

## Glossary of terms for volunteers

This document can be used as a handy reference guide to some of the different terms you may come across when you're volunteering with us. Your volunteer manager and key contacts are also on hand if you have any questions. All definitions are listed in alphabetical order and you can also quickly access them using the table of contents below.

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## **Academy**

Our [Guide Dogs Academy](#) is how we recruit, train and retain our Guide Dog Trainers and Guide Dogs Mobility Specialists who train our dogs, our clients, and then the partnership together. Our learners are based in local teams all around the country.

## **Applied Driving Techniques (ADT)**

ADT is an external provider that Guide Dogs has appointed to help manage risks related to any driving carried out on our behalf. For volunteers in roles involving driving, we will ask you to supply information to ADT as part of your suitability to drive on our behalf.

## **Behaviours**

Our behaviours reflect who we are, and also who we aspire to be and capture the essence of what it is to be [Guide Dogs PEOPLE](#), whether staff or volunteer: Person-centred, Expert, Optimistic, Partner, Lead-by-example, Engage.

## **Buddy dog**

Our [Buddy Dogs](#) help children with sight loss develop their self-confidence, improve relationships and build a greater sense of trust. Buddy dogs are pet dogs owned by Guide Dogs but looked after and paid for by the child's family.

## **Catch-up/check-in meetings**

One-to-one meetings with your volunteer manager. If your role requires a [disclosure check](#), these meetings are a requirement for the purposes of [safeguarding](#) and in line with the Volunteering Supervision Procedure.

## **Children and Young People (CYP) services**

We're proud to provide a wide [range of services](#) that support children, young people and the whole family, such as habilitation, our family events, CustomEyes Books and grants for assistive technology.



## **Disclosure checks**

Our volunteer role descriptions state whether a role requires a disclosure, and this will be discussed with you during your interview. These are criminal record checks provided by the Disclosure and Barring Service in England and Wales (referred to as 'DBS'), Disclosure Scotland (responsible for the Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme, referred to as 'PVG') and by AccessNI in Northern Ireland.

## **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)**

We celebrate the diversity of all staff, volunteers and service users. We're committed to ensuring an inclusive and accessible environment for everyone. In 2022, we launched our first [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy](#), which was co-produced with all our people.

## **Expenses Claim Form**

We believe you should not be out of pocket for your volunteering activities with us. The Volunteer Expenses Claim form allows you to submit a claim for the reimbursement of any reasonable pre-agreed expenses incurred while volunteering with Guide Dogs (such as travel). The [form and all expenses related documents](#) can be found on the VIP. If you need any support completing it, please ask your volunteer manager.

## **Fundraising Group (sometimes referred to as 'Branch')**

Our groups represent Guide Dogs in the local community and run activities to raise funds. We have hundreds of groups across the UK, and they are made up of several important volunteer roles, including Group Coordinator, Treasurer and Fundraisers. Groups are supported by the local [Community Fundraising Team](#).

## **Guide Dog Mobility Specialist (GDMS)**

Our Guide Dog Mobility Specialists create life-changing partnerships between our dogs and someone with sight loss and provide life-time support and advice.

## **Guide Dog Trainer (GDT)**

Our Guide Dog Trainers provide expert training for our dogs so they are ready for a partnership with someone with sight loss.



## **Guide Line**

We provide information and advice about sight loss for adults, children and their families. Guide Line is open 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday (except bank holidays) and can be reached on 0800 781 1444 or at [information@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:information@guidedogs.org.uk).

## **Habilitation Specialists**

A Habilitation Specialist supports children and young people with a vision impairment, aged from birth up to 25 years. As the largest employer of Habilitation Specialists in the UK, we work with hundreds of children and young people with vision impairment, every year - helping them build their skills and confidence to explore the world.

## **ID card**

All our volunteers are provided with a photo ID card to be worn whenever you are volunteering with Guide Dogs. The ID card assures others that they are speaking to a legitimate member of the charity.

