

Spread the word about

volunteering for Guide Dogs

Spread the word about volunteering at Guide Dogs

Guidance for existing volunteers on how to help recruit new volunteers



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Introduction

We know what an amazing role you do in helping to raise awareness about Guide Dogs. Thank you. This guide is to support you in raising awareness specifically about volunteering for Guide Dogs. From experience, we know that word of mouth is the best way to recruit new volunteers. You are fantastic at this already. We just want to give you all the tools and information you need to continue to get more people involved in helping us to support people with sight loss.

Tips on recruiting new volunteers

1. Have a think about what you need – If you are part of a fundraising group and you're looking for a new volunteer, what sort of skills do you need from that person? Is there someone in your group already that is looking for a new challenge? For example, you may need a treasurer. This role could be split into individual tasks. One person could do the banking and the other do more of the admin side. Filling a vacant role, doesn't always need to be done by just one person.
2. Let staff know – your staff contact needs to know if you either feel you need new volunteers (for example in your fundraising group) or if you're going to do some promotion in your local community. They can chat to the Volunteering Consultant (VC) to ensure we're not duplicating any work and to support you if they can. This is really key, so please make sure your team know.
3. Use your local knowledge – you're our fonts of knowledge! You live in the area that we need more volunteers and so you know what ways we may be able to promote getting involved. Let your staff contact know what local papers, websites or community centres they could use to spread the word. We do ask that you don't approach these local places directly before talking to your staff contact as it might be that we want to make the most of the opportunity by talking about other topics too. So do pass the details onto your staff contact instead.
4. Carry materials with you – did you know we have pocket sized cards on volunteering? Perfect to fit in your pocket, wallet or treat pouch! How often do you get chatting to strangers when you're out with your dog or you're at a collection? Give them a volunteering card or leaflet. They have all our website details and contact details which are the best ways for them to find out more.
5. Look out for poster spots – when you're waiting for the bus, does the bus stop carry local notices? Or when you're walking in the park, is there a noticeboard? Or is there one at church or in the pet shop? Let us know and we can send you some tailored posters for you to organise putting up at these spots. You may well need permission from wherever the noticeboard is, so just make sure you check this first.
6. Talk the talk – your personal stories are the most powerful thing. Talking to people you meet about what you do for Guide Dogs will inspire others to think about giving their time. So shout it from the roof tops!
7. Online – do you have your own Facebook page or twitter account? Tell your followers what you do for Guide Dogs and post photos to prove it. Social media is like the newer version of writing letters to your friends but it reaches so many more people and is a lot quicker (and cheaper!) to do. Check out the volunteer social media policy for further guidance.

The earlier the better. We all know that as much as we try, sometimes it can take a while to recruit the right volunteer. So, as soon as you know someone may leave, get in touch with your staff contact so we can all start planning together.

Materials to support you:

Leaflets

At the end of this guide you will find a list of all the leaflets we have that can support you in spreading the word about volunteering. Your local team have glossy printed versions, so you don't need to print your own. Just ask your staff contact which leaflet you want and they will sort this for you.

Posters

Your local team will have a range of editable posters. They can tailor these to suit the recruitment needs in your local area. Just let your staff contact know and they will do their best to organise these for you.

Creating your own thing

We know how amazingly creative you can all be and we want to make the most of that. We just need to make sure that all our posters, leaflets and business cards give the right message and follow our brand guidelines. So, if you are thinking that you'd like to create something of your own, please chat to your staff contact before doing so. It's more than likely that we already have something like that which you just might not have seen before. Or, it could be that there is a gap, in which case your staff contact can chat through it with you to see how best we can support you to fill it.

FAQs for existing volunteers

Q: I've heard there is an occasional volunteer form, when should I use that and when should I use the normal registration form?

