

Job Profile

Job Title: Technical Learning Specialist (Guide Dog Mobility Specialist)

Directorate: People & Performance

Reports To: Regional Academy Manager

Matrix Reporting To: None

Disclosure Check Level: Enhanced - Children and Adults

Date created/last reviewed: 09/05/2022

Overall Role Purpose

The Technical Learning Specialist (GDMS) is a leading technical expert who helps people with sight loss to live the life they choose by coaching, mentoring, empowering and developing Academy learners through their learning programme to become a competent Guide Dog Trainer (GDT) or Guide Dog Mobility Specialist (GDMS). Through training these individuals to excel in their roles, this position enables learners to embark on careers within our technical canine workforce including training our guide dogs (GDTs) and partnering people with a visual impairment into a life changing partnership (GDMS).

"We are setting the scene for the association - creating a workforce that really know their job, that are becoming the new front line in terms of standardised training. It is really inspiring. I get a sense of a 'proud Dad moment' – being part of that and helping that initial start to their career."

David, Technical Learning Specialist

Key Responsibilities

- Support the development of up to 4 learners to the required standards, including:
 - Coach and mentor learners to build confidence, resilience, and skills.
 - Carry out relevant competency assessment of learners, and feedback to them on their progress.
 - Design and implement person-centred learner plans.
 - Understand and implement adults learning practices and adapt to meet individual preferences.

- Be available to learners on-site during working hours to encourage, support learning, and observe practice.
- Role model and engage in reflective practitioner competencies and apply current theories to practical application.
- Model appropriate dog training and handling techniques, enabling learners and other technical staff to observe best practice.
- Engage in all learning activities to ensure continuous personal development of self to keep their knowledge in the field relevant and at the forefront.
- In partnership with the core Academy team lead on the effective recruitment of new learners into the Academy
- Participate in events and activities and to maintain your relationships with key stakeholders and business partners across learning and operations.
- Work collaboratively with Guide Dogs staff, volunteers and service users utilising these resources to provide a full, engaging, and balanced educational journey for your learners.
- Provide effective and supportive leadership and line management to your direct reports, complying with all relevant Human Resource policies and Academy learning processes.
- Provide ongoing support to learners who are transitioning to their home team and to qualification as and when required
- Engage and contribute to team meetings and training.
- Complete relevant administration as a line manager and coach.
- At times between learner development, support the business in providing services or CPD to other technical members of staff as required.

Breadth/Scope of Accountability

People Accountability

Number of Direct Reports: Up to 4

Number of Indirect Reports: None

Number of Volunteers Supervised: Indirectly, up to 12.

Financial Accountability

Annual Income Accountability: None

Assets Managed: None

Budget Accountability: None

Application of this Job Profile

All employees are required to carry out other such duties as may reasonably be required to fulfil their role and support functional and organisational objectives.

All employees must also:

- Comply with all organisational policies
- Promote the vision and values of the organisation
- Engage in continuous personal development

This job profile is accurate as at the date shown above. It does not form part of contractual terms and may be varied to reflect or anticipate changes to the role.

Working at Guide Dogs

As well as other services to enhance the lives of people who are blind and partially sighted, we breed and train guide dogs and companion dogs. Staff and volunteers in all our locations support this work. Therefore, all employees must be comfortable working in environments where dogs may be present.

Guide Dogs is a volunteer-involving organisation and as such all staff are required to support volunteers in their roles. This may or may not mean the direct supervision of volunteers but will require all staff to play a supporting role. From time to time you may be asked to support / volunteer your time at Guide Dogs events that take place outside of normal working hours. All employees will be expected to advocate for Guide Dogs at all times and be a fundraiser.

Guide Dogs is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom we work. We expect all of our employees and volunteers to demonstrate this commitment.

Guide Dogs will require proof of identity and the right to work in the UK.

Person Specification

Education/Qualifications

Essential

- GDMS qualified (including active practice within the last 5 years).
- Able to demonstrate ability to meet the physical demands of the role including walking long distances daily (in excess of 8-10 miles) in all weather conditions, and the potential to handle a range of dog sizes and temperaments.
- Current valid UK/EU Driving licence, or able to demonstrate how to complete the role without.

Desirable

- Adult coaching, mentoring, or teaching qualification.

Job-Related Experience

Essential

- Proven success in mentoring & coaching people in technical skills and theoretical knowledge.
- Confident in Guide Dogs training behaviour & welfare modules (STEP)
- Experienced in peer to peer sharing and knowledge development.
- Experience and confidence using Microsoft Office and using databases.

Desirable

- Experience of supporting elements of organisational change or continuous improvement.
- People management experience (staff or volunteers).

Knowledge

Essential

- Advanced understanding of adult learning methods and how to apply these.
- Minimum requirement for completion of Core Skills and Module 1, or relevant equivalent learning in the topic area.
- Working towards full completion of available Guide Dog training behaviour & welfare modules (e.g. STEP Modules 2-5).
- Knowledge of a range of resources and support available to visually impaired people.

Desirable

- Understanding of legislation and safeguarding practices relating to adults, children, young people and to disability.
- Signed off as STEP competent.

Skills and Competencies

Essential

- Ability to adapt verbal and written communication skills for different audiences and situations.
- The ability to demonstrate emotional intelligence, tact and empathy (including during difficult or challenging conversations).
- Passionate and pro-active about positive reinforcement training and animal welfare.
- Proven ability in reflective thinking, continuous improvement, , and problem solving.

Desirable

- Understanding of legislation relating to adults, children, young people and to disability.
- Effective presentation skills.
- The ability to apply competency frameworks - technical skills & behaviours.

Behaviours

Our behaviours capture the essence of what it is to be Guide Dogs people, whether staff or volunteer. They describe the experience we expect everyone - the people we support, donors, partners, our volunteers and staff - to have while working with us. Guide Dogs people are:

- **Person-centred** - We are a group of people working to help each person affected by sight loss. We listen, and recognise that every individual is different in where they've come from and where they're going. We are open, empathetic and inclusive. We place the person at the centre of every decision.
- **Expert** - We are specialists in what we do. We are committed to excellence and will never stop innovating. We respect our history, but seek out ways to adapt and improve, and are always willing to learn.
- **Optimistic** - We are relentless in our belief that people with vision impairment can lead the life they choose. We are passionate about helping each person, committed to challenging barriers, and proud of who we are and what we achieve.

So, we: -

- **Partner** - We only change lives when we collaborate. We build valued relationships with donors. We work together with our service users and colleagues, volunteers and partners - and our dogs, of course - to deliver great outcomes. We support and develop each other.
- **Lead-by-example** - We can all be a guide. We take the lead and then hand it over, empowering people to make progress independently. We gain trust by having faith in others, and influence by example. We do what we say we will.
- **Engage** - We cannot change lives if we look on from the side-lines. We get involved, take ownership, and feel responsible for all we do, think and say. We celebrate wins big and small, and we hold ourselves and each other to account.

We use competency-based questioning within our recruitment processes to assess the extent to which candidates demonstrate these behaviours - in ways appropriate to this role - in how they are at work and generally as people.

Safeguarding

If the role does or may involve working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, or supervising those that do, we'll also be assessing 'safeguarding competencies' as part of the process. These are:

- Appropriate motivation to work with vulnerable groups;
- Emotional awareness;
- Working within professional boundaries and self-awareness; and
- Ability to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults and protect from harm.

Mobility

A flexible approach with a willingness to work outside of core hours and away from home when required. Due to the nature of the learning pathway, it is important that the role is site-based with a preference for a full-time working pattern. Any flexible working requests would need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis