

Changing

Lives

GUIDE
DOGS



An overview of the Guide Dogs charity

2017 – 2018

Contents

Welcome from Jayne George, Director of Fundraising and Marketing	4-5
How we support people with sight loss	6-15
Our amazing guide dogs	6-7
My Guide, our sighted guiding service	8-9
Helping people with orientation and mobility ..	10
Supporting children and young people	11-13
Research and development	14-15
Getting involved	16-23
Fundraising for Guide Dogs	16-19
Volunteering for Guide Dogs	20-21
Campaigning for Guide Dogs	22-23
Working with us	24-25
How we spent our income	26-27



No one should be left out of life because of sight loss.

Imagine a world where blind people no longer feel invisible.

Where the quality of their eyesight is genuinely the only difference between them and the rest of society.

Imagine a world where being blind or partially sighted is not what defines you.

Imagine a world with enough support to make the challenges of sight loss no barrier to fulfilling hopes and dreams.

Guide Dogs is working towards that world.



Jayne George

Welcome

No one should be left out of life because of sight loss.

Welcome to our annual review. I hope it helps you understand more about the work we do to support people in the UK living with sight loss.

There are around two million people in the UK living with sight loss that has a significant impact on their daily lives, and of those, it's estimated that around 180,000 rarely leave their homes alone, and feel lonely and isolated.

But sight loss doesn't have to stop people leading fulfilling lives. I have the privilege of hearing countless stories from people of all walks of life who tell us how they have overcome the challenges they face and how they are getting on with their lives thanks to the support we have given them.

It's impossible to mention here all the life-changing work we carried out in 2016 but some of the highlights include reaching the milestone, for the first time in our history, of supporting more than 5,000 active guide dog partnerships; growing our sighted guiding service, My Guide; exceeding our targets for the number of children and young people we support; and influencing government to bring about a change in the law to provide audio visual announcements on all buses.

I'm proud that we are helping an ever-increasing number of people living with sight loss in different ways.



None of our work is possible without our brilliant staff and community of loyal volunteers. Week in, week out, I see the results of their work – parents with smiles on their faces feeling more positive about their child's future; the confidence of a new guide dog owner leaving their home for the first time in years; the My Guide partnership – strolling in the sunshine; the many people who re-learn the skills required to navigate the streets around their home; and the quality and care of our puppies and guide dogs.

An enormous thank you to all our supporters who help us make life better for people in the UK living with sight loss. I truly appreciate it.

Jayne George

Jayne George
Director of Fundraising and Marketing



Fact

Almost two million people in the UK are living with sight loss that has a significant impact on their daily lives.

Our amazing guide dogs celebrating our 5,000th partnership in 2016

Losing your sight can make it difficult to carry on living life the way you want to, going where you want to go, doing the things you want to do. That's quite a challenge and being partnered with a guide dog is a unique way of rising to it.

We've seen it work for many thousands of people over the years and in 2016 we achieved the milestone of supporting more than 5,000 guide dog partnerships.

You don't need to have lost all your sight to own a guide dog; most guide dog owners still have some vision. And you don't have to be officially registered as blind or partially sighted either. No previous experience of keeping or caring for a dog is necessary. If you are committed and able enough to support and care for a guide dog, our training will teach you all you need to know.

We provide all the essential equipment free of charge and we'll provide you with financial assistance if needed for things like food or veterinary costs.

Fact

We've made a lifetime promise to provide every one of our guide dog owners with a guide dog for as long as they need one.

Facts about our guide dogs

- Guide Dogs is the largest breeder and trainer of working dogs in the world. In 2016, we bred **1,375** puppies.
- We matched **828** people with a guide dog in 2016. Of those, nearly half of them were first time guide dog owners.
- By the end of 2016, we had supported **5,015** guide dog owners and their guide dogs.
- It cost **£56,800** to support a guide dog from birth to retirement.



“Having a guide dog feels like having a best friend who is helping me live a normal life.”