A: If someone helps out 4 or less times a year, then we can just ask them to complete the occasional volunteer form. Please send any completed forms to the Volunteering Office at Guide Dogs, Gibfield Park Avenue, Atherton, Manchester, M46 0SU. If they volunteer more regularly then they must complete the full volunteer form. Please contact your staff contact to let them know that somebody needs to complete this form.

Q: Why do volunteers need to complete a full application form?

A: There are lots of benefits to becoming a fully registered volunteer. For us, we ask for two references. This means that we are ensuring that the people volunteering for us are the right people. We have a duty of care to protect the people that we support and that volunteer for us. For the volunteer, it means that they receive a welcome pack, training, an ID card and communications about what's going on. Registered volunteers will also get the opportunity to feedback through surveys like the Volunteer Impact Assessment (VIA) and through Volunteer Voices groups.

Q: How does someone apply to be a volunteer?

A: The quickest way to apply is at **www.guidedogs.org.uk/volunteer**. They can just type in their postcode, find the relevant role and sign up. They will need details of their two referees to complete the process. Or, you can call the Volunteering Office on **0345 143 0191** or email **volunteer@guidedogs.org.uk**.

Q: Our new volunteer has completed the application form online but hasn't heard back, what should we do?

A: It could be that their referees haven't replied. So before contacting us, it would be great if they could just double check that they've responded. We'll need two acceptable references before your volunteer can start. You can contact the Volunteering Office to find out what's happening. Phone 0345 143 0191 or email volunteer@guidedogs.org.uk

Q: Can my new volunteer start if they are not registered?

A: If they are going to be a regular volunteer, then we need to obtain the two references before they can start. But they can go along to training whilst this is happening. But please make sure that if they do continue, that they register fully before doing so.

Q: How do I get them an ID badge?

A: If they are accepted as a volunteer, then they will be asked to send a photo to our Volunteering Office. This can be done electronically, by emailing it to volunteer@guidedogs.org.uk. (It's actually quicker that way too!) Guide Dogs needs to safeguard our service users and the public from anyone falsely posing as a representative of the organisation. So, once the ID card is produced, it will be sent to the local team so that they (or a designated volunteer) can check that person's ID face to face before giving them their volunteer ID badge.

Q: I'm a Fundraising Group Organiser, who will tell me when my new volunteer is fully registered?

A: Once they are accepted as a volunteer, the Volunteering Office will send them their welcome pack and let the local team know. Your staff contact will then inform you that this volunteer is all ready to volunteer!

Q: What happens if a volunteer decides to leave our fundraising group?

A: Guide Dogs needs to know if a volunteer decides to leave so that we can update our systems. So just let your staff contact know. We should also ask for their ID card and any equipment back from that volunteer. If you receive their ID card, please send it straight onto the local team.

Q: How does someone sign up to be a volunteer?

A: Find out about the volunteer opportunities available to you by going to our volunteering web page <http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/supportus/volunteering/> clicking on "**Apply Now**" and seeing what volunteer opportunities are available in your area. By clicking on the role title you will be able to see what the role entails. The quickest way is to apply directly from the website. If you would like some support, please call the Volunteering Office on **0345 143 0191**.

Q: How long does the application process take to become a volunteer?

A: When we receive your completed application form, we will take up your references, this is where delays may occur so please do ask your referees permission to give their details so that they are expecting our request. Once we have both your references back we will forward your details to your local volunteer manager who will arrange an interview with you where you will both decide if the opportunity is right for you.

In many cases once the interview has taken place you will be able to start volunteering with us straight away. However, for those roles with direct contact with children and vulnerable adults you will require a Disclosure check.

If you are applying to become a Puppy Walker or Boarder, we will also carry out a home visit.

Q: Who can be a referee?

A: We ask for two references. One character referee from a person you have known for

at least two years and aged 18 or over. The second should be a professional referee, somebody of standing within your local community e.g. Faith Leader, Teacher, Dr etc. They must not be a family member nor live in the same household as yourself or both referees be at the same address.

