



One Voice

2021

Key messages for staff and volunteers



Unless explicitly stated the statistics in this booklet are based on 2019 figures. These figures are a more accurate reflection of the work we do than those of 2020, when COVID-19 had a significant impact on our ability to deliver some of our services.

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Who we are and why we exist



We are Guide Dogs. And we're here to help people with sight loss live the life they choose.

Children and adults. Friends and family. Whoever you are, our expert staff, volunteers and life-changing dogs are here to help you:

Live actively. Our people and dogs can help you get out and about with confidence, going wherever school, work, or play takes you – and knowing that your sight loss won't hold you back.

Live independently. The advice and skills we provide will give you the freedom to live life on your own terms, in your own way, so that you can achieve your hopes and ambitions, and do all the things that make you...you.

Live well. Our experience and understanding can help you through the emotional challenges of sight loss as well as the practical ones, introducing you to an inspiring community of people with similar experiences and giving you the support you need to be your best self.

The scale of the challenge we face



- **1 in 5** people will live with significant sight loss in their lifetime.
- 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 by 2050.
- **Six million** people are estimated to be living with sight-threatening eye conditions.
- In 2021 nearly **100,000** people will be told they are losing their sight.
- There are **28,000** children (under 18) who are blind or partially sighted in the UK.
- Every day around **four** children in the UK are registered blind or partially sighted.
- **25%** of people with sight loss of working age are unemployed.

How we can help: our services

Getting support

Information and advice:
phoneline, online, email

General information
and advice:

For adults:

Finding the right services
for you, dog care and
welfare, access support.

For children and families:

Family Support,
Technology, Sensory
Grants and Education
Support.

Help for Adults

Our
Dogs



Help for Children and Families

Living Actively

- My Sighted Guide

Living Independently

- My Life Skills (includes functional vision and OMS)

Living Well

- Listening Service

For Adults

- Guide Dogs
- Companion Dogs

For Children and Young People

- Guide Dogs
- Buddy Dogs

Living Actively

- My Time to Play (0-4)

Living Independently

- My Life Skills (includes habilitation)
- Custom Eyes Books

Living Well

- Family Events

With new services, new technologies and our amazing staff, volunteers, dogs, and supporters, we will change more lives than ever before.

By 2023 we will double the amount of support we provide. In 2019 we helped people affected by sight loss **11,489** times.

Information and advice

You can find information online for answers and advice about living with sight loss – just visit [guidedogs.org.uk](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk)

Or give us a call to **speak to an expert** who can provide information and advice for yourself, your child or a family member. Call Guide Line on **0800 781 1444**

We have a wide range of services, with and without dogs, or can help you access support by other organisations.

By understanding what you and your family want from life today and tomorrow, we can help you plan to achieve it. And we'll support you every step of the way.

In 2020 we provided almost 190,000 people with information and advice about sight loss through our website and Guide Line.

As well as general information and advice on our services and living actively, independently and well with sight loss, we provide the following specialist advice for adults:

Care and welfare for your Guide Dogs puppy or dog

If you're partnered with one of our dogs, our dog care team can help with any questions about your dog's health, training or wellbeing.

Access refusals

Have you been refused access or faced potential discrimination with your guide dog? We can help you understand your rights and give you practical information and emotional support.

We also provide specialist advice for children and families in the form of:

Family support

In 2021, 1,460 families will be told their child is losing their sight.

Parents of children with a vision impairment say that the number one factor in improving their own quality of life is receipt of emotional support.

Our team is here to give advice and emotional support to families of children with a vision impairment. Our experts can share their experience to build your whole family's knowledge and confidence and provide tools that are right for your child's specific needs.



Technology and sensory equipment

For children with sight loss, technology is vital. It's not only important for a child's education, it also helps develop life skills, confidence and independence.

Our grants help cover the cost of technology and sensory equipment. We can help you choose the best assistive technology which can empower your child to become an independent learner and make school life easier.

In 2021 we're launching an initiative to make sure every child with a vision impairment in the UK has access to a free Apple iPad or iPhone outside of school.

