# Job Profile

Job Title: Buddy Dog Partnership Specialist

Directorate: Operations

Reports To: CAS Operations Manager

Matrix Reporting To: None

Disclosure Check Level: Enhanced with Adult Workforce

Date created/last reviewed: June 2023

## Overall Role Purpose

The Buddy Dog Partnership Specialist helps people with sight loss to live the life they choose by delivering the Buddy Dog Service and continuing supporting the Companion Dog Service. These services improve the health and wellbeing of our clients, increasing their self-confidence and encouraging interaction in the wider community and so reducing the isolation and impact of living with sight loss.

They identify and assess each dog to ensure it is suited to the Buddy Dog Service which can include some training of the dog. They deliver training to service users (and their families) or volunteers.

## Key Responsibilities

Delivery of the service

Creating & Supporting the Partnership

* Assess the suitability, needs and capabilities of children and young people with a visual impairment and deliver appropriate training for their Buddy Dog journey in a person centric manner.
* Plan, continuously improve and deliver engaging online and local workshops for the Buddy Dog Service.
* 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, that accurately describe the needs and capabilities of our clients, to support training and matching recommendations based on observations of the families and prospective matching need.
* Provide aftercare services to buddy dog partnerships that supports the dog being of maximum benefit to the service user and ensures the dog’s welfare is always maintained to a high standard.

Dog assessment/dog training

* Assess dog temperament and behaviour for suitability for the Buddy Dog Service, enabling quality control and using professional judgement to make recommendations on each dog’s progression.
* Continue to work with the dog’s training plans utilising our standardised PRT and welfare friendly approaches.
* Undertaking behaviour modification and animal training.
* Develop detailed knowledge of each dog to allow accurate matching to potential service users.

Matching and creation of partnerships

* Apply knowledge of the functional impact of sight loss and any other disabilities or health conditions to ensure dogs are well matched to their partner.
* Use detailed knowledge of each dog’s qualities and recognise how these are likely to compliment the needs and lifestyle of service users.
* Analyse and assess any risks attached to the buddy dog and whether these risks can be safely and appropriately balanced by the skills or capability of the intended service user and their family.
* Ensure service users are provided with all necessary information to make informed decision regarding a future partnership.

Collaborative working in Operations Team

* Work collaboratively with volunteering support colleagues to ensure the successful management of CAS volunteers such as Fosterers and Buddy Dog volunteering roles.
* Work collaboratively with colleagues and volunteers in puppy development, sharing information and knowledge to support the dogs’ progression through to training.
* Work collaboratively with fellow CAS colleagues including, Training & Behaviour Consultants, Training & Behaviour Advisors, Canine Assisted Partnership Specialists, Rehoming Officers and Dog Health & Wellbeing staff to bring about successful outcomes for our dog stock in the relative service areas.

Mentoring and Supervision

* Coaching, mentoring and educating clients and volunteers to give person centred support and a range of problem-solving solutions.
* Maintain supervision of partnerships to ensure ongoing success.
* Train and support volunteers involved with supporting the buddy dog service on an ongoing basis.

Data & Compliance

* Maintains 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.

Continuous improvement

* Support the continuous improvement of the services, supporting the Buddy Dog Lead as needed.
* Support the communications of the Buddy Dog Service as required both internally and externally.
* Support the design and implementation of new processes which aid efficiency, quality and/or improve Companion and Buddy Dog Services.
* Support in standardising, maintaining, and improving written, video and practical guidance to ensure that all the associated staff / volunteers / customers share a standardised approach.

## 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 regarding 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 and buddy 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 level 3 qualifications.
* Vocational qualification or equivalent experience in dog behaviour/ animal welfare.
* A qualification, experience, or willingness to undertake training in child-care, child development, behaviour or teaching children/young people.
* Current valid UK/EU Driving licence, or able to demonstrate how to complete the role without.

#### Desirable

* A recognised qualification in either training dogs or animal behaviour.
* Qualification as a guide dog mobility or assistance dog mobility instructor.
* Certification as a clinical animal behaviourist or veterinary behaviourist.
* A qualification, experience or knowledge in a veterinary field.
* Teaching qualification.
* A Re-habilitation or habilitation qualification.

## Job-Related Experience

#### Essential

* Experience of running group training in a workshop format in person.
* Experience of running group training online or in a digital manner.
* Experience of working with a range of clients and/or volunteers.
* Evidence of training delivery and education with clear communication skills.
* Proven understanding of dog welfare and needs to match them with the needs of people living with sight loss and provide ongoing support.

#### Desirable

* Experience of working with a range of clients with disabilities or individual needs.
* Experience of working in the not for profit sector.

## Knowledge

#### Essential

* Able to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and experience in positive dog training and handling in line with Guide Dogs ethical training policy.
* Able to demonstrate the knowledge and skills as well as experience in appropriate up to date training methods as well as problem solving and analysis of training and behavioural issues.

## Skills and Competencies

#### Essential

* Excellent communication and interpersonal skills with the ability to deliver training and education about dog welfare, motivate, manage and influence a range of stakeholders in a changing environment, including families of children with sight loss.
* Ability to work calmly under pressure and to work effectively as a member of a variety of teams.
* Empathetic and positive approach to working with people and dogs.
* Good planning skills, with a clear focus on client’s outcomes.
* Adaptive to culture change and is responsive to new ideas and able to adapt working practices to ensure these and actioned.

## 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/ETDrr9U4YzdHsA3S7CHSc9EBZy3LbOI0ioxx7UHaXzT37w?e=Vs29kp) to view the salary band.