



**Build
Train
Empower**



The new regional centre in Leeds will provide state-of-the-art training areas, dedicated facilities for children and young people, and become an integral community hub – having a lasting impact on the lives of people with sight loss and their families, across Yorkshire and the North East.

Build Train Empower

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 two 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've launched the Build the Future Appeal and why we're now calling on the people of Leeds, and the whole of Yorkshire, to get behind it.

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.

We're starting our new centre in the South East, and now we turn our sights to Leeds, to transform the lives of people with sight loss across the North East of England.

We will train more guide dogs like Maisie (pictured left with Guide Dogs Trainer Hannah, from Leeds), 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 people with sight loss, just like Alma and Suzie (right), live the life they choose.

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



"It upsets me when I see Alma and Suzie being left out. Events run by Guide Dogs give them the chance to meet children who are like them. It's important they know there are other children with sight loss, as it helps reduce the isolation growing up."

– Sophie, whose daughters Alma (5) and Suzie (3) both have congenital amaurosis, which causes the light-sensing cells at the back of the eye to stop working.

More families like Alma and Suzie's will be supported through the new Leeds centre, which will include early intervention services. For growing children like Alma and Suzie, this will provide the training they need 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 here in Leeds 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. With the recent COVID-19 crisis, the impact 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. Guide Dogs is here to help people live actively, live independently and live well. But to realise this vision, we must change the way we work – helping more people, in more ways, than ever before.

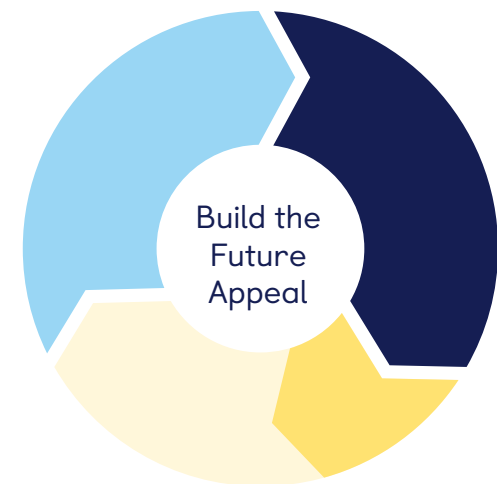
We therefore continue our plans to develop new, state-of-the-art centres across the UK. Construction of our new regional centre in the South East starts this year in 2021, and our focus now turns to the redevelopment of our centre in Leeds. This



centre will allow us to increase the number of new guide dog partnerships and 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.

We have already raised over £3m of our fundraising target of £10m, thanks to our wonderful donors and partners. To achieve our overall £30m target, we are combining £10m from our reserves and £10m from the sale of some land from our existing properties.

We now need your support for our Build the Future Appeal to achieve our fundraising target of £2.5m, to redevelop our new centre in the North East. 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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Wright".

-  Fundraising: £10 million, with £3 million raised so far
-  Proceeds from sale of property and land: £10 million
-  Cash reserves: £10 million

"My partnership with Colin is absolutely brilliant. I used to panic about picking my children up from school, trying to navigate around other children as well as obstacles on the street. Now it feels like a weight has been lifted. I can pick up my daughter without stress. I can get my coat, slip on Colin's harness and just go.

"Travelling to and from work is so much easier and nobody has to meet me at the train station now I have Colin. I used to panic if I tried to travel during busy times, but now I just say, 'Ok Colin, we can do this.'

"He is so proud of himself when we successfully navigate through rush hour. I give him a big hug and an extra treat, and he wags his tail so excitedly. We're a team."

– Bhavini, who applied for a guide dog after her sight loss meant she was struggling to commute to work and do the school run.



