



Together we are Guide Dogs



Why we exist, how
we help and who
we aspire to be

We are Guide Dogs

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

We work together with anyone affected by sight loss, to provide the skills and support they need. Children and adults. Friends and family.

The services we provide are life-changing.

We help people to:

Live actively

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

Live independently

The advice and skills we provide will give people the freedom to live life on their own terms, in their own way. Sharing the same hopes and ambitions as anyone else, and doing all the things that make them who they are.

Live well

Our experience and understanding can help people through the emotional challenges of sight loss as well as the practical ones, introducing them to an inspiring community of people and giving them the support they need to be their best self.



Our behaviours capture the essence of what it is to be Guide Dogs PEOPLE, whether staff or volunteer. The behaviours are both new and yet rooted in our heritage; they reflect how we are, but also how we aspire to be. They are shared, and individual.

Person-centred

Expert

Optimistic

Partner

Lead-by-example

Engage

We are:

Person-centred

We are a group of people working to help each person affected by sight loss. We 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.

Expert

We are specialists in what we do. We are committed to excellence and will never stop innovating. We respect our history, but seek out ways to adapt and improve, and are always willing to learn.

Optimistic

We are relentless in our belief that people with vision impairment can lead the life they choose. We are passionate about helping each person, committed to challenging barriers, and proud of who we are and what we achieve.

So, we:

Partner

We only change lives when we collaborate.
We build valued relationships with donors.
We work together with our service users and colleagues, volunteers and partners – and our dogs, of course – to deliver great outcomes.
We support and develop each other.

Lead-by-example

We can all be a guide. We take the lead, and then hand it over, empowering people to make progress without us. We gain trust by having faith in others, and influence by example.
We do what we say we will.

Engage

We cannot change lives if we look on from the side-lines. We get involved, take ownership, and feel responsible for all we do, think and say.
We celebrate wins big and small, and we hold ourselves and each other to account.



Person-centred



For example, we...

- listen without assumptions, to really understand what's important
- help others without expecting anything in return
- treat people in a way they wish to be treated rather than the way we wish to be
- partner with others to share information and knowledge
- communicate honestly and openly
- find roles to suit volunteers, as well as volunteers to suit roles
- respect other people's beliefs and ways of thinking
- encourage everyone to share their story
- empathise, and convey empathy
- ensure everything we do is accessible and inclusive to all
- challenge pre-conceptions and pre-conceived ideas

Expert



For example, we...

- pursue a 'can-do' attitude in all that we do
- suggest new and practical ways of doing things when appropriate
- embrace new technologies and new ways of working
- keep up to date with latest news, changes and innovation linked to our work
- adopt and promote a learning culture
- ensure we understand everything the organisation does and can do, and how things fit together
- continuously seek out the various different ways to learn new things
- freely share our knowledge
- freely ask for help
- try stuff – take some risks
- value others' work and trust in expert opinion
- inspire people through our knowledge, enthusiasm and actions

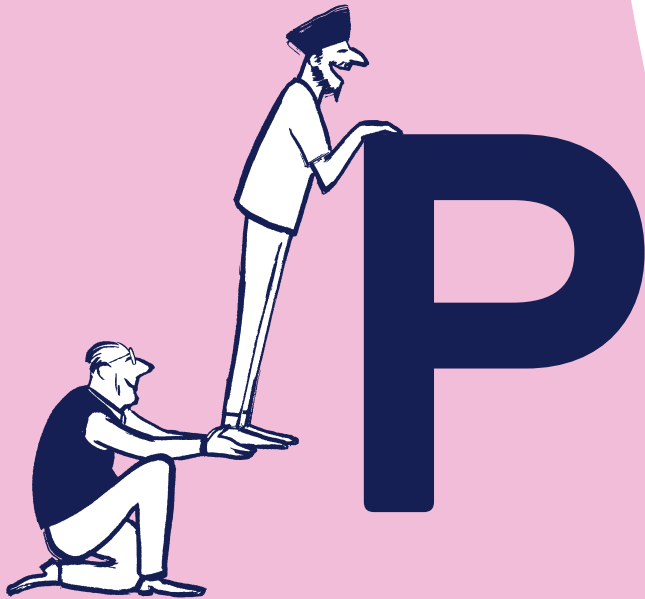
Optimistic



For example, we...