Justin, a 22-year-old DJ, reveals how his guide dog Nugget helps him to lead a full and rewarding life.

Justin was born with retinal detachment and as a result is completely blind. But that has never held him back; from his first tinkle of the ivories aged eight, Justin believes that his strong memory has helped him learn and play instruments with relative ease.

Aged 13, Justin's friend introduced him to the world of dance music using CDs (DJ decks). A few years later, he learned how to mix using voice over; now he is creating and producing his own tracks.

Justin decided to set up his own radio station and play his music for everyone to enjoy. He began to get noticed and was soon booked to DJ at small house music gigs in London.

Justin has always been independent, and he didn't want to be reliant on his parents and friends to get around, so he decided to get a guide dog. Justin said: "Having Nugget has given me the independence and confidence to get around London on my own without a worry, which is great if I have friends to see. It's also given my parents peace of mind that I will be safe if Nugget is by my side."

Justin's long-term goal is to be a music producer and for people to realise that a blind person can produce and play music to the same level as someone with sight.

8 Supporting adults living with sight loss

My Guide,

our sighted guiding service

Through listening to many people with sight loss over the years, we know they need choice when it comes to getting around. In 2016, we further developed our sighted guiding service, My Guide, making it more flexible to suit people's needs.

Some want a sighted guide for a short time to help them learn specific routes; some want to work with a guide on a regular basis; others prefer to have their family and friends trained as their guide.

Helping people with sight loss to feel part of life

Our My Guide training equips volunteers with the skills they need to become a sighted guide, helping people with sight loss get out of their homes to do the things they want to do. For some, that's taking part in local community events and activities; for others it might mean visits to the gym, local shops or visits to the theatre.

Facts about My Guide

In 2016

- We supported more than **2,400** people living with sight loss.
- We trained **3,200** people equipping them with sighted guiding skills, so they can support someone in their community.
- We provided Friends and Family training to **450** people to help them support their loved ones.
- We worked with **30** partner organisations to help us reach more people with sight loss.



Fact

More than 70% of people with sight loss lack confidence to join in everyday activities.

Derek lost his sight rapidly and began leaving home less and less – until My Guide volunteer Lynda came along.

When Derek's sight deteriorated over a short period of time, he spent more and more time inside his house. Left with very little vision, he lost his confidence and a sense of isolation grew. Then, through Guide Dogs, he met Lynda, a My Guide volunteer, and for both of them life took a dramatic turn for the better.

Lynda has helped Derek rediscover the world on new terms. Initially she helped build his confidence to walk a route, moving on to activities such as day trips to the seaside, t'ai-chi classes, computer courses and street gardening.

“Derek comes up with ideas,” says Lynda, “I look them up on the internet and then off we go. I’m his enabler, helping him find the confidence to do the things he’s capable of but needs help to start.”

Lynda's own mother lost her sight in the last few years of her life and it was managing this very difficult stage that motivated Lynda to volunteer as a My Guide.

“Having gone through that I felt I understood the feelings a person experiencing sight loss can have and believed I could help.”

When they first met, Lynda said Derek only looked down at the ground. “Now he looks around and up.” A subtle change, but one that sums up the trust Derek has placed in Lynda and the incredibly positive contribution she has made to his life – and he to hers.



“

I'm his enabler, helping him find the confidence to do the things he's capable of but needs help to start.

Helping people with orientation and mobility

Many people living with sight loss experience difficulties with their orientation (knowing where they are in a given environment) and their mobility (being able to move safely and confidently from place to place). And very often, when people first enquire about a guide dog, they do not have the required level of those two skills.

Our Orientation and Mobility Specialists help people with sight loss develop or relearn the skills they need so that they can move around safely. They listen to everyone's personal story and conduct assessments to gain an understanding of their current abilities and their aspirations for the future. This helps us determine which of our services will give them the support they need.



