



Appointment of Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

September 2026

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We are Guide Dogs

We are here to help people with sight loss live the life they choose.

Despite the impact of vision impairment, 70% of adults receive no support within the first 12 months of diagnosis, and are likely to encounter poor education, high unemployment, depression, loneliness and financial insecurity throughout their lifetime.

There are around 35,000 children and young people with a vision impairment living in the UK. Some 80% of a child's learning takes place using vision and every day they go without support can affect their development. We provide a number of services that help children and young people reach their potential as adults and working alongside our colleagues in the sector, we are here to provide that support from the day they are born.

There are around two million people with a vision impairment living in the UK, and this figure is expected to double by 2050. Every six minutes in the UK, one more person loses their sight.

Our vision is a future where every person with sight loss has the confidence and support to live their lives to the full. Guide Dogs is moving away from a five-year fixed strategy to a more adaptive, future-looking approach. [Forward, Together](#) is an ambitious 15-year plan that will guide our work through to 2040. To achieve our vision of a world where people with sight loss can truly live the life they choose, we will focus on strengthening purpose, access, and self-belief through the support we provide.

Our targets for the future are really exciting. But they are also ambitious. So we are making improvements and embracing innovation across the whole charity, from our training to our tech, our services to our sites.



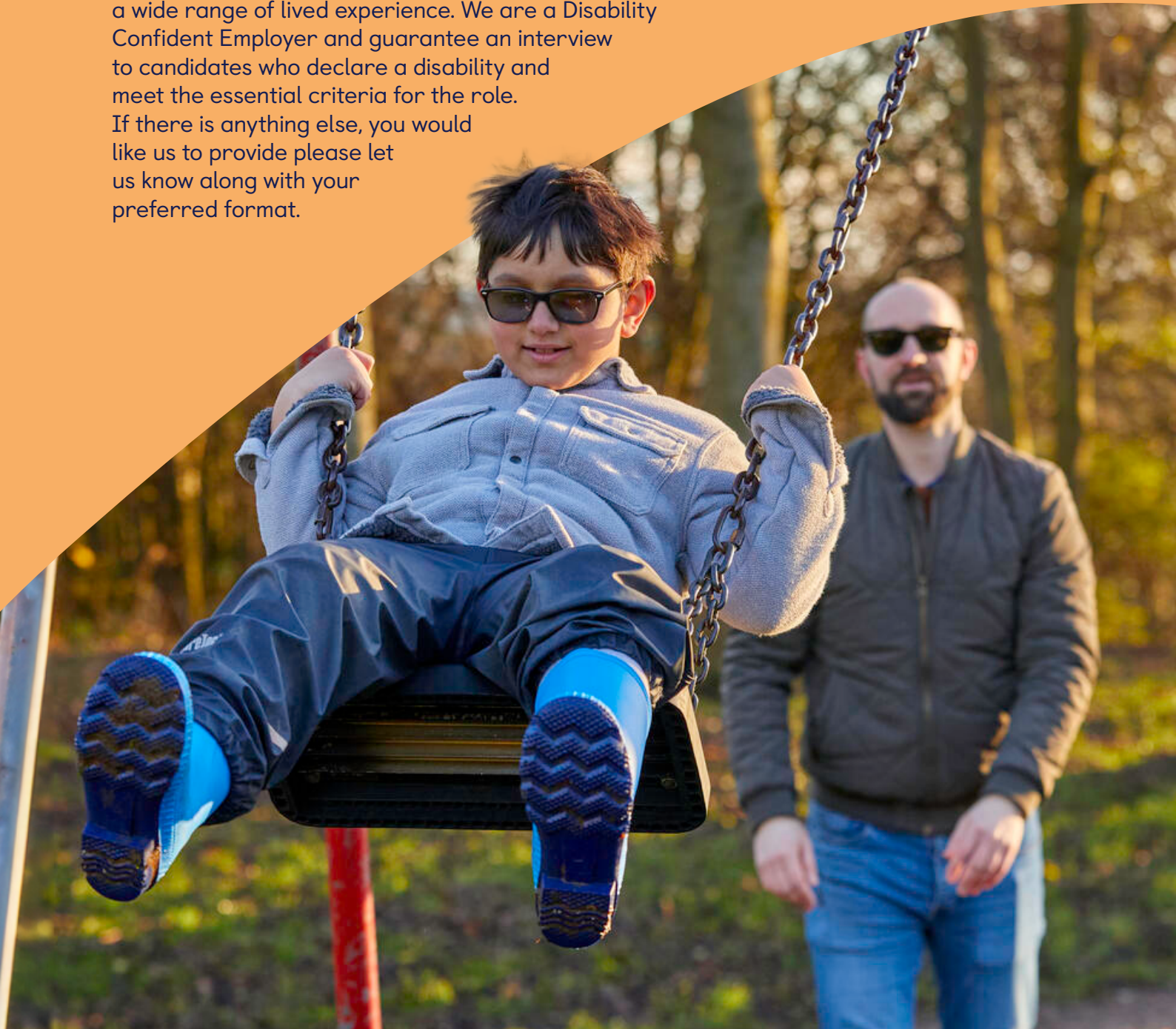
About Guide Dogs

Our people

We are working to maximise and develop our culture of accessibility, inclusion and teamwork, through our staff and volunteers. Our staff are passionate about what they do, as are our incredible volunteers who give more than 18.5 million hours of their time each year. Our volunteers fulfil roles such as: sighted guides, caring for our wonderful puppies and dogs, providing transport, raising funds and so much more.

Guide Dogs is committed to becoming an increasingly accessible, diverse, equitable and inclusive organisation, ensuring our workforce and Board are representative of the communities we support. Building on our DEI Strategy launched in July 2022, we are now refreshing our Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADE&I) Strategy to ensure it reflects the needs of our people, our communities, and our evolving organisational priorities. We welcome applicants with a wide range of lived experience. We are a Disability Confident Employer and guarantee an interview to candidates who declare a disability and meet the essential criteria for the role.

If there is anything else, you would like us to provide please let us know along with your preferred format.