Hear from your fellow supporter

The George W Walsh Seeing Eye Dog Foundation has provided a significant donation towards the redevelopment of the Leeds centre, as well as sponsoring a guide dog puppy, also called George (pictured right). The Trust was founded in George Walsh's name following his experiences supporting his mum, who had sight loss. A spokesperson said:

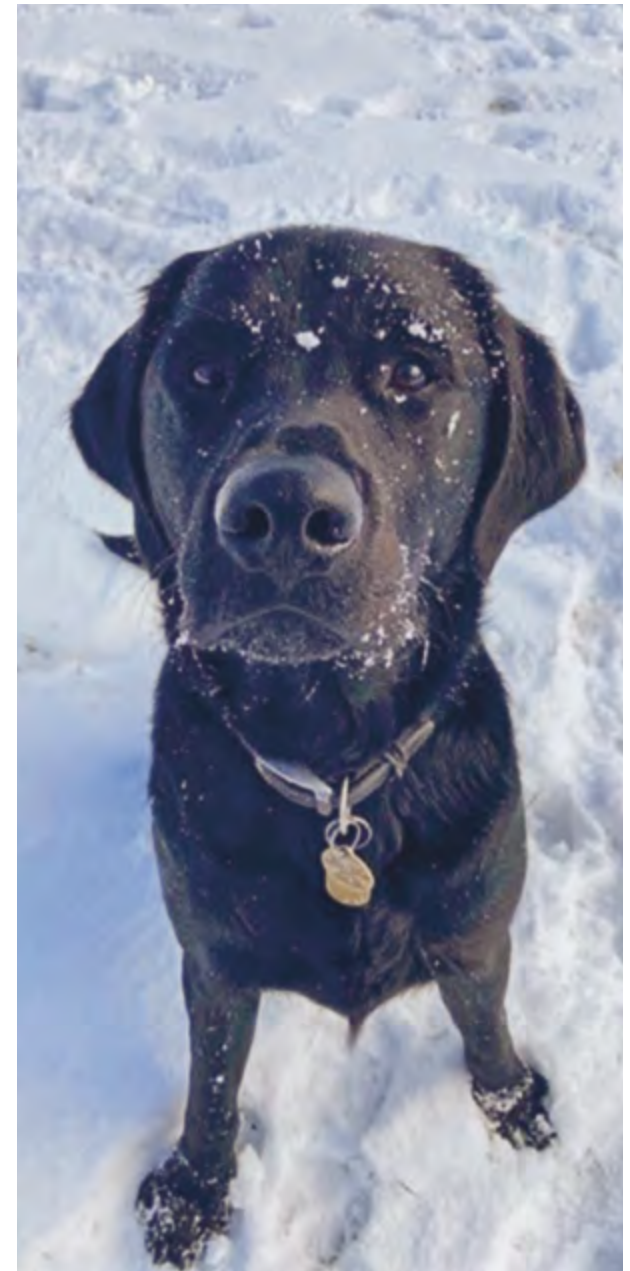
"George wanted to ensure that people like his mum have the support and mobility assistance needed to live the life they choose. The guide dog partnership is so unique in the UK. It not only supports someone living with sight loss to go to school, to study or to go to work; it also provides companionship and independence, and reduces isolation. This cannot be achieved any other way.

"The new centre at Leeds will create many hundreds of guide dog partnerships over the next 20 to 30 years, having a significant impact on the community of Leeds and the North East throughout this time. The centre will create opportunities for other training too, such as white cane and life skills, supporting adults and children in their journey.

"We met with guide dog owner Richard and his guide dog Martin (pictured on page 12) in 2019 at the existing Leeds site. It was clear that significant redevelopment was needed to create a modern, fit-for-purpose centre, including easier access, external training areas and increased internal training and work areas, for the staff and volunteers to be able to support the sight loss community.

"We continue to take an active interest in the redevelopment programme to enable Guide Dogs to continue their work, creating partnerships and improving the lives of people living with sight loss for many years to come."

Every day, 250 people start to lose their sight.



Why building the future at Leeds is so vital

These architectural renderings show how the redeveloped Leeds centre may look. Guide Dogs is working with architects to transform the space to provide a hub of activity and support for people with sight loss, and their families, in Leeds and the entire North East region.

Key improvements will include dedicated facilities for our early intervention services – like a sensory room and spaces for families – allowing children and young people to receive support on site. There will also be spaces for training volunteers like My Sighted Guides, and state-of-the-art facilities allowing us to train more guide dogs.