Facts about Orientation and Mobility

In 2016

- We supported more than **2,000** people to understand their orientation and mobility requirements.
- We completed more than **1,200** mobility assessments.
- We provided assistance more than **4,500** times to people with sight loss and their friends and family. This included assessing their mobility needs, long cane training, sessions to support independent living and training carers as sighted guides.
- We co-produced more than **900** training programmes, working with partner organisations.

Helping children and young people and their families

A range of services every step of the way

Around 30,000 children and young people in the UK have vision impairment. Early diagnosis and support are crucial if they are to fulfil their potential as adults.

Children and young people and their families can access one or any combination of our services, described below, at any stage up to the age of 25.

Family Support

A crucial part of our service is providing support not just to the child or young person but their family too. We offer support at the time of diagnosis, give independent advice on benefits and help families make contact with statutory agencies.

Movement Matters – habilitation training

Children with vision impairment often need to be taught the basic skills and concepts that develop naturally in sighted children. Our Movement Matters service helps children develop movement, orientation and independent skills.

Education Support

Our specialist Education Support Officers provide independent advice to help families make informed decisions about their child's education.

Access Technology

The correct assistive technology can act as a lifeline to a child or young person with vision impairment. We provide advice to help families access the right technology for their child. Families can apply to us for grants where no statutory funding exists.



12 Supporting children and young people

CustomEyes®

Our CustomEyes large print book service produces large print fiction, non-fiction and text books in the font size, paper colour and format to suit a child's specific eye condition.

Recreational Activities

We provide a range of subsidised activities, such as trips to the theatre, zoo and sessions in sensory playgrounds.

Facts about our children and young people's service

- From January 2017, Blind Children UK integrated into Guide Dogs and we became one single charity. All the services previously provided by Blind Children UK are now provided by Guide Dogs.
- In 2016 we helped **2,260** children and young people and their families, 3,264 times through our range of different services.

Fact

Four children lose their sight each day in the UK. The number of children being registered blind or partially sighted has increased by 9% since 2006.



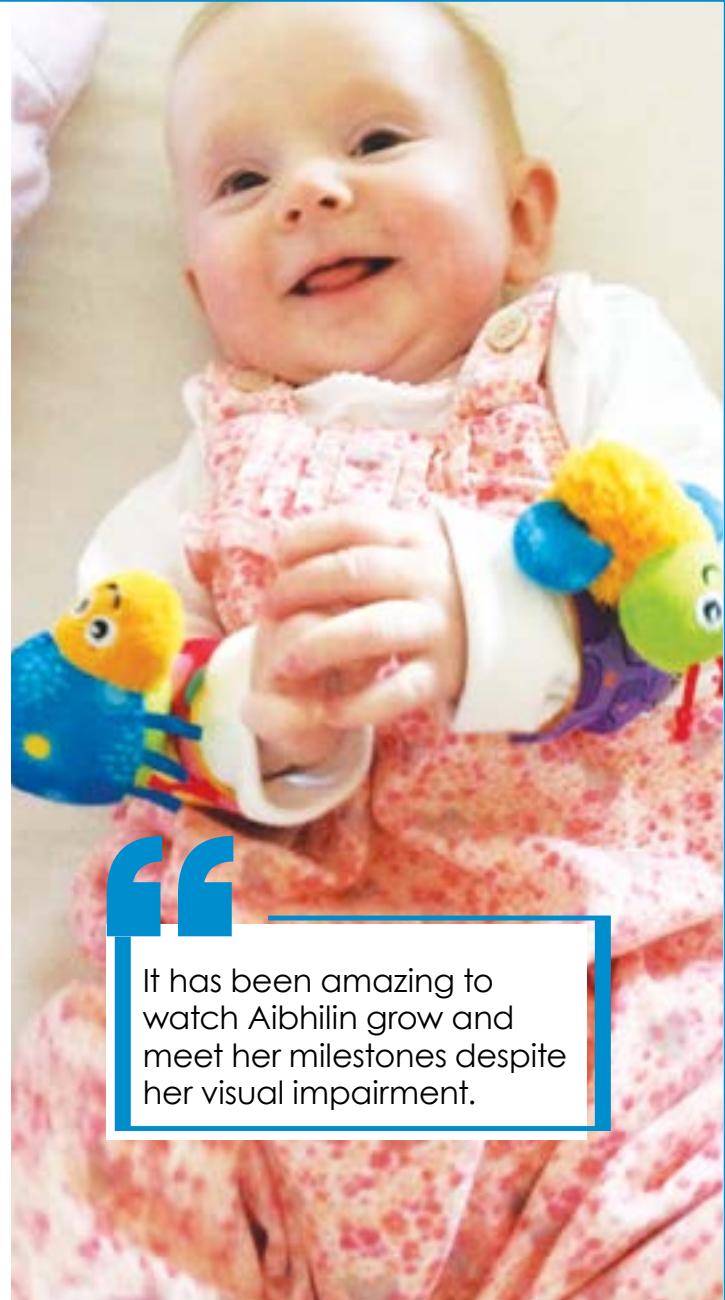
Vital support at an early stage is allowing Aibhilin to explore the world.