- always assume good motives, including when something is done or said that we don't agree with
- are prepared to put the extra effort in because we have a real passion to get it right for everyone at Guide Dogs
- share positive stories of how Guide Dogs has helped people with sight loss to live the life they choose
- are optimistic and positive about the future (hashtag GlassHalfFull)
- maintain a positive, can-do attitude even when facing challenges and barriers
- willingly challenge unacceptable behaviour in a constructive way
- have confidence in our own abilities and expertise
- always keep our purpose in mind... and aim high!
- try our best to be measured in our reasoning and kind in our solutions

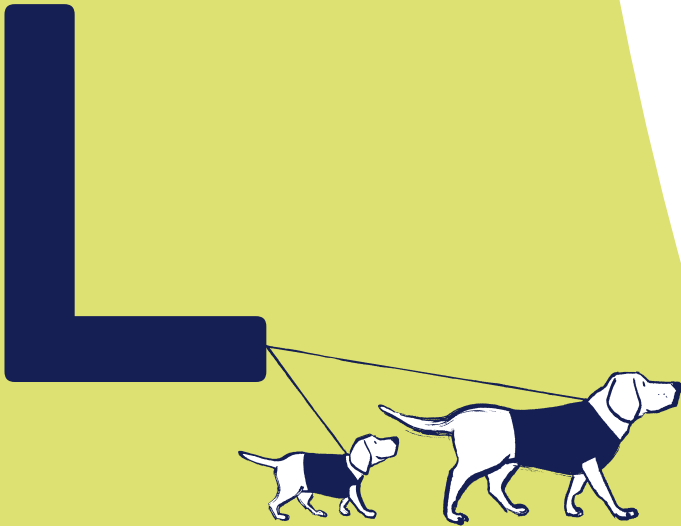
Partner



For example, we...

- involve others to deliver a better outcome, seeking their views and valuing their input
- take time to get to know each other and build good working relationships
- support agreed team decisions
- deal constructively with other viewpoints and behaviours
- value differences
- trust each other
- adopt the principle of “positive reinforcement” with each other – assume good intent and team-work, collaborate and co-create
- provide an early indication of when we will need help from someone else
- break down barriers internally and externally, and constantly look to build new connections
- share information willingly

Lead-by-example



For example, we...

- create a positive lasting impression on people we encounter
- encourage positive behaviour and enjoy engaging with others
- empathise, rather than leading with our own opinions
- are down to earth
- explore solutions and offer positive advice to others
- work to find win-win solutions with others for the good of our customers and partners
- trust those with responsibility to deliver in their area of expertise to get the work done
- share our expertise by showing and doing, rather than telling
- actively go outside our comfort zone
- approach requests for help thinking “how can I help you?”
- educate and empower people – including those who we support – to help themselves

Engage



For example, we...

- do what we say we will
- proactively take action
- use initiative to solve problems
- acknowledge when we make mistakes and take responsibility for addressing them
- have a clear view of what success looks like
- celebrate success and impact so people see it and feel good about it
- align our priorities so we are all working towards the same goal
- comply with requirements that are in place to protect people and the organisation
- trust decisions made by people whose job it is to make them, and ask if we need to understand more to have that trust
- hold ourselves accountable for the important little things
- regularly discuss our behaviours to ensure we understand them and review if and how we're demonstrating them

What's next?

Our behaviours reflect how we are, but also how we aspire to be. Here are some steps we can all take:

1. Recognise a colleague as a PEOPLE person

- Nominate a volunteer or staff member for a Pat-on-the-Back
- Nominate a volunteer for local Volunteer Awards
- Nominate a staff member or volunteer for annual People Awards

2. Ask for feedback from a colleague on which behaviours you demonstrate the best and where you could do better... and respond generously if you're asked for feedback by someone else

3. Use our focus on PEOPLE behaviours to call out unacceptable behaviour; be clear, positive and supportive

4. Have a conversation with the person who manages/supports you about which behaviours will help you excel in your role

- Staff and managers use quarterly MyContribution and/or one-to-one meetings to discuss objectives and behaviours
- Volunteers use check-in with your Volunteer Manager/Key contact

5. Get a discussion going in your team about what the behaviours mean for your team; how you work together and how you work with others outside the team – we've provided a toolkit for managers to do this with staff teams and are developing a toolkit for use with volunteer groups

You can find more resources on the Guide Dogs intranet and Volunteer Information Point.



**Together
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Guide
Dogs**

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