



One Voice

October 2023

Key messages for staff and volunteers

Unless explicitly stated the figures in this booklet are based on 2022 figures.



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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

- There are **2 million** people living with sight loss in the UK and this number is set to double by **2050**. (Deloitte, 2017)
- **1 in 5 people** will live with sight loss in their lifetime. (Deloitte, 2017)
- Every day **250 people** start to lose their sight in the UK. This is equivalent to one person every six minutes. (Deloitte, 2017)
- Nearly **three quarters** of people who are registered blind or partially sighted of working age are unemployed. (Slade et al, 2018, Employment and Sight Loss)

- There are **28,000** children (under 18) who are blind or partially sighted in the UK. (RNIB, 2022)
- Every day around **four children** in the UK are registered blind or partially sighted.



Facts about sight loss

- **More than half of people with sight loss say they feel anxious about the future.**

Adjusting to life with sight loss can be incredibly difficult. We're here to help people make sense of what is happening, to talk and listen, and provide practical advice and support.

- **Nearly half of people with a vision impairment can feel isolated and cut off from the people and places around them.**

Feeling isolated has a huge impact on a person's mental health and confidence. For many people our guide dogs and our services are the key to a life of independence and freedom.

- **More than half of people with significant sight loss say they've experienced negative attitudes or discrimination.**

While our specialist staff and life-changing dogs provide practical support every single day, we're also working for a more inclusive and accessible society where people with sight loss are free from barriers and judgement.

Statistics from the VI Lives Report in partnership with RNIB & TPT, 2021



- **Two thirds of parents say there isn't enough support at the point of diagnosis.**

Discovering your child has a vision impairment can be a worrying and confusing time. Our experienced and caring Family Support team is here to listen and help, whenever a family needs support or advice.

- **80% of parents feel their child's vision impairment has a negative impact on their ability to form friendships.**

Our Guide Dogs My Time to Play sessions and Family Events provide a space where children can build their confidence and make life-long friends. Our habilitation specialists also work with children and schools to put in place a wide range of support to promote friendships.

- **Nearly 4 out of 5 parents are concerned that their child's future career will be limited by their vision impairment.**

Reaching key milestones is much harder for children with a vision impairment. Every day a child goes without support can affect their development. For children and their parents, early intervention is life-changing.

Statistics from Guide Dogs CYP research, 2020



The impact of the pandemic is still with us

We know the wait to be matched with a guide dog can feel like a long one. This is partly due to the time it takes to train each dog and carefully match a partnership, and partly down to the lasting impact of the pandemic.

Given it takes around two years to raise and train a guide dog, we're still recovering from the essential pauses to our breeding and training programmes. We also lost many of our experienced puppy raisers and fosterers during the pandemic, so we're working hard to rebuild our vital volunteering community.

The good news is that in 2023 our guide dog success rates are recovering and the number of puppies we're raising and dogs we have in training are returning to pre-pandemic levels.



How we can help





Our services

Help for adults

- Information and advice
- My Life Skills
- My Sighted Guide
- Guide dogs including the Ready to Train programme

Help for children and families

- Information and advice
- My Life Skills
- Guide Dogs My Time to Play
- CustomEyes Books
- Tech for All
- Family events
- Guide dogs
- Buddy dogs

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



Help for adults

Information and advice

Our experts can help you to live actively, independently and well with sight loss.

Whether you're asking for yourself or a member of your family, call **Guide Line** on **0800 781 1444** to speak to someone from our friendly team today.

We can help you with:

- Finding the right services for you.
- Dog care and welfare if you're partnered with one of our dogs.
- Advice on guide dog access refusals.



51,000

In 2022, we answered over 51,000 calls to our Guide Line, providing expert information and advice.

Visit our website [guidedogs.org.uk](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk) for a wide range of helpful resources, including information about eye health and eye conditions, advice on technology for a vision impairment, and useful life skills such as tips for getting around, managing your home and making the most of your vision.

2.5M

We provided support through digital information and advice 2.5 million times in 2022.



My Life Skills

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

After developing a plan together and agreeing our services are right for you, one of our specialists may visit you at home. If you're 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 your local authority.



We can also help you to navigate the wealth of information and advice that Guide Dogs offers, and recommend other services and organisations that might be helpful.

My Sighted Guide

Our sighted guiding service connects you with a locally trained volunteer. They can help you to get out and about, and do more of the things you like, whether that's walking in the park, shopping or going to a football match.



698

In 2022 we supported 496 new My Sighted Guide partnerships and a total of 698 partnerships.

Guide dogs

Our guide dogs give people with sight loss 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.



A close-up, profile view of a man with short brown hair, wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt. He is looking down towards the head of a dog, which is partially visible on the left side of the frame. The background features a wall with a light-colored, geometric pattern. A large yellow circle is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text.

4,065

In 2022 we created 387 new guide dog partnerships and supported a total of 4,065 partnerships.

Ready to Train

We know it can take time to find your guide dog partner. But waiting for a guide dog doesn't have to mean waiting to get the most out of life. Our team of Vision Rehabilitation Specialists (VRS) is here to support you while you wait.

Your VRS can help you with a whole range of skills and ambitions, from getting out and about more easily, to managing around the house and understanding how technology can help with everyday tasks.

And they'll work with you to understand your needs and help you prepare for your dog. So when we find the guide dog for you, we can be absolutely sure they're right – and you're ready.





12

In 2022, 12 new Vision Rehabilitation Trainees joined our team and 8 Specialists qualified.

