



Together, we can change lives

A guide to leaving a life-changing
gift in your Will.

Contents

Life-changing legacies

Give someone a life of opportunity.....	3
How David got his smile back	5

Our work together

Sight loss can leave lives in the dark... ..	7
...but together we can let the light in	8
What we can do, thanks to you!	9
Together, we can train more life-changing guide dogs... ..	11
How Erin found her confidence	13

Getting started

We can help you get started.....	15
Writing your simple Will for free	17
Frequently asked questions	18

We'd love to meet you	21
Walk in the park.....	22
Providing a better future.....	23
A legacy that will live on	24

Give someone a life of opportunity

For someone with sight loss, the right support can mean everything. Freedom, confidence, independence. The difference between a life of just getting by and really going places.

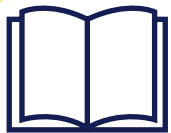
By leaving a gift in your Will to Guide Dogs, you can be that difference.



Together, we can help babies take their first steps, children make their first friends and adults live lives full of experience and opportunity.

Together, we can change the lives of people living with sight loss for years to come.

Once you've taken care of your loved ones, please consider leaving a gift in your Will to Guide Dogs.



This guide will show you **why** it's so important, **how** to do it and **what** a difference we can make together.

If you have any questions, please call our friendly team on freephone 0800 953 0113.

“

If I had to describe the impact of having a guide dog, I would say incredible and life-changing. The best decision ever.

”

Angharad and guide dog, Sarah



How David got his smile back

When David started to lose his sight, it felt like he was losing everything that made him who he was. He had to stop working, riding his motorbike, and he stepped back from the community that meant so much to him.



“

I could no longer do the things which brought me joy.

Everything that was part of who I was had gone. So really, I had gone.

”

With the help of his family, and the people around him, David came to terms with his sight loss and reached out to Guide Dogs. Soon after that his first guide dog, Scooby, came into his life.

“The first time I walked Scooby, I instantly knew there was a connection there, it felt right. When I stepped back into my house, my wife gave me a big hug and said: ‘You’ve found your smile!’”

“And I had, I was beaming from ear to ear – I couldn’t believe the joy that it gave me to have my independence back.”

David and Scooby became inseparable, whether at David’s new job with his local council or back at the heart of his local community. Partnerships like these are only possible thanks to people leaving gifts in their Wills.



“

The greatest gift Guide Dogs gave me was taking away that isolation. They put the smile on my face, which was that first step in the journey of coming back to me.

And that’s all from Guide Dogs and their amazing supporters. I can’t thank them enough.

”



A gift in your Will can **help** more **people** like David rediscover their smiles.

Sight loss can leave lives in the dark...

Every six minutes in the UK, one more person loses their sight and the number of people living with sight loss is set to double by 2050.

Without the right support, sight loss can be devastating. It can make people feel powerless, afraid and alone.

But it doesn't have to.

We're here to help people with sight loss live the life they choose. Our support is lifelong and our services are for everyone – children and adults, friends and family.

Thanks to supporters leaving gifts in their Wills to us in the past, today we're helping people with sight loss achieve things they didn't think were possible. Supporting children as they learn and grow. Giving adults the tools and the confidence to embrace careers and relationships, pastimes and passions.



With your **support**, we'll create a future where people with sight loss can **live actively**, independently and well.

...but together we can let the light in

We're best known for our iconic guide dog partnerships, but we have a wide range of services and support for everyone affected by sight loss, whenever they need us, whatever it takes. This is only possible thanks to the support of people like you.

We're the number one provider of services for adults and children with a vision impairment. We provide advice and guidance to help people with sight loss live independently, while our amazing dogs help people get out and about with the confidence to go wherever life takes them. And our sighted guide training

gives family and friends the skills to support them every step of the way.

We teach babies and children vital mobility and life skills, helping them understand and explore the world around them. And we provide large print, tailor-made books, as well as a wide range of technology and sensory toys to use at home.

Through our work with businesses and community groups, and our campaigning around talking buses and pavement parking, we're helping to create a more accessible and inclusive society.



A gift in your Will won't just help people cope with sight loss; it will help them **live lives** full of **purpose** and passion, **opportunities** and experiences.

These are the things that make **life** so **special**. What better legacy could there be?

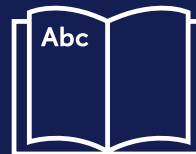
What we can do, thanks to you!

