



# Candidate Pack

## The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association



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## Introduction

Thank you for your interest in working for Guide Dogs! It is an exciting time with our refreshed 2023 Strategy, *By My Side*, to be joining the charity as it is doing more now than ever before to help people who are blind or partially sighted to live their lives to the full.

Guide Dogs is one of the UK's best known and best loved charities. It is listed in the top 20 of the Charity Brand Index recognising our positive reputation and trustworthiness. Since our first guide dog partnerships were formed in 1931, we have transformed the lives of so many people with sight loss, helping them to get out of their homes and to live independent lives.

More than 90 years later, our work is even more relevant. Every hour, someone in the UK starts to lose their sight. Today, there are almost two million people in the UK living with sight loss and by 2050, this figure could have doubled. We know we can do more to reach more children and adults for them to walk with us as we embark on our new strategy.

We hope that this information pack will give you everything you need to know about us and about the role!

Best wishes,

The People Service Centre team

## **Overview of Guide Dogs**

Guide Dogs is a National Charity that supports blind and visually impaired adults, children and young people, allowing them to live the life they choose.

We have offices across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland which are made up of our Regional Centres, Community Centres, our National Breeding Centre in Leamington Spa and our Central Office in Reading.

The organisation is made up of 5 different directorates, these include:

### **Operations**

Canine Assisted Services consists of multiple departments focussed on our guide dog service. This includes; Dog Wellbeing, Puppy Development, puppy & dog training, Buddy & Companion Dog services, Breeding and the guide dog service itself.

Skills, Information & Support Services consists of multiple departments focussed on our support and services that enable Children, Young People and Adults to live the life they choose through a variety of services to meet their needs. Such as; the Guide Line, Family & Education Support (through our CYP services), CustomEyes Books, Access Technology and Grants, My Life Skills (Habilitation) and our My Sighted Guide service.

### **Fundraising**

The Fundraising directorate comprises eight departments. These are; Commercial, Community Fundraising, Events, Individual Giving, Philanthropy & Partnerships, Supporter Care, Gift Aid and the Fundraising Data team.

### **Marketing, Digital and Influencing**

The Marketing, Digital and Influencing directorate comprises five departments. These are; Strategy, Brand, Communications, Digital, Research and Policy, Public Affairs & Campaigns.

### **People & Performance**

The People & Performance directorate comprises six departments. These are; Human Resources, Recruitment, Volunteering, Safeguarding, Project Academy, Learning & Development and Legal.

### **Business and Finance Services**

The Business and Finance Services directorate comprises five departments. These are; Finance, Procurement Services, Insurance, Information Services, Property Services.

## Working for Guide Dogs

We believe that wellbeing at work is about creating an environment to promote a state of contentment which allows all employees to flourish and achieve their full potential for the benefit of themselves and for Guide Dogs. As a member of staff, we offer you a wide range of benefits to suit your individual needs:

- 26 days holiday plus Bank holidays (rising to 28 days after 3 years' service).
- Defined Contribution Personal Pension Plan - New employees, who meet the eligibility criteria, will be automatically enrolled into the DC Plan upon their third month of employment. The pension contribution level for automatic enrolment is 3% employee and 5% employer. However, once you are a member you may wish to increase your level of pension contribution and Guide Dogs will match your contribution plus 2%, up to a maximum of 9%.
- A choice of Flexible Benefits - An amount equivalent to 3% of salary is given to employees to purchase benefits through an on-line portal. There are a range of options to suit personal circumstances and preferences. These include: Gym Membership, Travel Insurance, Healthcare and Hospital Treatment Plan, Dental Insurance, Additional Life Assurance, Health Screening, buying and selling annual leave (up to 3 days), Cashback to salary (up to 2% of salary equivalent).
- Discounts and Cashback Scheme - Access to discounts on goods and retail vouchers and cashback on purchases for supermarkets, clothing, electrical goods, travel, eating out, insurance and much more.
- Employee Assistance Programme - A free-phone confidential helpline to provide unlimited access to advice, information and face to face counselling support, where appropriate.
- Occupational Sick pay - Enhanced above the statutory minimum, after probation.
- Occupational Maternity, Paternity and Adoption pay - Enhanced above the statutory minimum.
- Life Assurance - A core benefit of 4 times salary.
- Childcare Vouchers - Enabling National Insurance savings to be made on child care costs.
- Eye Care Vouchers - Free eyes tests and, if needed specifically for VDU work, a contribution towards glasses.
- Dogalogue 10% Discount - All employees are entitled to a 10 percent discount on orders from the Guide Dogs charity catalogue

# The Recruitment Process

## Application

Due to the nature of the work Guide Dogs does, the individuals we support can be children, young people or vulnerable adults. In order to ensure we protect them to the best of our ability; we follow Safer Recruitment practices. This is the same recruitment practice used by schools.