Education support

Our specialist team offers independent and tailored advice to help your child receive the education support they are entitled to: from supporting you when you are choosing the right nursery, school or college, to working with teachers and special education staff or advising on assistive technologies.

Help for adults

Guide dogs

Our guide dogs give people with sight loss the confidence to get out and about safely, providing life-changing practical support every day.

In 2019 we created 685 new guide dog partnerships and supported 4,800 partnerships in total.

Companion dogs

Our companion dogs are a trained canine friend for people with sight loss, improving health and wellbeing, and reducing feelings of isolation.



My Life Skills


With our online and face-to-face training from experts and people with lived experience, you and your family can learn practical, easy-to-use tips to adapt to sight loss.

From kitchen equipment to smartphones and much more, you'll learn and practise essential everyday skills and tips, in a safe environment, which you can immediately transfer to home.

We can also share practical tools and techniques to optimise the sight you have and help you gain a better understanding of your condition.

My Sighted Guide

Our sighted guiding service connects people with a trained, local volunteer to get out and do more of the things they love. We can also provide sighted guiding training for family and friends.



In 2019 we
matched **1,296**
people with a
sighted guide.

Help for children and families

Guide dogs

Our guide dogs give young people the confidence to get out and about safely. There is no minimum age for a guide dog.

Buddy dogs

Our buddy dogs help children and young people build confidence in themselves and trust in their surroundings and can have a hugely positive effect on the whole family's wellbeing.

In 2020, 52 children were partnered with a buddy dog, helping improve their confidence and wellbeing.



My Life Skills

We're here to help your child learn invaluable practical skills for life.

From supporting physical development and learning in the early years, to navigating streets safely, preparing food, handling money, using technology and managing their appearance as they grow older.

In 2019 we helped 2,845 children learn essential life skills so that they can navigate the world around them confidently and safely.

My Time to Play

Launched in 2020, these fun and supportive online and face-to-face sessions help children aged 0-4 develop through play, and parents can also connect with other families.

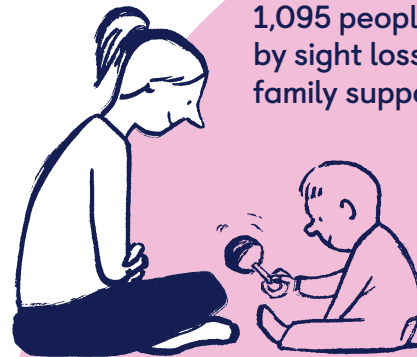
CustomEyes Books

We produce books in large print, tailor-made to suit each child's eye condition.

In 2019, we made 4,000 tailor-made books, enabling children with sight loss to enjoy reading just like their friends.

Family Events

Our UK-wide programme of activity days provides the opportunity for children and parents to meet other families and access advice from our specialist team.



1,095 people affected by sight loss attended our family support events in 2019.

How the public can support us



Donate

We rely on donations to continue our life-changing work and there are many ways for you to donate. These include:

- **Sponsoring a guide dog puppy** from just £1 a week, watching them grow from a six-week-old bundle of fur to a fully-qualified guide dog.
- **Leaving a gift in your will** helps us provide guide dogs of the future, as well as expand other services such as My Sighted Guide, so thousands more people can lead confident, independent and fulfilling lives.
- **Playing the Lucky Lottery**, which gives you the chance to win big whilst making an amazing difference to people with sight loss.

- **Raise funds to Name a Puppy**, whether for a school, business or in memory of a loved one.
- **Making a simple one-off donation** by visiting our website.

We have a range of ways that you can raise funds while at work, home or school. Find out more at: [guidedogs.org.uk/how-you-can-help](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/how-you-can-help)



Volunteer

Volunteering with Guide Dogs is life-changing – and not just for the people we support.

We have an amazing community of over **14,000** volunteers who give around **13 million** hours of support each year.