Q: Why do you take up references first?

A: Guide Dogs is committed to Safer Recruitment and as part of our commitment we ensure that our volunteer recruiting managers have as much information as they need for the interview and are able to make the right decisions for the organisation.

Also for you as a volunteer you are able to start volunteering with us immediately unless the role you have chosen requires a Disclosure check.

Q: Who needs a disclosure check?

A: Roles that have direct contact with our service users will require a disclosure check, this information can be found at the bottom of the role description.

England & Wales only - Guide Dogs has taken the steps to make it compulsory for all its volunteers who are subject to disclosure checks via the DBS to register with the Update Service (on-line checking service). This will aid us in ensuring that our checks are robust and completed efficiently and securely.

Scotland only – If you are a member of the PVG Scheme please make this known to the person who interviews you.

Q: How much time do volunteers give?

A: The amount of time you give as a volunteer depends on you and which role you undertake for us. Some people volunteer every day, others volunteer for just a few hours per week and some decide to volunteer for one-off events and activities. We try to match your availability as far as we can and any time that you can give, no matter how small, helps us to change the lives of people with sight loss.

What will I be doing?

Again depending upon the role that you choose depends upon what you will be asked to do. There are a large number of volunteer role descriptions on our volunteering pages for you to read through. If you choose to apply through the web pages the role description is available by clicking on the role title however you can receive further information about any roles by contacting the Volunteering Office.

What skills do I need?

The skills that you need will depend on the volunteering role that you do. Some roles require special or technical skills and knowledge, whilst others may require good personal skills however we will help you to develop these skills whilst you volunteer with us.

Q: What roles can volunteers under 18 do?

A: Yes, you can, although some of our roles do have age restrictions. Additional information about specific requirements can be found in the role description or by contacting the Volunteering Office for more information.

Q: Why do volunteers wear an ID badge?

A: If accepted as a Guide Dogs volunteer you will be asked to provide a photo for your ID Badge. Guide Dogs needs to safeguard (where possible) our service users and the public from anyone falsely posing as representatives of the organisation or misrepresenting Guide Dogs.

Q: What do volunteers receive?

A: Once you have been accepted as a volunteer you will receive a Welcome pack, usually by email however other formats are available. The pack will include details about your ID Badge, an Induction for Volunteers and details about Volunteer Information Point. You will also receive details about your staff contact who will be your local volunteer manager who will arrange any training and inductions.

Further support

This guide is designed to give an overview, but you may have more questions. We are here to help. Just contact your local team who will talk things through with you. If you have any questions relating to registering a volunteer, you can also call the Volunteering Office on **0345 143 0191** or email **volunteer@guidedogs.org.uk**.

Thank you for helping us to find more amazing people like you to change the lives of people with sight loss.

Appendices

National volunteering cards (Order from Orbital VCNAT or from your local team)



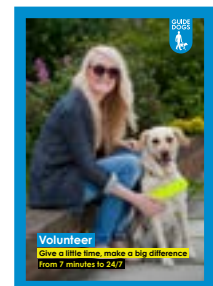
Regional volunteering cards (Order from your team)



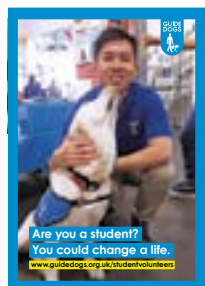
Helping Guide Dogs Form (Order from Orbital P180005 or from your local team)



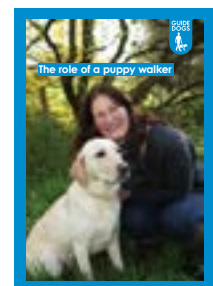
Volunteering leaflet (Order from your local team)



Student volunteering leaflet (Order from your local team)



Puppy walking leaflet (Order from your local team)



My Guide leaflet (Order from Orbital MGVOL or from your local team)



Boarder leaflet (Order from your local team)