## **Induction**

When you join our organisation our induction will give you a warm welcome, so you feel confident in any new role you undertake and have the best possible start of your volunteering journey with us.

## **Investors in Volunteers (IiV)**

We're proud to have been awarded the UK quality standard for good practice in volunteer management. We retain this accreditation, in recognition of our commitment to best practice in volunteering and the support provided by our volunteer managers.

## **Journey of a Guide Dog series**

The Journey of a Guide Dog is our popular [eleven-part documentary series on YouTube](#), which builds awareness of how we raise, care for, and train our dogs to change the lives of people living with sight loss.

## **Kallidus**

The platform where we host most of our online learning and training for volunteers. You can find out more information, including support videos and FAQs, by visiting our [Kallidus page on VIP](#).



## **Local Volunteer Awards**

One of the ways we celebrate the amazing efforts of our volunteers. They take place each year to recognise your contribution and share inspirational stories. You can ensure a volunteer is considered for a Local Volunteer Award by nominating them for a [Pat on the Back](#). Winners of the local awards are then invited to the Guide Dogs [People Awards](#) that same year.

## **Local Volunteering Attraction Coordinators**

These staff members are experts in attracting new volunteers to join our growing community. They can be found at local events or volunteer fairs talking about the amazing roles we have on offer, as well as getting the word out there on social media and in the local press.

## **Long Service Awards**

Another way we recognise our volunteers is to celebrate the milestone anniversaries of your volunteering. After you have volunteered with us for a year, [we formally recognise this milestone](#) with the offer of a pin badge and certificate, along with a letter of thanks. You will receive this award to acknowledge every five years of service.

## **Occasional Volunteer**

If you are volunteering as a one-off - or up to 4 times a year - you may be known as an 'Occasional Volunteer'. Our Occasional Volunteer roles enable flexible, lighter touch opportunities with lower commitments and easier entry requirements. Occasional volunteering is a great taster for our regular volunteering roles.

## **One Voice**

[One Voice](#) is the 'go to' booklet for information about our services, how we support people with sight loss, how we spend the money raised, and more. The booklet is updated annually or whenever there is new information about our services and support.

## **Operations**

This is the directorate within Guide Dogs which is responsible for the services we deliver. As well as our work to breed, train and place guide



dogs, it also includes [adult services](#) such as vision rehabilitation, and support for [children and young people with sight loss](#).

## **Operations Volunteering Experience Coordinator (OVEC)**

The OVEC team supports our Operations-based volunteers to get started in their new roles, celebrate their achievements and provide ways for them to connect with our wider volunteer community.

## **Pat on the Back**

Our recognition scheme for outstanding achievements of individuals who volunteer or work for Guide Dogs, contribute towards our overall purpose and demonstrate our behaviours in action. You can find more information, including how to nominate someone for a Pat on the Back, on the ['Saying thank you' page on VIP](#).

## **People Awards**

Our annual celebration and recognition of the standout efforts and expertise of volunteers, service users and staff who go above and beyond. Winners from the [Local Volunteer Awards](#) will be in the running for a national award at our People Awards.

## **Person-centred**

Being person-centred is one of our core [behaviours](#). We are a group of people who listen, and recognise that every individual is different in where they've come from and where they're going. We are open, empathetic and inclusive. We place the person at the centre of every decision.

## **Problem-solving procedure**

We hope that most issues or problems can be resolved informally, through feedback and conversation. Where we have a concern about a volunteer's behaviour that hasn't been, or is too serious to be settled informally, we use our problem-solving procedure to ensure that the issue is dealt with fairly and consistently, and that the volunteer has a voice within the process.



## **Puppy Development Advisor (PDA)**

Our Puppy Development Advisors provide expert advice and practical support to our puppy raiser volunteers so we can raise well-behaved and confident young dogs ready to start guide dog training.

