



# Helping people with sight loss live the life they choose

Our services for adults, children and their families

# Our services

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

Whether you, a member of your family or your child has sight loss, our expert staff, volunteers and life-changing dogs are here to help you live actively, live independently and live well.

**Getting support from Guide Dogs starts with:**

- a call to our Guide Line on **0800 781 1444**
- or a visit to our website, **[guidedogs.org.uk](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk)**

# Did you know?

- Beyond guide dogs, we provide a wide range of other services to increase independence and improve the wellbeing of adults and children with sight loss.
- We are the largest employer in the UK of Habilitation specialists dedicated to helping children and young people with sight loss learn, grow and access the same opportunities as everyone else.
- We can provide family and education support, habilitation specialists to help children and young people learn important life skills, technology and sensory equipment, tailor-made books and buddy dogs.
- In 2021 we provided more than 250,000 people with information and advice about sight loss through our website and Guide Line.
- We can match adults with a volunteer sighted guide and our orientation and mobility specialists can support adults to get out and about independently.
- You don't need to have lost all your sight or be registered as blind to be partnered with a guide dog or benefit from our services.

**More information about these services and how to access them can be found in this booklet.**

# Help for adults

We understand that living with sight loss is different for everyone, so our services reflect that. We're here to support you and the life you choose.



## Information and advice

We have a wide range of services, with and without dogs. By understanding what you want from life today and tomorrow, we can help you plan to achieve it.

And we'll support you every step of the way.

## Your journey with Guide Dogs

It all starts with a conversation. Our experts will work with you to develop a package of support that's just right.

After developing a plan together and agreeing our services are suitable, one of our specialists one of our specialists will call to agree further support.

If you are considering applying for a guide dog and need to improve your cane skills, we may be able to offer some top-up training. If you haven't had any cane training before, we can make a referral on your behalf to the local authority.

We can also help you to navigate the wealth of information and advice that Guide Dogs offers and signpost you to other helpful sources of support, both national and local.

## My Sighted Guide

Our sighted guiding service connects you with a local trained volunteer. They can help you to get out and about, and do more of the things you enjoy, whether that's walking in the park, shopping or going to a football match. If friends and family want to get involved, we can also grow their confidence through guiding training.

## Guide dogs

Our guide dogs give people with a vision impairment the confidence to get out and about safely. Whether it's helping them get to work, to a regular exercise class or to the shops and back, they provide life-changing practical support every single day.

“

Before My Sighted Guide helped me, I was too frightened to go far from the house. When my sighted guide volunteer came, I was able to get out, go for a walk in the sea air, go anywhere for a walk we wanted to go. Him and I have so many common things in life, he's completely changed my life.

”

Angus, My Sighted Guide service user

“

With Spencer by my side we go out every day. I don't have to wait for anyone else to go out with me. We go to cafés or a walk into our village and breathe in the fresh air, and it makes me feel so alive!

”

Guide Dog owner Terry with his dog Spencer

# Help for children and families

The day your child is diagnosed with a vision impairment is not an easy one. But it's also the day Guide Dogs' lifetime of support can start.

## Information and advice

We believe that vision impairment shouldn't prevent children and young people reaching their full potential. We work with parents, carers and professionals to support children and young people.



“

Our children can do whatever they want, they just need support from people like Guide Dogs.

”

Sophie, mum of two children with a vision impairment

## **Our information and advice service can help with:**

### **Family support**


Our team is here to give advice and emotional support from the moment your child is diagnosed 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.

### **Education support**

Our specialist team can offer independent and tailored advice to help your child receive the educational 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.

### **Technology grants and sensory equipment**

For children with sight loss, technology and sensory play is vital. Our expert team can provide personalised advice to help you choose the right technology or sensory equipment for your child's age and stage. We can offer grants to help buy the specialist technology or sensory equipment your child needs. We also have a range of sensory packages with toys carefully selected by our experts for different age ranges.





## My Life Skills

We're here to help your child learn and practise skills that are important to daily life, confidently and safely. Our habilitation specialists support children and young people of all ages with a vision impairment.

We can support their physical development and learning in the early years. For older children, we help with navigating streets safely, getting around at home or school, preparing food, handling money, using technology and expressing their individuality, for example by personal style. This training will give your child invaluable practical skills and improved mobility for life.

We also offer tailored support for children with additional and complex needs. These include early motor skills, sensory development and body awareness. We can also support them to understand and move around different environments.

Please note that this service is commissioned through local authorities, or parents can use a child's direct payments for this service.

Please note that this a statutory service and should be requested through local authorities or you can use your child's personal budget for this service.



“

I'm so grateful to Grant and Tracy as I'm now able to do more by myself without needing someone to guide me all the time. I didn't even know the technology apps existed before they suggested them. I'm hoping to be accepted on a professional cookery course at college later this year and I can't wait!

”

Rebecca, assistive technology and habilitation services service user



## My Time to Play

Our My Time to Play service helps children with a vision impairment aged 0–4 develop through play. It provides parents with the opportunity to network, share experiences and pick up skills and knowledge to support their child’s development. We offer a virtual programme on Zoom where you can join other families for structured, fun and supportive group sessions from the comfort of home, as well as in-person sessions where you can meet other families and get support from our habilitation specialists.

## Custom Eyes Books

No child should miss out on the joy of reading – and we can produce books in large-print, tailor-made to suit your child’s eye condition. We have a range of books available, including non-fiction and popular fiction titles. We can also provide National Curriculum revision guides for home and school.

“

The very first session involved a bell and my son loved it so much, he crawled for the first time ever to get the bell. We have fun every week and will be so sad when it ends!

”

Sarah, Mum to Alfie, aged 10 months, joined My Time to Play sessions



## Tech for All

Tech for All is a pilot service which provided children with a vision impairment aged 3-18 with a free Apple iPad or iPhone to use outside of school. Each child has been supported by a digital learning programme, to make sure they get the most out of their device. We know how important these devices are to children's development – both to support their learning at home or to explore the activities and interests they enjoy. We are registering future interest in this service with the expectation we can support more children with tech in 2022.

## Family events

Every year we host a UK-wide programme of family activity days. Here, your child and their siblings can play and take part in activities together – alongside other children with sight loss. Meanwhile, parents can share experiences, support each other and access specialist advice from our Children and Young People Services Team. We also host an early diagnosis weekend to support families at this critical time.

## Guide dogs

Our guide dogs give people with sight loss the confidence to get out and about safely. Whether helping young people get to school or college, to an exercise class or to meet their friends, they provide life-changing practical support every single day.



## Buddy dogs

Our buddy dogs bring a canine friend into the lives of children with sight loss. By helping them build confidence in themselves and trust in their surroundings, these dogs have a hugely positive effect on a child and their family's wellbeing.

# How to contact us

We are here for you  
whenever you need us



Call Guide Line on **0800 781 1444**  
which is staffed by experts who can  
provide information and advice to help  
you, your family member or child find  
the right service. Lines are open  
9am-5pm, Monday to Friday.

Visit the Guide Dogs website at  
**[guidedogs.org.uk/getting-support](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/getting-support)**



**0800 781 1444**  
**[information@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:information@guidedogs.org.uk)**  
**[guidedogs.org.uk/getting-support](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/getting-support)**