Our volunteers get to have amazing experiences that you genuinely couldn't find anywhere else. Get involved by:

1 Working directly with people who have sight loss

Whether it's popping to the shops together or meeting friends, you could help someone with sight loss live the life they choose.

2 Nurturing and caring for our amazing dogs

Our young puppies and our dogs in training need loving homes while they learn their vital skills. And our guide dog mums and dads need care and support to help them provide the next generation of guide dogs.

3 Raising the funds that make it all possible

Join one of our **450** fundraising groups, host your own fundraiser, take on sponsored challenges, and help make sure fundraising resources get to the people that need them. In 2019 our community fundraisers raised over **£7 million**.

We have **100** different volunteering roles and we're so grateful for any time you can give us whether it's months, days or hours. However you choose to get involved, you'll be making a real difference.

The Volunteer Information Point (VIP) is the place for volunteers to find out all relevant information about their role, their team and news from the wider charity including any urgent updates.
[guidedogs.org/vip](https://www.guidedogs.org/vip)

Campaign

We campaign to make sure children and adults with sight loss can live actively, independently and well. We work to remove barriers to this, and champion best practice when we see it.

Our campaigning work covers a range of issues; from making sure children with sight loss are able to access the services they need, to ensuring public transport and streets are as accessible as possible.

We couldn't do this without our **28,000** amazing volunteer campaigners. From signing petitions and sharing posts on social media, to writing to their MPs and going out to collect signatures on our behalf; our campaigns community help us to drive change.

To get involved visit [guidedogs.org.uk/how-you-can-help/campaigning](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/how-you-can-help/campaigning)



How every £1 raised is spent by Guide Dogs

- The UK's first guide dog partnerships qualified in 1931. Since then, thanks to our dedicated staff, volunteers and supporters we have partnered over **36,000** people with a guide dog and transformed the lives of thousands more through our other services.
- In 2019 we provided support **9,650** times for children with a vision impairment and their families.
- It costs **£75.7** million to deliver all our services.
- It costs **£34,600** to breed and train a single guide dog.
- It costs **£54,800** to support a guide dog from birth to retirement.



- 53p** Providing guide dogs and other adult services
- 8p** Campaigning and raising awareness
- 5p** Providing children and young people's services
- 1p** Research and development
- 33p** Generating income, including trading activities

Fast facts about Guide Dogs

- You don't need to have lost all your sight or be registered as blind or partially sighted to be partnered with a guide dog or benefit from our services.
- We are the largest employer of specialists dedicated to helping children and young people with sight loss learn, grow and access the same opportunities as everyone else.
- There is no upper or minimum age for our guide dog partnerships. In 2020 our youngest guide dog owner was 14 and our oldest was 97.
- We are world leaders in puppy socialisation: breeding and training more dogs than any other organisation in the world.

- In 2019 we welcomed **1,135** potential guide dogs in to the world.
- At any one time we are responsible for **8,400** puppies and dogs. We are one of the only organisations globally that breeds and nurtures dogs throughout their lifetime.
- We generally have two main breeds, Labrador and Golden Retrievers, which we cross to gain the best characteristics of each breed. These make up almost **80** per cent of our dogs. We also have German Shepherds, Curly Coat Retrievers and Labradoodles.



What your donations can buy

£8

could support a working guide dog partnership for a day.

£16

could buy a coat for one of our puppies in training.

£125

could buy a Starter Kit for a new guide dog owner, containing everything they need to start a life with their new guide dog.

£332

could provide eight weeks of Early Diagnosis Support to a child with sight loss and their family.

£24

could pay for an hour's advice and guidance from one of our Specialist Education Support Officers.

£420

could buy a child with a vision impairment an ipad, to help them with their education and transform their learning experience.

£44

enables us to produce a tailor-made, large print book for a child with sight loss, so that they can enjoy reading just like their friends.





How to contact us

For help and support visit

[guidedogs.org.uk/getting-support](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/getting-support)

or call our Guide Line on **0800 781 1444**

To find out how you or your company
can support us visit

[guidedogs.org.uk/how-you-can-help](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/how-you-can-help)