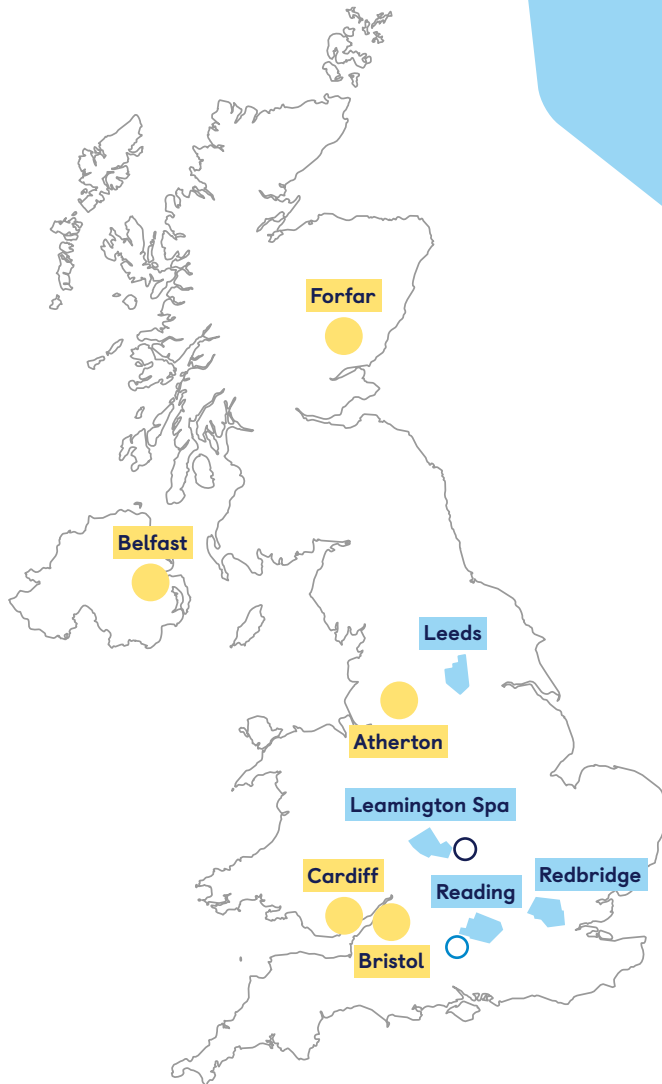
The centre has been designed to minimise environmental impact and maximise efficiency, using insulation and renewable energy sources such as solar power where possible. These improvements will reduce running costs while providing a modern, fit-for-purpose space that both people and dogs can enjoy.



Your support will transform this dark, broken-up and inaccessible space into a fit-for-purpose, light and airy training area appropriate for dogs, trainers and people with sight loss.



Build



Map key:

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Regional centre |  Guide Dogs National Centre |
|  Proposed new centre |  Guide Dogs Reading Hub |

Building a network of support

Our aim is to double the amount of support we provide to people by 2023. 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 designed to support more people with sight loss to live actively, live independently and live well.

For example, babies and very young children, and their parents, will be able to use our new early intervention service, My Time to Play, which will include access to specialist facilities like sensory rooms to

help children develop and grow. We aim to reach up to 720 families each 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, their families and volunteers – providing a flexible, enriching space that will encourage learning from one another and the growth of a like-minded community where everyone benefits from shared experiences.

We hope our dedicated supporters will help us realise this ambitious plan to build an exciting future for people with sight loss, their families and 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 Leeds

The current Leeds centre is a great base for the North East of England, but the building was leased and shared with other organisations. This limited Guide Dogs' ability to expand to meet the needs of people with sight loss. This is why we are incredibly excited to have succeeded in purchasing the freehold of the centre, thanks to two very generous donations, allowing us to redevelop the building into a dedicated space for Guide Dogs services.

The new centre will include state-of-the-art training facilities – more than doubling the number of dogs which can be trained on site. We expect to match 130 new guide dog partnerships across the North East of England each year.

The new centre will provide dedicated facilities for children and young people – something that's not possible in the current space. This will make a huge difference to people in Leeds and across the North East who've struggled to get the support they need. The architects' impression of the new Leeds building is pictured here.

With your help, the new centre will become an integral community hub – linking teams across Sheffield, Newcastle and Hull – where people with sight loss can get the support they need to live the lives they choose.