One-year-old Aibhilin, from Northern Ireland, is starting to explore her world thanks to early movement support from our Habilitation Specialist Miriam De Groot. Aibhilin was just three months old when her parents first met Miriam and mum Caroline says the support has made a huge difference to their family.

“Meeting Miriam gave us the knowledge and confidence to support Aibhilin in developing her sight and overall development. It has been amazing to watch Aibhilin grow and meet her milestones despite her visual impairment.”

Working with such a young child was a first for Miriam, but it helped her to understand the challenges that parents face. “It’s so important to encourage early movement in children like Aibhilin but how we do that is different with every child. Aibhilin loved reaching out for the light up toys, which has the added bonus of helping her to use and develop the sight that she has.”

The impact on Aibhilin’s development is clear to Caroline: “Aibhilin took her first steps using a stroller and the work that Miriam has been doing has made that possible.”



It has been amazing to watch Aibhilin grow and meet her milestones despite her visual impairment.

Insight and innovation

We invest in research and development to make sure Guide Dogs is a forward-thinking organisation that develops services based on what people with sight loss need and want.

Canine research – ensuring the highest standards of care and welfare

Research that helps us maintain the highest standards of care and welfare for our dogs is a vital part of our work. Our canine research directly informs our day-to-day work with our dogs and pups.

The way puppies develop in their early life is very important and we have devised a new way of socialising them – helping them to learn to interact with people while they are still 'in the nest' with their mother during their first few weeks.



This is the first programme of its kind which is tailored to puppy development and scientifically proven to have lasting, positive effects on a dog's behaviour into adulthood.

Supporting technological innovations

In 2016, we continued our partnership with Microsoft to develop technology to make it easier for people with sight loss to make safe, enjoyable journeys around our towns and cities. Following successful trials of a soundscape prototype, Microsoft aims to prove its market viability and release the technology to the general public in 2017/2018.

We have also built relationships with other technology providers and developers: we want to ensure that people with sight loss are at the centre of their thinking when they design and launch products.



Fact



We aim to ensure that people with sight loss are at the centre of their thinking when they design and launch products.

Sight loss and older people

Together with Brunel University, we commissioned research into sight loss in older people to gain further insight into their needs and how we can support them in the future.

43% of people who lose their sight go on to battle depression.

16 Getting involved

There are three main ways you can support us:

Fundraise

Volunteer

Campaign

1. Fundraising for Guide Dogs

Every day we help people get to work, get to school or just do the things they love. You can help us ensure that people with sight loss don't lose out on life by fundraising. By raising just £35 you could help keep a guide dog partnership moving for a week.

There are so many great ways you could help change lives. You could:

- Fundraise at home, school, work or in your local community.
- Host a Great Guide Dogs Tea Party.
- Take on a Guide Dogs challenge event.
- Join a Dogs Unite sponsored dog walk.
- Join in Guide Dogs Week during the first week in October.
- Make a regular or one-off donation.
- Play the Guide Dogs raffle or lottery.
- Sponsor a Puppy.
- Leave a gift in your Will.



