



Our Training Approach

Our dogs mean the world to us and to the people whose lives they go on to change. We ask them to do a very important job, so it's vital that they are confident, happy and equipped with the skills they need. To do this, we follow these principles:

- We use reward based training methods to teach our dogs. We praise and reward when they get it right, and help them to make the right decisions. By doing this, the training is fun, and they learn quickly to repeat behaviour which results in praise or treats.
- The bond between a guide dog and their owner is unique, and is only possible because the dog has learned to trust all the people in its life. From puppyhood onwards, a guide dog's training builds two-way trust between dog and handler.
- Reward-based training means our dogs always have a choice about taking part, so we have happy dogs who want to work, and owners who can trust their dogs completely. On occasion there are dogs who don't suit the guiding role, so our training process allows us to identify these dogs and find an appropriate path for them.
- We respect our dogs as partners in the training process and encourage them to problem-solve. They enjoy the training and the work, which in turn strengthens the bond between dog and owner.
- We don't use physical punishment when training, as this negatively impacts on the dogs' welfare and bond between owner and dog. Trust is central to the Guide Dog ethos, and so we use positive reinforcement training to teach our dogs to become life-changers.