reach those in the area who aren't getting the support they need.



"Before my training I didn't want to go out. I felt like a prisoner in my own home. My confidence is now returning and I love going out – walking or taking the bus to the shops." The new centre in London will give people the skills and confidence to get out and about independently.



Our new, improved training method for guide dogs requires specialist indoor and outdoor training areas – something that's not possible in the current centre. The Build the Future Appeal for Redbridge will provide purpose-built training facilities, helping train more guide dogs to change more lives.



"It is difficult to put into words the difference my guide dog River has made to my life and the lives of the people around me. Having had River for nearly three years, it's easy to forget how difficult I found the simplest things, like popping to the café or to visit friends and family. Now I can just go for a walk in the sun for the sake of it. It is also easy to forget how well-trained River is, and how much time, hard work and effort went into making him the brilliant guide dog he is. Ensuring Guide Dogs have the facilities they need to breed, train and match their brilliant dogs, is so important. Without the support of wonderful donors, maintaining and developing all the facilities just wouldn't be possible."



Our existing centre has no dedicated spaces for events. While staff do their best, these activities often take place in small, cramped rooms that aren't fit for purpose. The redevelopment will provide specialist spaces tailored to the needs of people with sight loss.



Rebecca lost 90% of her vision due to a brain tumour, but Guide Dogs has introduced her to technology including an app to alert her when it's time to get off the bus, and an app that verbally describes text and objects. Now she can get out and about on her own, and is looking forward to cookery school. But Redbridge currently has no services for young people like Rebecca – which is why the redevelopment is so vital.



The new centre at Redbridge will provide a space for people with sight loss, family members, and the wider community to come together. It will be a place where people can gain the skills and confidence to be more active and independent – and live the lives they choose.



Support our Build the Future Appeal

Your support deserves special recognition – and we've created a number of ways to thank you in our new centres. We'd also like to invite donors to visit the centres so you can see how your gift is changing lives.

If you'd like to support the future of Guide Dogs, please get in touch.

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