A requirement of this practice is that we must have fully completed application forms for all candidates wishing to be considered for a role. The application form is made up of the online form (accessed via our job board), a full CV and supporting cover letter.

The application form must be fully completed, including providing details of sufficient professional referees to cover the past 5 years. If there is not enough sections on the form to cover the 5 years, continue on a separate Word document and upload this as a supporting document alongside your application.

The attached CV needs to provide clear details of your full work history in date order, ensuring all gaps are accounted for as well.

The cover letter is your opportunity to address the criteria for the role, as laid out in the job description. This is your personal statement to demonstrate how your skills and experience meet the requirements for the role. To provide the best evidence against the criterion, ensure you use specific examples to illustrate the specific skill or experience you are referring to. A good technique for this is using the STAR method;

**S** - what was the situation?

**T** - What was the task you had to do?

**A** - what action did you take?

**R** - what was the result?

Remember that we are interested in what you did, more than anything other people did. So, make sure that you say 'I', and not 'we'.

## Shortlisting & Assessment

Applications will be reviewed by the recruiting manager as they come in. This will initially be a longlist against the essential criteria for the role. The applications that make it through the longlist, will then be reviewed in more detail against all the criteria (essential & desirable). The highest scoring applications will then be shortlisted for an invitation to interview.

Guide Dogs are a **Disability Confident Employer**. This means that any applicant who has declared a disability on their application form and demonstrate that they meet the essential criteria for the role within their application, will be offered an invitation to interview. This will be irrelevant of how they rank in the shortlisting against other candidates.

Once shortlisting is complete, all applicants will receive communication from Guide

Dogs, usually by email, to advise of the outcome of their application.

All roles will involve a face-to-face interview, in person or virtually; however, some may also involve other assessment stages as well. The assessment process followed varies role by role. The job advert may contain details of the planned assessment process, or you will be given more details if shortlisted.

All assessment exercises or interviews used are tailored to be able to find the most suitable candidate for the job role. They are also designed to give applicants more insight into the role and to provide a realistic expectation of the position to allow candidates to decide if the position it is suitable for them as well.

Dependant on the reasons behind the assessment process design, shortlisted candidates may complete all exercises before being informed of an outcome, or they may be reviewed after each stage and only some individuals progress to the next exercise.

As with the long and shortlisting exercise, all applicants will receive communication from Guide Dogs, usually by email, to advise of the outcome of their assessment.

## **Job Offer**

Once all assessments have been completed, results for all applicants in consideration will be reviewed by the recruitment panel and a decision will be made about the most suitable person for the role.

If successful, the recruiting manager will be in contact to congratulate you and discuss the offer details. Once accepted, pre-employment checks will be carried out, including a full 5-year professional reference history and a disclosure check if applicable for the role.

## **Onboarding**

The successful candidate will be provided with an official offer letter, and their terms of employment for review, signing and return. This will be subject to all pre-employment checks being completed, returned and deemed satisfactory.

Once a signed contract has been returned, the successful candidate will be advised further of their onboarding process and start date if this was not included in the contract.

## **Feedback**

All candidates are welcome to request feedback on their application or interview/assessment. To do so, please use the contact details below, specifying the role to which the request relates.

If there is a large volume of candidates, feedback on application may take us a while to provide, especially if the recruitment process is ongoing.

For candidates that have declared a disability, please advise in what format would be

most helpful to receive it in.

## **Reasonable adjustments**

At any stage in the recruitment process, if you require any reasonable adjustments to complete required stages, please contact the recruiting manager or the People Service Centre on the details below. How we can support you can then be discussed in more detail to identify the most reasonable adjustments that can be implemented.

## **Contact Details**

### **People Service Centre**

Phone - 01189838837 ext.3 for the Resourcing Team, or ext. 1 for general enquiries.

Email - [peopleservicecentre@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:peopleservicecentre@guidedogs.org.uk).

To enable us to help you as efficiently as possible, please include the vacancy ID number, job title & location in your communication as well as your full name, as used in your application.

**End of document.**