Help for children and families

Information and advice

Our experts can help you to live actively, independently and well with sight loss. Whether you're asking for yourself, or your child, speak to someone from our friendly team today for more information. Call Guide Line on **0800 781 1444** or visit our website **guidedogs.org.uk**

Our information and advice service can help you 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.





4,235

In 2022 we helped children with a vision impairment to learn essential life skills 4,235 times, so they can navigate the world around them confidently and safely.

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 managing their appearance as they grow older. This training will give your child invaluable practical skills and improved mobility for life.

We also offer tailored courses for children with additional and complex needs.

These include early motor skills, sensory development and body awareness. And 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 personal budget for this service.

Guide Dogs My Time to Play

Our Guide Dogs My Time to Play service helps children with a vision impairment aged 0–4 develop a broad range of skills 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 in-person and virtual programmes led by our habilitation specialists, where you can join other families for structured fun and supportive group sessions. In-person sessions are held in community venues across the UK and virtual groups allow families to attend from their own home via Zoom.

805

In 2022, we delivered our Guide Dogs My Time to Play sessions to 805 children and family members.

30



CustomEyes Books

No child should miss out on the joy of reading. We can produce custom-made books, with font size, spacing, paper colour and more all tailored to suit your child's individual needs. 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.

6,289

In 2022 we delivered 6,289 tailor-made books, enabling children with sight loss to enjoy reading just like their friends.



643

We supported families 643 times through our Family Support and Education Support services in 2022.



Tech for All

For children with a vision impairment, technology and sensory play is vital. It develops learning, creativity, life skills, confidence and independence.

We believe all children with sight loss should have access to the technology they need – both to support learning at home and to just have fun exploring the activities and interests they enjoy.

That's why we provide a wide range of devices, technologies, software and sensory toys to use at home completely free of charge. Our expert team can also provide personalised advice on the best technology to support your child's needs.

2,499

In 2022 we provided 2,499 free iPads and the supporting learning programme to children and young people with a vision impairment.

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's 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 to get to school or college, a sports club 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.

52

In 2022, we partnered 52 children with a buddy dog and supported a total of 266 partnerships.



How the public can support us





Seed



42

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 our Vision Rehabilitation Specialists, so thousands more people can lead confident, independent and fulfilling lives.
- **Playing the Lucky Lottery or Guide Dogs Raffle**, which give you the chance to win big whilst making an amazing difference to people with sight loss.
- **Raising funds to Name a Puppy**, whether for a school, business or in memory of a loved one.

- **Signing up to our Good Dog!** training and welfare subscription for dogs of all ages.
- **Shopping online at the Guide Dogs Shop** where we have a wide range of Guide Dogs merchandise and inspiring gifts.
- **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 **15,500** volunteers, who gave around **13 million hours** of their precious time in 2022.

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

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.

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.

Raising the funds that make it all possible

Meet new people by joining one of our fundraising groups, host your own fundraising event or take on a sponsored challenge. In **2022** our groups and community fundraising team raised over **£6.2 million**.

We have almost **80** 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 the relevant information about their role, their team and news from the wider charity including any urgent updates.

guidedogs.org.uk/vip

Sign up here to help promote volunteering in your community.

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 **17,500** campaign supporters across the UK. 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/campaigns



51,855

In 2022 our campaigners took 51,855 actions on a range of issues, including signing petitions around access rights for guide dog owners and emailing MPs.

Learn how to guide a person with sight loss

We provide free training to people who are interested in learning how to guide an adult with sight loss – teaching them how to guide with confidence, skill and empathy.

Much like learning how to perform first aid, sighted guiding is a useful life skill. It gives people the confidence to know how to act when they meet someone who is blind or partially sighted, and the guiding techniques to help them if they need it.



We deliver four training programmes:

- Introduction to Sighted Guide Training - live, online training with one of our experts, for anyone wanting to learn how to guide someone with sight loss.
- Friends and Family Sighted Guide Training - a live, online session, specifically for those who want to help a friend or family member with a vision impairment.
- Top 10 Tips for Sighted Guiding - a short, on demand video for people who want to learn the basics quickly.
- Community and Corporate Sighted Guide Training - tailored, in-person sighted guide training for workplaces, community groups, universities and charities that provide services to the public.

To help us make the world a more inclusive place by learning this simple skill visit:

guidedogs.org.uk/SightedGuiding

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 **2022** we provided support **18,406** times for children with a vision impairment and their families.
- 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*.

* These figures are from 2019. We're working hard to bring costs back down to this figure. The current cost is higher because of the significant disruption caused by Covid and the investment needed to recover our guide dog service.



57p

Providing guide dogs and other adult services

9.3p

Campaigning and raising awareness

7.8p

Providing children and young people's services

0.5p

Research and development

25.4p

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.
- We are world leaders in puppy socialisation, breeding and training more dogs than any other organisation in the world.
- We're the world's largest assistance dog organisation and in **2022** we were responsible for over **7,300** dogs across the UK.

- In **2022, 1,222** pups started their journey to become guide dogs.
- We generally have two main breeds, Labradors 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

£6

could support a working guide dog partnership for a day.

£16

could buy a 'puppy in training' jacket for one of our pups.

£43

could pay for a one-to-one online session with a Family Support Specialist, providing vital emotional and signposting support.

£138

could buy a starter kit for a guide dog partnership, providing everything they need to start their new life together.



£26

could pay for a child to attend a Guide Dogs My Time to Play session, where they can learn important skills through play.

£27

could pay for an hour of specialist training for a guide dog.

£296

could buy a Fine Motor Skills sensory bundle, providing a package of toys carefully selected by our experts.

£1,240

could buy a young person a laptop kit, complete with assistive technology such as Supernova magnifier and speech.



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)

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