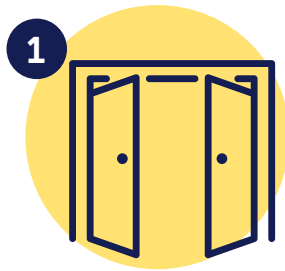


Guide Dogs Academy

In 2021 we launched our Guide Dogs Academy to transform and accelerate the way we recruit, retain, and develop our technical staff, and grow the Guide Dog Trainers (GDTs) and Guide Dog Mobility Specialists (GDMS) workforce. Our Academy now supports all the technical skills development for the Guide Dog Service teams from puppies to partnerships.

Our campaigning and influencing

We strive for a world where guide dog owners and vision impaired people feel able to fully participate in society. We engage extensively with members of the vision impaired community and members of the public to ensure our campaigns reflect the issues that are important. We currently have four priority areas:



Open Doors – to prevent people with assistance dogs being refused access to services, places and vehicles.



Streets Ahead – to make streets and outdoor public places more accessible for people living with a visual impairment. The campaign encompasses three main areas: Shared Surfaces, Pavement Parking and Street Clutter.



Transport – to make sure people with a vision impairment can travel independently and with confidence.



Children and Young People – to make all things equal for children and young people with a vision impairment.

Our places

Our central office, known as the Reading Hub, is located just outside of Reading, in a village called Burghfield. Many of our central teams are located from this office, including our HR, Finance, Fundraising and Marketing teams as well as one of our Guide Dog training teams, and our new vet practice.

The National Centre near Leamington Spa is our flagship centre for visitors and supporters. It is the centre for excellence in guide dog breeding and our workshop where the iconic guide dog harness and leads are made.

We have five regional centres which are welcoming spaces for service users, supporters and volunteers. Each centre has the capacity to train the number of dogs required for the region, with an indoor training area and a modern dog day care facility. We also have two further devolved national centres in Northern Ireland and Wales.

Our fundraising and income

Without the generous support of the public Guide Dogs would not exist. 95% of our income comes from fundraising, the other 5% from grants, charitable and trading activities. Due to investment into fundraising in recent years, Guide Dogs is currently ranked 27th among UK charities for fundraising income, with growth at double the rate of the market over the last five years and exciting plans to diversify our income streams further.

The foundation of our fundraising success is the sustained investment in our incredible products – such as Sponsor and Name a Puppy, Lottery, Raffles and Legacies – coupled with our 420 inspiring local fundraising branches, events, and partnerships with leading organisations such as Citigroup and Swiss Re. We are also embracing new digital forms of fundraising and developing our commercial offering.



