# Job Profile

Job Title: Guide Dog Mobility Specialist (GDMS)

Directorate: Operations

Reports To: CAS Operations Manager

Matrix Reporting To: None

Disclosure Check Level: Enhanced - Adult and Child Workforce with a Children’s Barred List Check

Date created/last reviewed: 07/04/2024

## Overall Role Purpose

The Guide Dog Mobility Specialist (GDMS) helps people with sight loss to live the life they choose by enabling people with sight loss to get out and about through their partnership with a guide dog. They will supervise or deliver the training of dogs to be safe and efficient guides. They provide specialist assessment, advice and support to service users to determine their compatibility for guide dog mobility and determine the most suitable type of dog to then create and sustain a guide dog partnership.

## Key Responsibilities

Service User Assessment

* Assess the orientation, mobility and (if any) functional vision of prospective service users in relation to training and working a guide dog.
* Work with Operations colleagues across the service user journey to understand each service users’ individual needs and aspirations to ensure the most appropriate service recommendations are provided.
* Produce professional specialist reports to support recommendations based on mobility outcome and prospective matching need.
* Ensure reports accurately describe the needs and capabilities of service users for a guide dog service so that the most appropriate dog can be selected and prepared to meet the assessed needs.

Matching of guide dog and owner partnerships

* Ensure that dogs are suitably matched to service users.
* Use detailed knowledge of each dog’s qualities and recognise how these are likely to complement the needs and lifestyle of service users.
* Analyse and assess any risks attached to the guide dog and whether these risks can be safely and appropriately balanced by the skills or capability of the intended service user.
* Ensure service users are provided with all necessary information to make informed decision regarding a future partnership.

Creating and Supporting Partnerships

* Plan, supervise or directly deliver training courses for service users and other key individuals which contribute to the success of the partnerships.
* Apply theoretical and practical knowledge to the teaching and learning of adults and at times people with additional needs, including the instruction of children and young people.
* Use skills and experience to develop both service user and the matched dog to jointly create and maintain effective partnership and a good quality of life for the guide dog.
* Provide aftercare services to guide dog and owner partnerships that supports efficient mobility, dog wellbeing and maximises the effective working life of the partnership and its end.

Dog training

* Train dogs according to national and international standards as well as according to specific individual service user requirements.
* Apply knowledge of the functional impact of sight loss and any other disabilities or health conditions to ensure dogs perform their guiding role within the required variety of circumstances.
* Assess and review the dogs’ temperament and behaviour are suitable to ensure dogs to perform their guiding role.
* Develop detailed knowledge of each dog’s capabilities to allow accurate matching to potential service users.
* Produce comprehensive reports to enable quality control and use professional judgement to make recommendations on each dog’s progression.
* Progress dogs to their plans (as required) in a timely and efficient manner, ensuring prompt resolution at all key decision points in the dog journey.
* Practice and remain current in applying our dog training methodology.

Collaborative working in Operations Team

* Work collaboratively with volunteering support colleagues to ensure the successful management of volunteers such as Fosterers, Dog Exercisers and Dog Wellbeing volunteers. Duties may include, carrying out home checks, delivering technical training inputs, providing advice & problem-solving inputs to volunteers as necessary, and maintaining communication channels between volunteers and colleagues for effective coordination.
* Work collaboratively with colleagues and volunteers in puppy development, sharing information and knowledge to support the dogs’ progression through to training.
* Work collaboratively with colleagues to bring about successful outcomes for our dog stock in the relative service areas.

Mentoring and Supervision

* Coaching and mentoring staff, clients and volunteers to give person centred support and a range of problem-solving solutions.
* As requested, provide technical supervision which may include tutoring and teaching, to canine technical staff.
* Completing all relevant supervision paperwork.
* Maintain supervision of partnerships to ensure ongoing success.
* Train and support volunteers involved with supporting the guide dog service on an ongoing basis.
* Support and advise other key individuals who have influence in the ongoing freedom and independence of our service users.

Data & Compliance

* Maintain accurate and timely client and dog records on the appropriate IS system, in line with national standards and GDPR compliance.
* Maintain all training needs to ensure compliance with standards and processes.

## Breadth/Scope of Accountability

### People Accountability

Number of Direct Reports: None

Number of Indirect Reports: None

Number of Volunteers Supervised: Will be responsible for regular communication and training inputs for groups of volunteers in regard to technical matters relating to the care and support of our training and partnered dogs as business needs dictates.

### 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. 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

* 2 A-levels (Grade A-C) or equivalent qualifications; or/and recognised external/internal dog training qualification or equivalent experience (QCF level 3 / SQCF level 6-7).
* GDMI/GDMS qualification recognised under the International Guide Dogs Federation) with proven practice in last 5 years.
* Current valid UK/EU Driving licence, or able to demonstrate how to complete the role without.

#### Desirable

* Accredited higher-level learning in the areas of animal wellbeing or behaviour.
* Qualification as either a Vision Rehabilitation Specialist, Mobility Instructor or Rehabilitation Worker e.g. Dip HE Rehabilitation Studies.
* Accredited learning in the area of teaching or mentoring.

## Job-Related Experience

#### Essential

* Experience of coaching and teaching individuals and groups of adults and/or children in practical skills and theoretical knowledge.
* Experience of working as a GDMI/GDMS for an Organisation recognised by the International Guide Dogs Federation or Assistance Dogs International.
* Willing and able to drive medium to large dog-carrying vehicles.

#### Desirable

* Previous experience in the areas of animal welfare, training or behaviour.
* Previous experience in a teaching or coaching role.
* Previous experience of working as a mentor or supervising others.
* Experience of working with people with disabilities.

## Knowledge

#### Essential

* An understanding of theories and models relating to teaching, coaching and person-centred working.
* Knowledge of visual impairment and its psychological and functional effects on the individual and family.
* Knowledge of dog ethology, behaviour, learning theory, animal ethics and positive reinforcement training techniques.

**Desirable**

* Understanding of Safeguarding practices.

## Skills and Competencies

#### Essential

* Able to undertake physical demands of the role, including walking long distances daily (in excess of 8-10 miles), in all weather conditions, unaided, and able to handle and walk with a range of dog breeds, ages, sizes and temperaments.
* Interpersonal skills and excellent communication abilities that inspire, motivate and deliver excellent support to a diverse range of people.
* Proven coaching skills.
* Excellent organisational and self-management skills.
* Can demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm, passion, resilience and commitment to achieving person-centred outcomes.
* Willing and able to work flexibly; working hours can often be variable and will include occasional weekend, early morning and late evening work as required.

## 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.

## Job Group (internal use only)

This role has been evaluated as a Specialist Professional, please [follow this link](https://guidedogs.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/g/Ec1eCkqjWa1OttLo4tqDsikB9d3tJ31nGcMWIFbIQUfrpQ?e=11AkJZ) to view the salary band.