## **Rehomed dogs**

Our [rehomed dogs](#) are adopted into loving homes with carefully selected members of the public. Whether these are young dogs who aren't suited for a career change or older dogs reaching retirement age, they will become a well-loved member of their new family.

## **Role description**

The document that gives an overview of a volunteer role. It summarises what tasks are involved, what prior skills/experience might be required and the expected time commitments.

## **Safeguarding**

[Safeguarding](#) is about promoting the welfare, and protecting from harm and abuse, anyone who comes into contact with our organisation. This could be a service user, volunteer, member of staff, a supporter or a member of the public.

## **Settling-in period**

Starts as soon as you begin your volunteering activity and normally lasts three months. It's intended to allow you to try out the role, and complete your induction, so you and your volunteer manager can confirm it's the right one for you.

## **Sighted Guide Training**

We encourage all volunteers (aged 18+) to sign up to our [Sighted Guide Training](#) to learn how to guide adults with sight loss safely, with confidence, skill and empathy. Sighted guiding is a useful life skill and it gives you confidence to support people who have vision impairment.

## **The Guide**

Our monthly all-volunteer e-newsletter. You can see news featured in previous editions on the [dedicated area of the VIP](#).





## **Training**

Most volunteer roles require training to ensure that you have the information, knowledge and skills to do your role safely and effectively. Once a new volunteer has completed their interview, the next stage will be for them to undertake the training for the role.

## **Trustees**

Volunteers whose role is to make sure the charity is running well and doing what it was set up to do. You can find out more about [Guide Dogs Board of Trustees](#) on our website.

## **Vision Rehabilitation Specialist (VRS)**

Our Vision Rehabilitation Specialists are highly skilled experts who support people with a broad range of skills to improve their independence. They offer help with everything from managing around the house, personal care and understanding how technology can assist with everyday tasks, to getting out and about.

## **Volunteer Agreement**

The [Volunteer Agreement](#) is a document that sets out what you can expect from Guide Dogs when you start volunteering with us and throughout your journey, as well as what we expect from our volunteers.

## **Volunteer Handbook**

The [Volunteer Handbook](#) is a document that provides key information about volunteering with Guide Dogs.

## **Volunteer Information Point (VIP)**

The [Volunteer Information Point \(VIP\)](#) is our dedicated online space for volunteers. It includes key information about volunteering with Guide Dogs, resources and the latest news.

## **Volunteer manager**

Your volunteer manager is your go-to person for any questions and support you need throughout your volunteering with Guide Dogs; if you perform more than one role, you may have more than one volunteer manager. Many of our staff support volunteers as part of their job and



your volunteer manager may not have the word 'volunteer' in their job title.

## **Volunteer View**

We will invite you to complete the [Volunteer View survey](#) every other year to tell us about your volunteering experience with us. We care about your experience and your feedback is invaluable to help us understand what works well for you and what we could do to make Guide Dogs an even better place to volunteer.

## **Volunteers' Week**

A national week dedicated to celebrating volunteers across the UK. It starts on the first Monday in June every year and it provides Guide Dogs with an opportunity to recognise the invaluable contribution of our community of volunteers.

## **Volunteering Champion pack**

A bundle of free promotional materials, which include our posters, leaflets, business cards and a guide to attracting volunteers. You can request a [Volunteering Champion Pack from VIP](#) to promote our volunteer roles locally.

## **Volunteering Office**

This friendly team is on hand to support you with any queries you have about volunteering. They also support behind the scenes to process volunteer applications, complete reference checks and provide volunteers with their free polo shirts and ID cards. Contact them by email at [volunteer@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@guidedogs.org.uk) or on 0345 143 0191.

## **Welcome to Guide Dogs**

A virtual session we will invite you to attend when you start volunteering with us. It will provide you with essential information about Guide Dogs, our work, mission and services. These events are run regularly throughout the year and will form part of your [volunteer induction](#).

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