



# Candidate Pack

## Academy Guide Dog Mobility Specialist



## What you'll find in this pack

Who we are and what we do	3
Our roles and people	4
Guide Dogs Academy	6
What we can offer you	7
How to apply	8
Shortlisting and assessments	9
Onboarding	10

## Who we are and what we do

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.

We are a national charity with Regional Centres and Community Centres across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Our Guide Dogs National Centre is in Leamington Spa and our Hub in Reading is where most support teams are based.

Thank you for your interest in working for Guide Dogs! It's an exciting time to be joining us. Our strategy, By My Side, is doing more than ever before to help people with sight loss live actively, independently and well.

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. Every six minutes in the UK approximately one more person loses their sight. Our work is even more relevant than ever, and we want to do more.

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

Good luck!

People Service Centre team

### Any questions?

We've added FAQs and tips on how to give the best interview you can to our website.

Once you've worked through this pack, you can check out our careers pages at

[www.guidedogs.org.uk/faqs/careers](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/faqs/careers)



Priya from south-west London has dealt with constant sight loss challenges throughout her life. She applied for a guide dog after becoming a mum for the first time.

**“Having a guide dog is a life-changing experience and I’m phenomenally grateful to Guide Dogs for enabling me to be more independent.” - Priya, Guide dog owner**

## Our roles and people

We have a diverse range of roles across the organisation who all make a vital contribution. From reception coordinators to guide dog trainers, fundraisers to habilitation specialists.

We’re committed to being an organisation that celebrates the diversity of our staff, volunteers and service users. We want to foster an inclusive environment for everyone. Our aim is to be an inclusive employer. We’re only at the beginning of our journey and are transparent about the fact that we have a lot of work to do, but we’re making exciting steps forward.

### Operations

Many of the roles we are best known for sit within our Operations teams. We have a range of roles that support our important dog services, such as guide dog trainers, guide dog mobility specialists and expert dog care teams. We also have roles supporting our other life-changing services such as habilitation specialists who work with children with a vision impairment, orientation and mobility specialists who support adults, and roles within our My Sighted Guide service.

### Fundraising

Our work is only possible thanks to the incredible work of our fundraising team and the generosity of our supporters. Our fundraising teams work tirelessly to create exciting and interesting campaigns that raise vital income so we can continue to develop and deliver our much-needed services.

### Marketing

Our marketing team is the voice of Guide Dogs - responsible for increasing awareness of our life-changing work, engaging wider audiences, and inspiring people to take action.

## Business and Finance

Our important support functions in Procurement, Information Systems and Finance work across the organisation to make sure we spend our income wisely, invest in the right technology, follow robust processes and choose the right partners.

## People and Performance

Our People and Performance team works with our staff and volunteers to attract, retain and develop the best talent to run and support our vital services.

## Guide Dogs Academy

We are passionate about developing our skills and knowledge of our staff as we know some of our roles are pretty unique to us. So we have our very own Guide Dogs Academy! Our Academy provides training and development opportunities for people who want to become guide dog trainers and guide dog mobility specialists. We have dedicated specialist coaching staff ready to support our learners and provide a learning experience tailored to individual skills and needs.

### The Academy learning journey

When a learner joins the Guide Dogs Academy they will receive a learning plan that builds on their current skills and experience. Learning will be delivered through a range of hands-on practical learning, digital content, workshops, observations, peer, group and self-directed learning.

Within the Academy, learners will be able to apply theory and connect processes to hands on practical learning activities. Our learning and coaching is designed to develop the skills and knowledge you need to be the best you can be in your role.

A learning plan will help individuals to:

- Understand and experience the context of the new role and how it fits with creating new guide dog partnerships.
- Get to grips with the fundamentals of how a guide dog can support someone with sight loss and our unique development programme. Practicing the key skills needed to create life-changing partnerships.
- Bring skills and learning to life during the training and develop guide dogs and create real, life changing partnerships.
- Depending on the role, learners will match and deliver guide dog mobility training for people with sight loss, as well as provide ongoing support and assessment.
- When learners have met their key competencies, they will transition to their home team, where they will continue their development and gather experience in the field.

During the learning programme, of around 2 years, there will be blocks of planned activity and the opportunity to take annual leave; there will be some fixed and flexible days.

## What we can offer you

We're proud to be experts in supporting people with sight loss, but we know we must always keep developing and learning.

We offer a positive learning culture and provide opportunities where you can continue to grow and learn in your role at Guide Dogs. We encourage you to actively engage in learning to develop and maintain your knowledge, skills and professional expertise.

Everyone who joins our team is invited to our Newcomers Welcome Programme which will guide you through the first six months in your new role.

We wouldn't be able to change lives without our employees. That's why it's important for us to create a working environment that looks after our wellbeing so we can all achieve our full potential for the benefit of ourselves as well as Guide Dogs.