You can help us change lives! Fundraise at home, at work or at school.

Becoming a life-changing fundraiser is not only rewarding but a piece of cake! You could host a Great Guide Dogs Tea Party, a sponsored Blindfold Challenge, a pub quiz, a Dine in the Dark event or a Dress Down Day.

Call **0345 143 0192** or go to **www.guidedogs.org.uk/fun4us** to get your free fundraising pack.

However you decide to fundraise, the money you raise makes a difference to people in the UK living with sight loss.



Our family hosted a Great Guide Dogs Tea Party to celebrate our puppy's first birthday! My sister and I made posters, played games with everyone, and we also helped to bake, serve and eat cakes too! **Amelie, aged 10, Wiltshire**

Fact

Every hour, someone in the UK starts to lose their sight. Help us make sure they don't lose out on life as well by fundraising for Guide Dogs.



**Organise a
Blindfold Challenge**



**Organise a Dine
in the Dark event**



**Host a Great Guide
Dogs Tea Party**

18 Getting involved

Gifts in Wills

a gift that's full of life

Gifts in Wills are vital to Guide Dogs. Leaving a gift in your Will is a powerful way of looking after a cause close to your heart, and your support will help to provide the guide dogs of the future; helping people with sight loss to live full and rewarding lives.

Karen Benson shares what inspired her to leave a gift in her Will to Guide Dogs.

"My father-in-law was blinded during WW2. Many times during his life he was offered a guide dog, but turned them down, saying, "Someone needs one more than me." I hope by more people leaving gifts to you that blind people will never have to feel this way - you do a remarkable job and the independence it allows people to retain is invaluable; with the added bonus of a loyal, loving companion with a wet nose and waggy tail!"

To find out about leaving a gift to Guide Dogs in your Will, please call us on **0800 953 0113** or go to www.guidedogs.org.uk/giftsinwills.



Fact

Over the last seven years, the waiting list for our guide dog service has grown by over 25%.

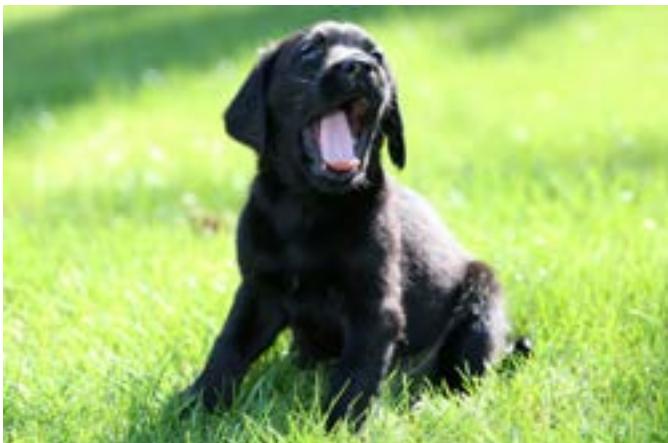
Sponsor a Puppy

Our puppy sponsors follow our adorable puppies and share in their incredible journeys from six weeks old to fully-qualified guide dog.

Sponsorship costs from just £1 per week and your donation will be helping to provide a guide dog for life. To sponsor a puppy call us on **0800 953 0113** or visit www.sponsorapuppy.org.uk



I could never think of life without a guide dog. I have my independence, and that's one thing I will never take for granted. I have so much to say thank you for.
James Gallagher, guide dog owner



SPONSOR
A PUPPY



2. Volunteering for Guide Dogs

Our volunteers help us to change lives and reach out to people with sight loss. Giving just a little time makes a huge difference to Guide Dogs, and to our volunteers.

We really do value our volunteers – that's why we ensure they are well supported and get the best experience of volunteering for Guide Dogs. We offer ongoing support from staff and other volunteers, as well as volunteer consultative groups, online resources and volunteer awards.

You can give your time in so many different ways. Whatever your skills or interests we're sure to have an opportunity for you to use them.