You can download our Annual Report and Accounts from:
guidedogs.org.uk/about-us/finance-governance/reports-accounts-and-annual-reviews



Our impact

Caitlin's story

Caitlin's two passions are music and judo. She writes her own songs and has performed to hundreds of people at music school, she's in a band, has her own YouTube channel, and she also trains with the British judo visually impaired team as part of the Para-Potential Programme.

Caitlin was born with congenital glaucoma and underwent almost 50 operations before her fifth birthday. Growing up with a serious vision impairment wasn't easy for her. Starting school was particularly difficult as she did not have the confidence to join in activities and getting lesson materials adapted was always time-consuming.

When Caitlin was five, her family first received support from Guide Dogs. Caitlin's mum Claire says: "It wasn't until we needed Guide Dogs that we realised how much support they offer. They really have been a lifeline to us."

Caitlin was appointed a Guide Dogs habilitation specialist who was able to teach her skills to find her way around school and, as she got a bit older, training to use a long cane. The family also received advice from our education team on the additional support available and they attended our events to meet other vision impaired families and children. Caitlin also loves our CustomEyes service, where she can order her favourite books in the print size she needs.

Despite the fearlessness Caitlin has in her music and judo, as she reached her teenage years she still did not feel confident going out on her own. She desperately wanted more independence to do the things other teenagers could do. Luckily, help was at hand from Guide Dogs Habilitation Specialist, Emma Foster.

Emma explains: "When I first met Caitlin she was self-conscious about using her cane and wasn't taking it out with her. She avoided going to busy places, going out in the dark, and meeting up with her friends. I helped her realise she can still do the things other teenagers do; she just has to do them in a slightly different way."

Emma and Caitlin practised cane training on the walk to her music lesson once a week, as well as travelling into town to meet friends. She gave her tips such as using zebra crossings and identifying landmarks to help with her orientation. In the school holidays they also worked on independent living skills, such as baking, using an oven and washing up.

Caitlin says: "I felt more confident after working with Emma. I was able to go out at night, which I couldn't do before. The new mobility skills improved my judo performance too!"

This newfound confidence fuelled Caitlin's drive to do even more and she decided it was time to apply for a guide dog. In July 2019 Caitlin was partnered with a gorgeous black Labrador cross retriever called Honey.

Caitlin says: "I knew a guide dog could help me be even more confident and independent, but I never expected to gain a best friend as well. Honey puts a smile on my face every day with her puppy eyes and wagging tail. She's my reason to get out of bed in the morning and have a great day. We're a perfect match."

Caitlin's Mobility Specialist, who helped train guide dog Honey says: "It's great to be part of a wider team from Guide Dogs that has helped Caitlin get to where she is today. With Honey, Caitlin can now go anywhere she wants and meet up with friends just like every other teenager. Honey has given her the independence that she wanted and deserved."



Board Culture

Guide Dogs has an effective and established governance system in which Trustees and executive members work together constructively to develop, oversee and implement the strategy. The Board culture is positive and collaborative; challenges are made appropriately when needed, and there is a strong and varied mix of skills and perspectives around the table to ensure wide-ranging debates and carefully considered decisions.

There are currently 11 Trustees, including an experienced Chairman. Our Executive Board consists of 4 Executive Directors including the CEO, and a wider Executive Leadership Team – of which this role is part. Our Trustees actively share the enthusiastic, positive and ambitious commitment of the Board to do their absolute best for people with visual impairment and contribute their skills and expertise constructively both in and outside of the formal meetings.

Details of our current Trustees can be found [here](#) and details of our Executive Directors can be found [here](#).

The Role of Chief Financial Officer

As a key member of the Executive Board, the CFO is far more than the organisation's financial leader. They are a strategic partner to the CEO, Trustee Board and Executive Team, driving the financial strength, operational excellence and long-term sustainability to enable people with sight loss to live the life they choose.

Leading a diverse portfolio spanning finance, investments, legal, compliance, procurement, health & safety and business planning, the CFO steers critical decisions, oversees significant assets and ensures robust governance across the charity. They champion financial accountability, unlock performance, and help shape strategy, investment and change.

Whilst being a highly influential leader the CFO balances strategic vision with operational rigour, building high-performing teams, and inspiring confidence at Board level – ensuring every pound, every asset and every decision delivers maximum value for our beneficiaries.