We offer a wide range of benefits for our staff, some of which can be tailored to suit your individual needs.

Benefits include:

- A 35-hour working week.
- 26 days holiday plus bank holidays rising to 28 days after three years employment.
- Defined contribution group personal pension plan. Guide Dogs matches your contributions plus 2% up to a maximum of a 9% employer contribution.
- Life assurance benefit of four times your annual salary.
- Flexible benefits scheme. We give you an amount equivalent to 3% of your salary to purchase benefits from a suite of well-being products, such as health care services, gym memberships, insurances or the ability to buy and sell holiday
- Discounts and cash-back scheme where you have access to discounts on goods and retail vouchers and cashback on purchases from 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 when you need it.
- Occupational sick pay. We offer a generous sick pay policy because we understand that we all get poorly sometimes.
- Family friendly policies. Family is important to us, so we offer enhanced maternity, paternity and adoption pay.
- Eye care vouchers. We provide free eye tests and a contribution towards the cost of your glasses if you need these specifically for working at a computer screen.
- Hearing tests. We provide hearing tests for everyone who works in our kennels.
- Wellbeing and support - We run regular wellbeing events as well as running support groups for individuals, that focus on different topics such as BAME group, women's groups, men's groups.
- 10% discount at our Guide Dogs shop where you can purchase gifts, homeware, clothing or even something for your furry friend.

## How to apply

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.

Our recruitment processes are also designed to minimise the impact of unconscious bias and ensure a fair and consistent process across all applicants.

To give you an idea of what to expect during our recruitment process, here are the key stages you will work through:

### Advertising our roles

All our adverts have job descriptions and a candidate pack attached. These clearly outline the requirements for the role, including any relevant disclosure checks and additional information relating to that role.

### Completing the application form

The application process is made up of 3 parts; a CV, an online form & a cover letter. All accessed once you select 'apply for the vacancy' on our job board.

You will first be asked to upload a CV. This should be tailored for this role and needs to provide clear details of your full work history in date order, ensuring all gaps are accounted for as well. The date format needs to be at least month & year, but if you can provide day as well that is even better.

The online form must be fully completed. This will include highlighting your most relevant piece of work history and providing the details of sufficient professional referees. As part of our safer recruitment practice, we require at least 2 referee details and that they are professional and cover the past 5 years. If there are 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 the online form.

The cover letter is your opportunity to tell us why you are interested in working for Guide Dogs as a whole, as well this in this particular position. You should also address the criteria for the role, as laid out in the job description. Use specific examples to demonstrate how your skills and experience meet the requirements for the role. To provide the best evidence against the criterion, ensure the examples you use clearly 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 & Assessments

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

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

Our interviews may feel a bit different to others you might have experienced. As well as looking for the skills and competencies needed for the role, we are also checking how your behaviours align to our Guide Dogs behaviours, and what your motivations are for joining us.

If you're shortlisted and invited to meet with us, you will be asked to complete a criminal declaration form. This is reviewed before your interview and if anything is disclosed we will check it with the Safeguarding Team and, if required, discuss it with you. For further information on criminal record self-declaration for roles that are not eligible for basic, standard or enhanced disclosure checks under the DBS, Disclosure Scotland or Access NI please refer to [Nacro](#) (DBS guidance), [Disclosure Scotland](#), [Access NI](#) and the Ministry of Justice [website](#).

All applicants will receive communication from Guide Dogs, usually by email, to advise of the outcome of their application and/or at each stage of the assessment process.

We know that job interviews and assessments can be a bit daunting for some people so we'll do all that we can to make you feel at ease and know what's expected during each step of the process. At Guide Dogs we want to make sure you can be at your very best and showcase your talents whether it's at an interview or assessment centre.

The assessment exercises used are tailored to be able to find the most suitable candidate for the job role and are in line with the job description. They are also designed to give applicants more insight into the role requirements to ensure they have realistic expectations of the position and that it is suitable for them as well.

## 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 applicants for the roles. If successful, the recruiting manager will contact you 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. There is also a requirement to complete an occupational health questionnaire.

## Onboarding

Successful candidates will be provided with an offer letter, and their terms of employment for review, signing and return. This is a conditional offer and is subject to all pre-employment checks being completed, returned, and deemed satisfactory.

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

## Feedback

You can ask us for feedback about your application and assessment. Please call or email using the contact details below.

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 may require reasonable adjustments, please contact the recruiting manager, or the People Service Centre on the details below, and this can be discussed in more detail to identify the most suitable way to support you.

## Contact Details

For any questions or support please contact our Recruitment Team via [peopleservicecentre@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:peopleservicecentre@guidedogs.org.uk) or 0118 983 8837.

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.

## Good luck!

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