Legacies from thoughtful people like you are the gifts we depend on most to deliver our services now and in the future. This means they help make the biggest difference to the lives of people with sight loss.



We're the world's largest assistance dog organisation, responsible for over

7,400
dogs across the UK.



We have over

4,000
books ready to adapt for children with vision impairments, so they can enjoy reading like their friends.



Each year around

1,300
puppies start the journey to become guide dogs.





We've trained over

37,500

guide dogs. That's more than one new guide dog every day since our first partnerships were created. Your support could help train future generations.



We're at the end of the phone to provide expert information and advice.

We receive more than

50,000

calls every year.

It takes time, devotion and expert training to provide these life-changing partnerships and services. And with your support, we can reach more people than ever before.



Together, we can **build a future** where sight loss never has to hold anyone back.

Together, we can train more life-changing guide dogs

Our promising pups can't grow into life-changing guide dogs on their own. Their journey requires our time and dedication – and your kindness.

Nearly two out of three guide dog partnerships are made possible because of gifts in Wills from people like you. Your support can help nurture the next generations.



Newborn

Most of our puppies are born in the homes of our breeding dog volunteers, and stay with their mums for those formative first weeks of their lives.



7 weeks old

The puppies now visit our National Centre for lots of specialist playtime, so we can check their temperament and their health.



8 weeks old

Each puppy is homed with one of our wonderful volunteer puppy raisers to start learning social skills and getting to grips with the world around them.



14 months old

It's time to learn the basic guiding skills at one of our Guide Dog Training Schools. When they've mastered these, they move onto advanced training with a Guide Dog Mobility Specialist.



18 months old

The dogs are carefully matched with their new owners and two lives join together in a new partnership. Our trainers visit regularly to make sure things are running smoothly.



Retirement

When guide dogs retire, they often stay with their owner, family, or friends. But if this isn't possible, we find a loving home where they can spend their golden years.



It costs around £38,110 to provide all the expert training needed to train a guide dog, transforming them from a pup into a partnership.* But we cover the cost of all our guide dogs' food and vet bills too.

*This covers all the direct costs of the expert training a dog will receive from their first day at Guide Dogs school until they are matched with someone with sight loss and qualify together as a new partnership. This calculation is based on staff salaries, and the amount of time our dogs will spend with our different specialist staff throughout the training period, which, on average, took a total 37.3 weeks in 2023.

How Erin found her confidence

“

Quince isn't just a buddy dog, he's my friend. He helps me feel safe and he always sticks with me.

”

Not every dog is meant to be a guide dog. Some of them find their calling as buddy dogs – companions for children with a vision impairment. Dogs like Quince who became anxious doing guide work, but whose loving and calm nature made him the perfect match for Erin, born with nystagmus, which causes constant, rapid eye movement.

“From a very young age, it affected her confidence,” says Erin’s dad Anthony. “She hated going anywhere new, or loud. She found it very overwhelming and scary.”

Guide Dogs helped Erin with mobility and habilitation training, developing the skills and confidence to get around independently. But her life really changed the day she opened the living room door and buddy dog Quince bounded in.

“
She always talks about how the first thing she saw were his big brown eyes and nose. She couldn’t believe he was for her.

”

Recalls mum Sarah with a smile.

“The difference Quince made was instant. He loved Erin for who she is. He didn’t see the nystagmus, or her glasses, or that she struggled with a step.”



With Quince by her side, Erin’s confidence has soared. She loves to go rock-climbing and has even got up on stage at Guide Dogs events to tell her story.

“Quince has really changed my life,” says Erin. “It’s really special, because if he wasn’t who he is, I don’t think I’d be who I am.”



A gift in your Will could **help** more **children** like Erin discover their **confidence**.

We can help you get started

Your Will is a very important document. It's a reflection of the life you've lived and the values you hold. It's your way of making sure the people you love and the causes you care about are looked after in the future. Without it, the law decides what happens to your estate.

Writing your Will can be simple and straightforward. We recommend you consult a professional advisor, but we've got a few pointers to help you get started and a notes section for any further thoughts.

Before you write your Will, it can be useful to list the items you might want to include. The main things to consider are:

Your home, property and your car (including any mortgages, agreements and loans).

Furniture and other household items.

Jewellery and other individual items of worth.

Stocks and shares.

