



## Volunteering Policy

Unique reference number: VOL-P-002

Document Owner: Tracey Berridge - Head of Volunteering

Version: 4.0

### Purpose of Policy

Volunteers are fundamental to Guide Dogs: without volunteers, we could not achieve our purpose, to help people with sight loss live the life they choose. We are committed to ensuring that volunteers have the best possible experience whilst volunteering with us and feel valued for the impact and contribution they make.

The Volunteering Policy outlines Guide Dogs' approach to volunteering and applies to all volunteers (including Trustees) and all staff who interact with, and manage volunteers.

It does not cover internships, work experience, work placements, expert panels or focus groups, [Guide Dogs Association Members](#), or third-party fundraisers raising money 'in aid of' Guide Dogs.

### Definitions:

**Volunteer** - A person who gives their time to support Guide Dogs in a voluntary capacity and is not financially compensated for doing so, other than through the reimbursement of their expenses.

**Volunteer journey** - How we define each stage of volunteering activity at Guide Dogs: Planning and Preparing; Attracting; Recruiting; Inducting and Training; Supporting and Managing; Engaging and Recognising; Leaving.

**Role owner** - The nominated individual staff member who is accountable for certain aspects of how a volunteer role works at Guide Dogs.

**Volunteer manager** - A named staff member or lead volunteer who has responsibility for managing a named volunteer in a specified volunteer role.

Further definitions for volunteering terminology can be found on our [Volunteering Information Point \(VIP\)](#) webpages for volunteers.

## Policy Statements

### General statements

**Volunteers are an integral part of Guide Dogs:** We encourage the involvement of volunteers in any area of our work where it will benefit the organisation and the people with sight loss we support.

**We strive for excellence in volunteer engagement:** Guide Dogs aspires to be a sector-leading volunteer involving organisation and commits to maintaining the [‘Investing in Volunteers’](#) quality standard.

**Volunteering should be open to all:** We do our best to remove barriers and ensure people from all backgrounds feel welcome and able to get involved. We avoid tokenism – ensuring that inclusive messaging is backed by inclusive practice.

**We foster a positive volunteering culture:** Staff will understand the role of volunteers, the unique value they bring, and the importance of strong, respectful working relationships between staff and volunteers.

**Volunteering helps us achieve greater impact:** The contribution of volunteers complements and enhances the work of paid staff, extending our reach and capacity. Volunteers will never be used to replace staff, or will volunteering be used to extend the agreed working hours of paid employees.

**Volunteering with Guide Dogs, is not a legally binding contract.** It is freely entered into, with no formal or implied obligation, and volunteers are free to end their involvement at any time. The [Volunteer Agreement](#) clearly states there is no intention to create a contract of employment, now or in the future.

In some cases—such as roles involving the development of our dogs (where Guide Dogs retains ownership) or the creation of content for

the charity—specific legal agreements may be required. Where this applies, the details will be discussed with volunteers in advance to ensure mutual understanding.

**We will invest in enabling positive volunteering experiences:** By providing training, guidance, financial and staffing resources, we will enable excellent volunteer management.

**We will make expectations clear:** the expectations we have of volunteers and what volunteers can expect of Guide Dogs is outlined in the Guide Dogs [Volunteer Agreement](#).

**We respect the personal data of our volunteers:** Guide Dogs complies with all relevant legislation, including the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. Third-party processors are governed by data processing agreements. We provide appropriate training for volunteers and staff. Our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Data Retention Policy](#) set out how volunteer data is processed and retained. We are transparent about this through the publication of our Privacy Policy on our website.

**We care about the safety and wellbeing of our volunteers:** Guide Dogs is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of everyone who comes into contact with the charity, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. We will take all reasonable steps to prevent harm and provide Public Liability and Personal Accident insurance cover for eligible volunteers.

**Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility at Guide Dogs:** Guide Dogs is committed to Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all those who come into contact with the organisation and protect them from abuse or harm. We expect all volunteers to share this commitment and to raise any concerns in line with our Safeguarding policies and procedures.

## **The Volunteer Journey**

Guide Dogs defines the volunteer journey as consisting of seven stages: Planning and Preparing; Attracting; Recruiting; Inducting and Training; Supporting and Managing; Engaging and Recognising; and Leaving.

A set of key principles is in place for each stage of the volunteer journey. Alongside our Volunteering Policy, these principles support Guide Dogs to deliver good practice in all aspects of volunteering.

### **Permissible exceptions:**

Any exceptions to the Volunteering Policy must be agreed by the Head of Volunteering.

### **Related policies, processes, or procedures:**

For internal staff only:

- [Our Volunteer Journey](#)
- [Volunteer Planning Principles](#)
- [Volunteer Attraction Principles](#)
- [Volunteer Recruitment Principles](#)
- [Volunteer Induction and Training Principles](#)
- [Volunteer Support and Management Principles](#)
- [Volunteer Engagement and Recognition Principles](#)
- [Volunteer Leaving Principles](#)

Please refer to the [Volunteer Manager Hub](#) for further information on volunteering processes, procedures, and resources relating to managing volunteers. All key documents are also published on the Knowledge Hub.

Sources used in the development of the Volunteering Policy include:

- [Investing in Volunteers](#) standards
- National Council for Voluntary Organisations, Time Well Spent reports ([2019](#), [2023](#))
- [Governmental guidance](#) on involving volunteers.
- Fundraising Regulator's [Code of Fundraising Practice](#)

## **Governance Information.**

### **Governance Review & Approval Table:**

Table contains 2 rows and 6 columns. Headings in row and column 1.

<b>Governance Area:</b>	<b>H&amp;S</b>	<b>Safeguarding</b>	<b>Insurance</b>	<b>Legal</b>	<b>Data Protection</b>
<b>Approved by (date &amp; initial):</b>	18/12/25 SN	19/12/25	19/12/25 CC	04/12/25 GP	11/12/25 IB

## Board Approval Table:

Table contains 2 rows and 6 columns. Headings in row and column 1.

<b>Board / Committee:</b>	<b>Audit &amp; Risk (ARC)</b>	<b>Finance Reporting &amp; Investment (FRIC)</b>	<b>Trustee Board (GDBA)</b>	<b>Remuneration &amp; People (RP)</b>	<b>Other (enter name)</b>
<b>Date Approved:</b>					

**Review Frequency:** Policy: Every 2 years.

## Version control table:

Table contains 3 rows and 4 columns. Headings are in row 1.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Details of Change</b>
19/12/25	4.0	Updated	Full review and rewrite. Introduction of Volunteering Principles.
04/09/23	3.0	Updated	Full review and rewrite.

**End of document**