



# Candidate Pack

## Access Assistant



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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 gain freedom and independence.

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 80 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 the role

Access Assistants, also known as Support Workers in some Organisations, support members of staff with disabilities to be able to fulfil their roles. Due to the nature of our Organisation, most Access Assistants are recruited to support members of staff with visual impairments. The important thing about the Access Assistant role is that it is to support the member of staff to be able to fulfil their role, it is not to do the role for the member of staff.

A close and trusting working relationship is extremely important between an Access Assistant and the employee they are supporting, as well as a person-centred approach, communication skills, flexibility and understanding. A clear understanding and respect for the boundaries of the role is critical in allowing this close working relationship to be successful; supporting the individual to fulfil their role themselves without doing it for them.

Please refer to the job description, attached to the job advert for details of the Access Assistant role in general, as well as the person specification criteria required for the position. This is the detail to address within an application for this role as this is what will be reviewed as part of the shortlisting exercise.

This specific Access Assistant position is to support a member of staff that is a Habilitation Specialist within the Children and Young People's team. Specific tasks for the role will include;

### Regular Duties will include:

- Driving the staff member to and from face-to-face client visits, meetings, and events, and assisting with loading/unloading equipment. (This can be across a large geographical area and may include Nottingham, Lincolnshire and Derbyshire)
- Attending virtual and in-person meetings to take notes and read shared content aloud as required.
- Supporting during client sessions by taking notes, completing forms, and assisting with accessibility needs.
- Attending multi professional meetings to record key discussion points and action items.
- Assisting with making physical and digital materials accessible (e.g. adjusting font sizes, colours, and layouts).
- Inputting statistics, expense details, and other admin into relevant systems as dictated by the staff member.

### Ad Hoc duties may include the following, including quarterly overnight stays:

- Attending CPD training days and conferences, providing travel support, notetaking, and reading from presentation slides.
- Supporting during family or community events by transporting equipment, taking notes, and providing practical assistance.

## Skills and Attributes Required

The ideal candidate for the Access Assistant role will be confident when driving to new and unfamiliar locations and will possess strong written skills, including the ability to take accurate notes and keep clear records. They should be comfortable using basic IT tools such as email, word processing, and data entry programs. The role requires someone who can follow verbal instructions and work independently once tasks have been explained. Reliability and good time management are important, as is the physical ability to lift and carry items when needed.

Previous experience working with individuals who have physical or sensory processing access needs would be beneficial, as would familiarity with accessibility software or adapting digital and printed content. Experience supporting professional or training events may also be useful.

The successful candidate will approach their work with a calm, friendly, and respectful manner, maintaining a high level of discretion and confidentiality. They should be adaptable, open to varied tasks, and comfortable working one-to-one or in unfamiliar environments. A commitment to inclusion and accessibility, and working in a values-led way, is central to this role.

## Benefits we offer our employees

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

## **Standard 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 only accept completed application forms for candidates wishing to be considered for a role. The application form can be completed online via our job board. We do request that a current CV is also attached to support an application providing details of a full work history to ensure all gaps are accounted for.

Application forms should be used to clearly highlight how your skills and experience meet the requirements for the role. These are laid out within the person specification of the role description within this document. When addressing each criteria, ensure you use specific examples to evidence the specific skill or experience you are referring to.

### **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) to identify the highest scoring applications that will be shortlisted for invitation to interview.

Guide Dogs are a Disability Confident Employer. This means that any applicant that has declared a disability, and meets the essential criteria, will be offered an invite to interview. This will be irrelevant of how they rank in the shortlisting.

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 be proceeded by a telephone interview. Some roles will involve other assessment exercises as well. The assessment process followed varies role by role. The assessment exercises 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 requirements to ensure they have realistic expectations of the position and that 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.

To support career development, candidates that have declared a disability, or are internal, will be contacted by the recruiting manager to offer the provision of feedback. Please advise if you would like this, and in what format would be most helpful.

## **Reasonable adjustments**

At any stage in the recruitment process, if you any 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**

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.**