Cash in bank or building society accounts.

National Savings and/or other savings schemes, and insurance policies.

Overseas assets such as property or savings accounts.

Online assets – these can include digital photographs, digital currency and music.



You could leave a gift in your Will to Guide Dogs in the following ways:

- A 'residuary gift', which involves setting aside a percentage of your estate, once any taxes and debts have been paid, and gifts of money or items have been made. This type of gift is popular because it isn't diminished by inflation.
- A 'pecuniary gift', which is a fixed amount of money.
- A 'specific gift', such as jewellery, shares or artwork.

My notes



It's a good idea to regularly review your Will, so that it's up to date and still reflects your wishes. This is especially important when your circumstances change.

Writing your simple Will for free

If your wishes for your estate are not complex, it may be possible for you to write what's known as a simple* Will for free.

To make this as straightforward as possible, we've partnered with two Will writing services so you can write or update a simple Will for free in the way that suits you.

Face-to-face with a solicitor

You can write or update your Will with a local solicitor through our partnership with the National Free Wills Network. Request a Free Wills Network pack, using the details below, for a list of solicitors in your local area who are part of the scheme.

Unfortunately, this service isn't currently available in the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man.



Write your Will online

We've also partnered with a specialist online Will provider, Bequeathed, so you can write your Will in the comfort of your own home.



Many people choose to leave a gift in their Will to Guide Dogs when using these services, and we're very grateful to those who do. But it's entirely up to you.

To find out more about these free Wills services, visit guidedogs.org.uk/freewills or call our team on freephone 0800 953 0113.

*Solicitors have different criteria for what qualifies as a simple Will. If your requirements exceed the criteria, they will discuss a fee with you before proceeding.

Thank you so much for considering leaving a gift to Guide Dogs in your Will. Together we can change so many people's lives for the better.

To make it as easy as possible for you, we've answered a few of the questions you may have about leaving a gift in your Will. If your question isn't answered here, or you'd like to find out more about our work, call our friendly team on freephone 0800 953 0113, who can put you through to your local legacy contact.

► I want to leave a gift to Guide Dogs. What are the charity's details?

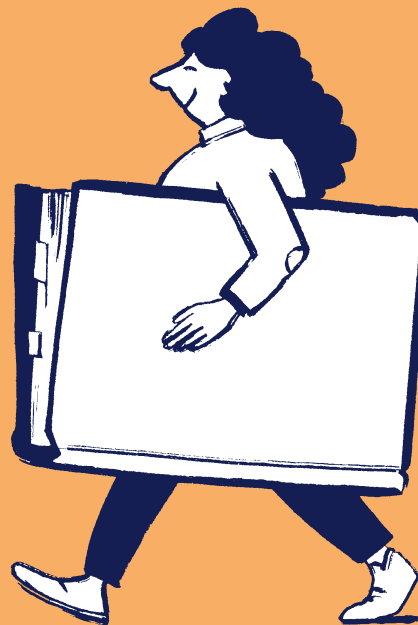
Firstly, thank you! These are the details to include in your Will: The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, Hillfields, Burghfield Common, Reading, Berkshire RG7 3YG. A charity registered in England and Wales (209617), Scotland (SC038979) and Isle of Man (1334).

► Will my gift make a difference?

Yes, absolutely – just ask David (page 5) and Erin (page 13)! Whatever the size of your gift, every penny will be spent wisely to help fund our life-changing services, enabling people with sight loss to live the life they choose. And nearly two out of every three guide dogs are made possible by gifts in Wills from people like you.

► What is an Executor?

An Executor is someone you trust to carry out the instructions of your Will – typically a friend or family member, though it could be a solicitor. It's common to name at least two Executors in your Will.



► Do I need to use a solicitor?

We'd always advise that you consult a solicitor to make sure your Will is legally binding, and that your wishes are recorded and carried out as you would like. If you already have a solicitor, they should be happy to help.

► How can I make sure my gift maintains its value over time?

You can leave a residuary gift which will hold its value better than a specific cash sum, or you can leave a fixed amount of money which can be linked to the index of retail prices. This allows your gift to keep its value in line with inflation. We recommend you speak to a solicitor for more information.

► Will I have to pay Inheritance Tax on my gift to Guide Dogs?

Gifts to Guide Dogs and other charities are often 100% tax free, and they may also reduce the Inheritance Tax burden on the rest of your estate. Every case is different so it's best to speak to a solicitor or visit gov.uk/inheritance-tax for more details.

► Can I change my mind?

Of course. You are free to change your mind – and update your Will – at any time. It's a good idea to regularly review your Will, so that it's up to date and still reflects your wishes. This is especially important when your circumstances change.



► **I've just written my Will. Do I have to rewrite it if I want to leave Guide Dogs a gift?**

Not at all. It can be simpler to instruct a solicitor (by letter or email) to add an amendment to your existing Will called a codicil. Alternatively, you can update a simple Will through the National Free Wills Network – just call freephone 0800 953 0113, or visit guidedogs.org.uk/freewills to request your free Wills pack.

► **Do I have enough money to leave a gift?**

We're so grateful and proud to receive every gift, no matter the size. Each one helps change the lives of people with sight loss. Once you've taken care of those closest to you, even a small percentage of your estate can make a huge difference to someone's life.

► **Will you know if I've left Guide Dogs a gift?**

Your Will is private and we won't know if you have left us anything unless you tell us – or until the time comes for your Will to be read. However, if you have included a gift to Guide Dogs in your Will, we would love to know so we can say thank you. Please let us know by returning the response form enclosed.



We'd love to meet you

We'd be delighted if you came along to one of our local Reception Day events to see first-hand how a gift in your Will could help provide the vital services of the future.

You'll hear from some of our volunteers, guide dog owners and staff – and some of our dogs may be joining us too! We'd love to tell you about the other life-changing services a gift in your Will could help support too.

By leaving a gift in your Will to Guide Dogs, you'll join a community of people who share our dedication and have become a lasting part of our vital work.

If you've got any questions, or you'd like to join us at an event, please get in touch with our friendly Supporter Care team on freephone **0800 953 0113**, who can put you through to your local legacy contact.

To find a Reception Day near you and get a glimpse of what your experience might look like, visit [guidedogs.org.uk/receptiondays](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/receptiondays)



Walk in the park

Wills really do change lives

We've created an online tribute to celebrate the lives and honour the memory of the more than 75,000 amazing people who have left a gift in their Will to Guide Dogs. Through a virtual walk in the park you'll meet family members and friends who will share why their loved ones chose to leave such a special gift. You'll also hear from some of the people who have been helped by incredible legacies like these.

Visit guidedogs.org.uk/walkinthepark to celebrate with us.



Providing a better future

Long-time supporter Ghislaine tells us why she'll be leaving a life-changing gift in her Will to Guide Dogs.

"Guide Dogs has always been my favourite charity, right from when I was a little girl and collecting milk bottle tops to take to school! We had several visits from Guide Dogs representatives with the incredibly clever dogs, which made a lasting impression on me, and I have continued supporting ever since.

"I'm a passionate dog lover and having owned three Labradors in the past, I know what wonderful, gentle, and selfless creatures they are. My dogs have enriched my life in so many ways, so I'm delighted to be able to help someone with sight loss to share the experience and to have a better life.

"Guide Dogs provides so much hope for visually impaired people, and hope for a better future. I know that my gift will help this wonderful work continue.



“

I'm delighted to help someone with sight loss have a better life.

What better legacy is there than that?

”



Will you join people like Ghislaine by leaving a **life-changing** legacy?

A legacy that will live on

Since 1931, more than 75,000 people have kindly remembered Guide Dogs with a gift in their Will.

By supporting our vital work in such a special way, they have become a lasting part of it. A part of the values that define us, the commitment that drives us, and the impact that inspires us.

If you feel this way too, we'd love you to become a part of what we do.

So, once you've taken care of your loved ones, please consider leaving a gift in your Will to Guide Dogs.

With your support, we'll be there for people with sight loss for years to come.

Thank you.





We'd love to hear from you

If you've remembered Guide Dogs in your Will, it would mean so much if you could let us know, so we can thank you for your kindness.

We'd also love to know what inspired you to leave a gift.

You can do this by:

- Emailing our team at giftsinwills@guidedogs.org.uk
- Or calling us on freephone 0800 953 0113.

Guide Dogs is a working name of The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. Registered Office: Hillfields, Burghfield Common, Reading, Berkshire RG7 3YG. A company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (291646) and a charity registered in England and Wales (209617), Scotland (SC038979) and Isle of Man (1334). C601 06/24



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