"Martin isn't just my guide dog, he is my passport to a better life. He gives me the freedom to do what I want, when I want."

– Richard, pictured with his guide dog Martin

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 vision impairment, and dedicated spaces for volunteer training. And, of course, they will allow us to train more guide dogs, to help people like Richard (left) find the guide dog that can change their life.

Richard, from Skipton, was born with bilateral cataracts that left him with very little sight. He says applying for his first guide dog Ralph was “the best move I could have made.” Sadly, Richard lost Ralph to a heart tumour but, thankfully, was then

matched with his current guide dog Martin.

“When I lost Ralph, it felt like working and commuting just wasn’t sustainable anymore. It was a huge blow to my confidence.

“Now, Martin gives me the independence to live my life on my own terms. Since becoming a guide dog owner, I have travelled extensively for work and leisure.

“With Martin by my side, I feel confident and safe. We are a team, and I trust him to take on any challenge, whether it is my long commute to work, a trip to see friends or just a pleasant walk in the country.”
– Richard

Transforming training in our new centres

The new regional centres will include facilities for our improved training method, Standardised Training for Excellent

Partnerships (STEP). It 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 will help us adopt this new training method – getting more guide dogs to more people.

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

Empower

Empower more people like Mia

The new regional centres will bring our services together – including support for children and 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 young people like Mia to live the life they choose, and provide holistic support to help the whole family.

Fifteen-year-old Mia, from Yorkshire, was born with multiple conditions that caused a

serious vision impairment. She has received support from Guide Dogs to help her get around safely, and to ensure she has the right support and equipment at school. Mia says she's much more confident thanks to Guide Dogs' support:

"I was really shy and didn't go out because I kept falling. Now I have my cane, I have a life. I can go out and get a coffee with my friends. That shy girl has run away and is never coming back – and it's all because of Guide Dogs."

- 15-year-old Mia

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

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 across the North East, providing support that's tailored to each individual and their family, ensuring people can achieve their own goals – whatever they may be.



Will you join us and Build the Future?

Join the team that's already supporting the appeal:

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 their time and commitment in vital roles like My Sighted Guides and Puppy Raisers. They play a critical part in delivering our services so we can help many 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 in Leeds

If we are to meet our aim of helping more people with sight loss than ever before, we need your help to expand our Leeds centre. You'll help more people across the North East receive the support they need to live life to the full.



Caitlin, from Blackburn, has been receiving support from Guide Dogs since she was five – through our services for young people, then white cane training, and now with her guide dog Honey. The redeveloped Leeds centre will bring all Guide Dogs services under one roof, providing a central hub where people like Caitlin can access everything they need.



The redeveloped centre will provide dedicated spaces for volunteers, allowing us to better train more people for our My Sighted Guide service, which helps people with sight loss get out and builds their confidence.



The Leeds redevelopment will more than double the number of guide dogs like Spencer who can be trained on site.

"I describe being matched with my guide dog Spencer – my knight in shining black armour – as the first day of the rest of our lives. I feel like myself again. My partner says it's like having the old Terry back."

– Terry, from Yorkshire, was matched with Spencer just before the first COVID-19 lockdown



The new centre will allow us to expand various services, like our friendly, well-behaved buddy dogs, who can help improve the confidence of children and young people with sight loss.

"I was worried that I was expecting a dog to change everything, but I can truly say that he has. Up until we got Sam, everything connected to Jago's eye condition has felt negative, but Sam has been a huge positive."

– Suzanne, Jago's mum



The new centre will help bring volunteers and people with sight loss together. It will benefit people like Louise, from Wigan, who is a sighted guide for Rik through our My Sighted Guide service.

"Rik is very close to his family, but he wanted to get out on his own and it's a pleasure to help him do that. I helped him buy presents for his family one Christmas, which he'd never done before, and it was very special."

– Louise, My Sighted Guide volunteer



"I was facing early retirement due to my sight loss, and I lost my confidence and independence. My guide dog Spencer was immediately part of the family – the grandkids loved him and gradually I learned to put my trust in him and started doing all the things I had stopped doing. There was a time when life seemed bleak and difficult. Now, I can't wait to find out what adventures lay ahead."

– Kevin, from Yeadon, with his guide dog Spencer



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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