

Sighted Guiding

Sighted guiding is not specific to Guide Dogs; it is a way of escorting a person who has vision impairment in an efficient way, giving this person the feeling of moving in a safe and secure manner.

We encourage all volunteers to gain sighted guide skills to help you in your volunteer role with Guide Dogs and in your everyday life. While My Sighted Guide and People Driver volunteers already receive comprehensive sighted guide training as part of their role, we encourage all volunteers, regardless of their role, to sign up to our 'Introduction to Sighted Guide' training. We run virtual sessions open to anyone aged 18 and over, which will help you to confidently guide an adult with sight loss. You can sign up on our website: <http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/sightedguidingintro> or speak with your volunteer manager for more information.

'A very useful and informative course, delivered in a concise, friendly manner. Wish I'd done this course before I started volunteering'.
Introduction to Sighted Guide Participant - 2023

Sighted Guide Techniques

Approaching someone, and setting off

Introduce yourself and offer help. If your offer is accepted, ask the person where they want to go, and if they would like to take your arm. Stand by their side and let them hold your arm just above the elbow. Start walking, and they will follow about half a step behind.



In a narrow space or busy area

Walk in single file. Straighten your guiding arm and move it to the middle of your back, and the person you're guiding will step in behind you. Walk more slowly.

Taking a seat

Describe what sort of chair it is, if it has arms, and whether there's a table in front. Place your guiding hand on the back of the chair and allow the person you're guiding to slide their hand down to locate the back. They can then sit down.

With a row of seats, sidestep along together until the person is in front of their seat with the backs of their knees touching it. They will then sit.

Going up or down stairs and steps

Say whether the steps go up or down. The person's free hand should be on the side with the handrail.

Going up, pause to allow them to locate the bottom step, then proceed they will be one step below you.

Going down, make sure the person you're guiding has located the handrail and the edge of the top step. Stop and let them find the first step down with their foot before moving off. Walk one step ahead and say when you reach the bottom.

When you reach the top or bottom step, say so.



Crossing a road

Say whether the kerb is a step up or step down and pause before stepping so the person you're guiding can get ready. Once you have safely crossed, if you are parting from the person, describe to them where they are.

Getting through doorways

Say whether the door opens towards or away from you, and to the right or left. Open the door with your guiding arm - as you walk through, the person you're guiding should hold it open, before following you through.

General tips

- Ask the individual how they like to be guided. Let them take your arm, and they will follow a little behind.
- Warn anyone you are guiding of obstacles or hazards.
- Leave enough room around obstacles and watch for those at head height as well as ground level.
- Describe surroundings - including changes in ground surface.
- Remember to say "left" or "straight ahead", not "over there".
- Don't overload the person you're guiding with information.
- Never push or pull the person you're guiding.
- When leaving the person, ensure they know where they are, they're in a safe place and that you are leaving them.
- A guide dog owner will indicate the need for assistance by letting the harness-handle lie on the dog's back.
- If they have a guide dog, approach from the other side. The guide dog owner gives the dog instructions, not you.
- Never distract a guide dog, as this might put its owner in danger. And never take the lead or harness or tell the dog what to do.

If you want to know more... you can watch our instructional sighted guide videos here: [Instructional Sighted Guide Videos](#)



“Really enjoyed learning more. As a Puppy Raiser and Fosterer it's useful to have as much information as possible about the whole picture.”

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