



Our vision, part of Guide Dogs' new strategy launched this year, is to achieve a society in which blind and partially sighted people enjoy the same freedom of movement as everyone else. Our comprehensive research programme plays an important part in this as we use the findings to ensure that the services and support we provide are appropriate to the needs of blind and partially sighted people on their journey to independent mobility.

"...Guide Dogs' research programme will undertake quality research that provides a sound evidence base to Guide Dogs' policies, operational procedures and campaigns and that enables us to provide blind and partially sighted people with the knowledge and choice of services they require to enable them to achieve the same freedom, movement and quality of life as everyone else..."

A robust review process ensures that the research undertaken or funded by Guide Dogs is scientifically sound, cost effective and continues to inform and enhance our work. This process is heavily dependent on the robust and expert contribution of our peer reviewers and panel members, to whom Guide Dogs owes a tremendous debt of gratitude for their time and commitment.

We aim to meet national standards and seek accreditation where that will complement and enhance the research that we carry out, for example Guide Dogs is now a recognised partner organisation of the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR).

We know very well that we cannot achieve our vision on our own. We will therefore seek to work collaboratively with other organisations to help us succeed in implementing our research strategy and contribute to the fulfilment of their research objectives by working with them on areas of common concern. In particular, we will support Vision 2020 and compliment the UK Vision Strategy, whose key aims are to eliminate avoidable sight loss and improve the eye health of the people of the UK.

We will continue to listen actively to our clients and, where appropriate, update our research strategy so that our research continues to meet the needs of blind and partially sighted people.

These are exciting times for our research programme as it expands to meet the needs of our new strategy. However, in a time of economic stringency it is even more important that what Guide Dogs does is soundly evidence based and evaluated and that our practice is informed and improved by careful research.

I hope that this update provides you with a taster of the first class research work our researchers are undertaking on our behalf. Guide Dogs would welcome any feedback on our research programme and potential areas for future research.

Professor John Hilbourne

Chair of the Guide Dogs Research Committee
Portfolio Trustee