For example:

- Puppy walking – looking after a puppy during its first year.
- Boarding – looking after dogs in training.
- My Guide – providing sighted guide assistance to someone with sight loss.
- Driving our people, dogs or equipment.
- Joining your local supporter group.

Volunteer for us:

Visit www.guidedogs.org.uk/volunteer

Email volunteer@guidedogs.org.uk

Call the Volunteering Office on
0345 143 0191



Siobhan with My Guide Ambassador Helen

“The My Guide service means I can get out and live my life. It's a real partnership. I would recommend the life-changing My Guide service to anyone who cannot leave their home alone – or who may have difficulty with everyday mobility.”



Ben, fundraising volunteer, winning one of the local volunteer awards.

Join your local supporter group

We are fortunate in having more than 400 supporter groups across the UK. These thriving community groups arrange a wide range of fundraising activities and increase our profile in their local area. All of them help us to reach out to an ever-increasing number of people with sight loss.

For more information or to join your local supporter group, call 0345 143 0191.

Fact

Our 16,000 volunteers give around 19.5 million hours of their time each year to help people with sight loss.

I was inspired to volunteer for Guide Dogs after watching the Me and My Guide Dog programme and learning how life-changing guide dogs are, and the positive influence having a guide dog has on someone's life. I love meeting other volunteers and I get satisfaction in knowing that the volunteering I do really makes a difference. I love hearing about new partnerships and seeing the end result of all the effort of our fundraising volunteers.



3. Campaigning for Guide Dogs

We campaign to break down barriers and end discrimination against people with sight loss. Our consistent campaigning has led to a shift in Government thinking and policy on a number of key issues.

With the help of more than 55,000 campaigners, we work with the Government, local authorities and other organisations.

Our focus is on three key issues:

Talking Buses

Buses play a vital role in enabling people with sight loss to live more independent lives. We are striving to make audio-visual announcements on buses compulsory so that people with sight loss can travel with the confidence of being able to alight at the correct bus stop.

As a result of our campaigning, in 2016 the Government changed the law to give them the power to ensure all buses in England, Scotland and Wales have this vital technology on-board in the future.

Fact

**We have more than 55,000 campaigners! Join us at:
www.guidedogs.org.uk/signup**



United as campaigners, we are a powerful force to change the future for the better for those living with sight loss.

Emma Free, guide dog owner



Access All Areas

As many as 75% of assistance dog owners surveyed have been refused access to places, vehicles or services because of their dog despite this being against the law.

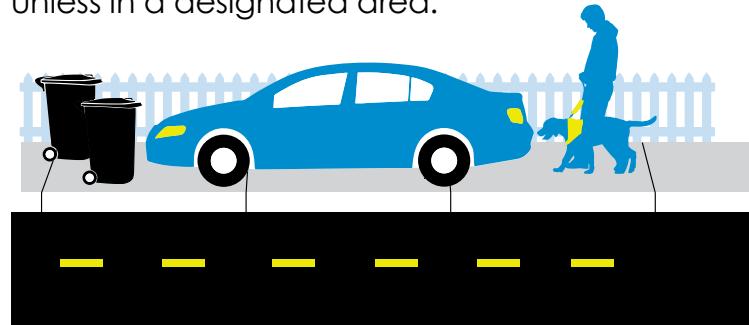
For guide dog owners, being refused access to taxis or private hire vehicles, is the most common access refusal.

Guide Dogs is calling on the Government to make disability equality training mandatory for drivers of taxis and private hire vehicles. Nearly 50,000 people signed our Action for Access petition.



Pavement Parking

We want to end the problem of vehicles being parked on pavements which are a dangerous obstacle for people with sight loss. We're calling for a law to replicate the model in London where drivers can't park on the pavement unless in a designated area.



Help make a difference:

www.guidedogs.org.uk/campaigns

 @gdcampaigns

 www.facebook.com/campaignsatguidedogs

“ Hundreds of campaigners have taken to their high streets this year to collect petition signatures and deliver information about the access campaign to high street shops.