Key Responsibilities:

Leading Finance & business planning

- Deliver strategic, tactical, and transparent financial leadership to drive the operational and financial effectiveness of the charity.
- Ensure functional expertise is in place to deliver excellence in day to day delivery and can inform strategic decision-making.
- Monitor performance and provide accurate monthly management information to support informed decision-making.
- Be accountable for advice and guidance on all tax matters.
- Oversee the annual budget planning and preparation and provide long-term financial forecasting to ensure delivery of the charity's longer-term financial goals.
- Oversee the performance of the External auditors and delivery of the annual accounts in accordance with the SORP.
- Accountable for the procurement function, ensuring commercial value in the contracts we have and frictionless transacting.
- Provide support to the board to facilitate their fiduciary duties.

Leading Governance

- Provide leadership to the Compliance, Risk, and Quality function to ensure effective corporate risk management, including identifying risks, assessing potential impacts, and mitigations.
- Provide support and leadership to in house legal counsel and the data protection officer.
- Manage key relationships with Trustees, notably with the Chair of the Board, the Chairs of the Finance, Investment, Pensions, and Risk Committees, internal and external auditors, fund managers, pensions advisers, and insurers, in regard to the responsibilities as Chief Financial Officer.
- Advise the Finance Committee and Risk Committee on tendering the internal and external audit services at appropriate times.
- Advise the Executive Leadership Team on all matters of financial probity, fraud, statutory and charitable financial compliance and breaches of financial control.

Breadth/Scope of Accountability

People Accountability

- Number of Direct Reports: 7
- Number of Indirect Reports: c.40
- Number of Volunteers Supervised: None

Financial Accountability

- Annual Income Accountability: n/a
- Assets Managed: Property and investments portfolio
- Budget Accountability: £4.7m (Directorate)

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.



Person Specification

Education/Qualifications

Essential

- Graduate equivalent with a formal accounting ACA/ACCA or equivalent qualification.

Job-Related Experience

Essential

- Proven experience in financial leadership roles within large, complex operating environments.
- Proven experience of effectively leading strategic development and implementation.
- Demonstrable understanding of risk frameworks, including management and assurance of strategic risks at Board level.
- Proven experience of being a collegiate member of a senior leadership team and supporting cross directorate business decisions.
- Demonstratable experience of continuous improvement / building high performing teams.

Skills and Competencies

Essential

- Strong interpersonal skills, ability to communicate and manage well at all levels of the organisation including experience of working with Trustees / non-executives.
 - Passion for and commitment to the not-for-profit sector.
 - Can demonstrate a 'can-do' attitude to delivering organisational change and improvement.
 - Strong problem solving and ability to make decisions based on accurate and timely analysis.
 - High level of integrity and dependability.
 - Ability to make and implement decisions.
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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.

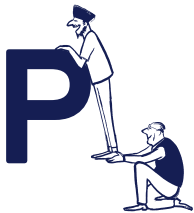


Expert – We are specialists in what we do. We are committed to excellence and will never stop innovating. We respect our history, but seek out ways to adapt and improve, and are always willing to learn.



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

This role could be located from any of our major sites, with a strong preference for location at or accessibility to Reading, where the majority of the Finance team are currently based.

Our hybrid working policy would apply, with individuals expected to spend a minimum of two days a week at Guide Dogs offices.

A flexible approach is essential, with a willingness to work outside of core hours and away from home when required.



Remuneration and benefits package

- £130,000 – £150,000
- 26 days holiday plus bank holidays.
- Defined Contribution Personal Pension Plan (matched contributions up to a maximum of 9%).
- Life assurance.
- Comprehensive range of flexible benefits incl. annual benefits allowance
- Generous life-friendly policies including enhanced family leave.
- We are a Disability Confident Employer and we are committed to accessibility and workplace adjustments.

Key dates

- Applications Open – 31st August
- Green Park Initial Interviews – 12th October – 30th October
- Informal meetings, including lived experience panel – 9th November – 13th November
- First Stage Interviews – 16th November – 20th November
- Final Interview – 23th November – 27th November

How to apply

Applications should be submitted to our recruitment partner, Green Park.
For further information or informal discussions, please contact
Miles Mackie – Miles.Mackie@green-park.co.uk.





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. 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 right to work in the UK.