



Social Media Accessibility Guidelines

Image Only

All social media posts, whether for organic or paid content, on Guide Dogs channels need to be accessible, meaning they need to include visual descriptions.

Where channels allow, include an alt description to help those who are vision impaired to build up a mental picture.

Keep your visual description concise and focussed, picking out the key details that paint the picture, to avoid lengthy screen reader descriptions!

Per channel:

Facebook - upload your photo, click "edit photo" and write your description in the "Alternative text" box. Just click save and you're ready to publish.



The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (UK) ✓

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Did you know we have a wide range of audio materials to help with home schooling? We know that learning can be visually demanding for children with a vision impairment. If your child is struggling with eye fatigue, we hope these materials can help make learning more accessible 🙌 <http://bit.ly/3pmDCRX>

If you would like to know more about accessing different ways of learning, the first step is to give us a call on 0800 781 1444 📞

[Visual description: A young boy smiling and looking to camera. He is holding some earphones over his ears]



Instagram - for feed posts, upload your photo, click next, then "advanced settings" and then click "write alt text". Then simply add your description and then click done before sharing as normal. Unfortunately, Instagram Stories don't currently have the option to add image descriptions, so you can just write a description in your post.



Twitter - you can add a separate image description to an image on Twitter. You need to activate the "Image Descriptions" feature, which you can find in "Twitter Settings", under the "Accessibility" tab. After that, just attach your image as normal and then click "Alt" to add your description and post as normal.



Guide Dogs  @guidedogs · Feb 8

Gary 'nose' the most 'pawfect' dog pun is out there somewhere 🤔

[#UkPunDay](#)

...

[Visual description: A close up headshot of Golden retriever cross Gary looking to camera]



Other tips:

- When using hashtags, ensure to use CamelCase by capitalising the first letter of every word. This ensures screen readers read the hashtag out how intended.
- Avoid overusing emojis, and when using, try to use at the end of a sentence - this will prevent messaging confusion.

Videos

All videos created by or for Guide Dogs need to be accessible, meaning they need to have subtitles and audio description as per our videography guidelines.

Consider this when editing. You may need to hold shots for longer to accommodate audio description. Knowing that subtitles will be added to your video might also affect your shot choice, especially if the action is happening in the lower portion of the screen.



If you are unable to add audio description and/or subtitles to your video, contact the Content Team in the first instance. We may be able to help, although we have limited capacity and need at least two weeks' notice to schedule work in. We can also put you in touch with external suppliers from our videography roster that can help you.

Here is some guidance for if you plan to add subtitles and audio description yourself.

Subtitles

- All subtitles must be Arial Regular, it should be white (RGB 255,255,255), centre justified at the bottom of the screen, with a solid black (RGB 0,0,0) background/highlight strip behind.
- It's difficult to specify the exact number of words per line as this will vary depending on font size, aspect ratio, the resolution of the video, and the destination platform. However, try not to make subtitles too small or too big - they should be readable on mobile devices.
- Every time a new person speaks, add their name followed by a colon, for example: "John: I've been blind for five years".
- Use square brackets to denote other sounds, for example "[music]", "[laughter]".
- Use a music note 🎵 at each end of a line to denote singing, for example, "🎵 Silent night 🎵".



In this video, we meet three people with sight loss that Guide Dogs has helped this year. A voiceover introduces each one, their words appearing onscreen around the footage.

Audio Description

All videos over 30 seconds need to have audio description in them, or have a separate 'accessible' version that contains audio description. Audio description informs viewers with sight loss what is happening on screen but must always also be concise.

Here are some tips on writing good audio description:



- Appropriate gaps must be left in the edit to allow for the insertion of audio description. This means you should break up any dialogue or voiceover to allow for description in the gaps in-between.
- Audio description should be concise, but also describe as much as you need to understand the video and its story.

What to say

“Ben walks down a street”

What not to say

“Ben walks slowly down a wide tree-lined street in late afternoon”

- Part of being concise means not every single action needs to be described.

What to say

“Karen makes a cup of tea”

What not to say

“Karen boils the kettle, places a teabag in the mug, then pours the water in”

- All onscreen text that is not a subtitle needs to be read aloud. When describing onscreen text, start each line with, “Caption:”

What it says onscreen

Meet Bailey, a six-week-old golden retriever

What the audio description should say

“Caption: Meet Bailey, a six-week-old golden retriever”

- Make sure that any new sounds in a video are identified. A splash of water, for instance, could mean many things, so an audio description along the lines of “a car drives through a puddle and splashes Steve” will help the viewer understand what’s going on aurally.
- Some videos feature lots of the same stuff happening. For example, a puppy changeover video is usually mostly shots of puppies running



about and playing. Here it may be unnecessary to describe every action in detail, the AD could simply be “This video shows Libby playing in the grass” at the start of the video.

What to say

(At start of video) “This video shows Libby playing in the grass”

What not to say

“Libby plays in the grass. Libby plays in the grass with her sibling Lyca. Libby runs across the lawn. Libby rolls on the grass”.

- Some videos feature lots of different things happening quickly. Here it may prove nearly impossible to describe every action, so it’s OK to use terms like “montage” and “timelapse” (for example, “A montage of people playing sport”) to signpost these sequences.

What to say

“A montage of people playing sport”

What not to say

“Amy lifts weights in a gym. David runs a relay with Beth. Sam swims in a local pool. Jess climbs a climbing wall”.

For videos less than 30 seconds, on social media, it is sometimes better to add a brief visual description to the copy of the post itself rather than the video. For those over 30 seconds, you can link to the Audio Described version of the video instead of writing a lengthy visual description. Contact the Digital Team for more advice on accessibility around social media videos.



Guide Dogs  @guidedogs · Jan 2

Guide Dogs helps people with sight loss from the day they're born.

Discover how early intervention from Guide Dogs is life changing for children with sight loss and their families: bit.ly/3p4dpXP

[AD version: bit.ly/34Q0VML]



It should be noted that there is currently no way to audio describe livestreams, and subtitling livestreams is only possible with third-party services like Wordly.

Approvals

The Digital Team and Content Team will only approve video content that meets the minimum standards set out in this document.

For more information, contact the Content Team at ContentTeam@guidedogs.org.uk and the Digital Team at DigitalTeam@guidedogs.org.uk.

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