Join us and make a difference



If you want to work for an organisation that makes a real difference to the lives of people living with sight loss, Guide Dogs may have a great opportunity for you. We employ over 1,500 staff working in a wide range of roles, all passionate about playing their part in helping people with sight loss get around safely and confidently.

With our Central Office near Reading in Berkshire, and teams throughout the UK, we offer many varied and rewarding careers. The skills and abilities we are looking for are as diverse as the range of jobs we have to offer. We believe that people are at the heart of what we do and we use our range of skills and experience to make the biggest possible difference to people's lives.

A diverse workforce

We actively seek to achieve diversity in our workforce. We welcome applications from all sections of the community and strive to build a workforce which is representative of the communities we serve.

We encourage applications from people who have a disability. We will guarantee to interview all applicants who declare a disability and who meet the essential criteria of the job.

Our vacancies and descriptions of the various roles are listed on our website.

www.guidedogs.org.uk/aboutus/careers





Recruiting and retaining talented staff is critical to our success. It is through their professionalism and determination that we enable thousands of people with sight loss to transform their own lives each year.



Fact

Only one in three people who are blind or partially sighted (of working age) is employed.

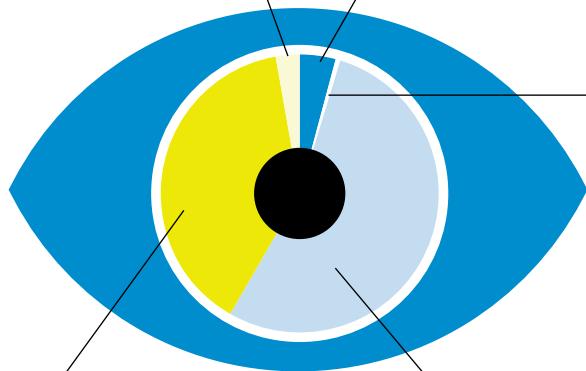
How we spent our income in 2016

Breakdown of a pound

3p of every pound was spent on providing children's services: **£3.2 million.**

3.5p of every pound was spent on campaigning and raising awareness: **£3.7 million**, of which **£0.6 million** is the cost of campaigning.

0.5p of every pound was spent on research and development: **£0.7 million.**



39p of every pound was spent on generating income, including trading activities: **£39.5 million.**

54p of every pound was spent on providing guide dogs and other adult services: **£54.6 million.**

The difference your money makes

£5 could support a working guide dog for a day.

£20 could pay for one hour's training for a guide dog.

£25 could buy a white guide dog harness.

£35 could pay for a veterinary consultation.

£95 could buy a Training School Kit for one of our guide dog trainers who teach pups the specialist skills they will need to become a qualified guide dog.

£140 could buy a Starter Kit for a new guide dog owner containing everything they need to start a life with their new guide dog.

The cost of providing our services in 2016

£49 million

It cost **£48.9 million** to run the guide dog service.

£2.1 million

It cost **£2.1million** to run the My Guide service.

£2.9 million

It cost **£2.9 million** to run Mobility and Orientation services.

£56,800

It cost **£56,800** to support a guide dog from birth to retirement. This includes the cost of:

- Breeding a guide dog puppy: **£3,600.**
- Puppy walking for the first year: **£5,300.**
- Early training: **£22,000.**
- Advanced training: **£10,400.**
- Training each guide dog owner with their guide dog: **£3,300.**
- Supporting the partnership throughout their working time together, generally six to seven years: **£12,200.**

£450,000

A guide dog owner may have as many as eight guide dogs in their lifetime bringing the total cost to more than **£450,000.**

8,000

At any one time, we are responsible for more than **8,000** dogs including those who are enjoying their retirement.



GUIDE
DOGS



No one should be left out of life because of sight loss.

Get in touch:

W: www.guidedogs.org.uk

E: info@guidedogs.org.uk

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This publication is also available in Braille, large print, audio and text only formats, and in alternative languages on request.

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