

GUIDE
DOGS



Youth Action Project



MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Youth Action Project overview

We've put together a pack filled with information and resources to inspire you to take action. Your actions will support people with vision impairments to live the life they choose.

Find out about us - pg 3

Before you start your plans to help Guide Dogs, find out about the charity, our services and most importantly the people we support.

What do we mean by Charity and volunteering - pg 7

A closer look at what charities do and the volunteers who support them.

Factsheets - pg 8

To help you learn about our services and how you can help.

Plan your Social Action - pg 14

We've provided a few ideas and resources that will kickstart your planning.

Get out there and make a difference

It's over to you take your ideas and make a change.
If you raise over £250 we'll send you a certificate and a thank you gift.

Review your project

Did it go to plan, what would you do differently next time, what have you learned, all things that will help in future projects.

Let us know

Get in touch and tell us how your project went and if you fundraised, how much you raised and we'll send you a certificate of thanks.

Resources section - pg 15

Everything you need to get started with your chosen social action.



About the people we support

What is vision impairment?

Vision impairment is one of the terms used to describe when a person has no sight or when a person has reduced eyesight, which cannot be corrected with glasses. Some other terms used are:

- Sight loss
- Eye condition
- Partially sighted
- Blind
- Sight impaired

Who

2 million people in the U.K have some level of vision impairment, about **34,000** of those are children or young people.

- Some people are born with an eye condition which causes their vision impairment.
- Some people lose their vision due to an eye condition or through illness or accident. For many people their eye condition gets worse over a period of many years.

About us

Guide Dogs started as a small charity in the UK in 1934 with the aim to help people who are blind or partially sighted live independently in an inclusive society. This aim remains the same today and the charity has grown to include a wide range of services that help children, young people and adults with vision impairments.

The guide dog service –

Many people who are blind or partially sighted are determined to regain their independence and use aids to help them get out and about. This is how our guide dog service helps, we breed and train our guide dogs to guide their owners by walking in a straight line, whilst avoiding obstacles and stopping at kerbs and steps.

My Guide –

Sometimes people who are blind or partially sighted need support to get out and about. This is where our My Guide volunteers can help, they are trained sighted guides who are matched with a person with a vision impairment to help them get around safely and achieve their goals.

Children and Young People services –

We offer a range of services that support children and young people from birth up to aged 25. These include education support, technology and grants, custom made books through our CustomEyes® service, events for the whole family and skills to get around and live independently.

To find out more about all our services visit our web page www.guidedogs.org.uk/services

Real stories

Watch our video about Libby “A Test of Blind Ambition”

Watch the video then go through the following points. NB- the video does contain some mild swearing. [Link to video A test of Blind Ambition.](#)

- What noises could you identify? Describe any noises you couldn't work out?
- What did you hear people saying, how did they make you feel?
- What did you think about the suggestion “that career choice is a bit ambitious for someone like you, how about receptionist in a gym?”
- Discuss/think about the term “Normal”.



Kelsey

Kelsey is 16 and currently studying for his GCSE's. He was recently matched with his first guide dog but has received services from Guide Dogs for many years, after losing his sight when he was five years old. Some young people are born without sight or with partial sight, many like Kelsey have the attitude “there is nothing I can't do”.

Read about Kelsey's typical day, discuss/think about the things that Kelsey does which may be unexpected, how does technology factor into his daily routine?
Discuss/consider his hopes and dreams, how do you think his guide dog Lacey may have influenced his life?

My Day

5.30am I get up and take Lacey my guide dog out to spend (for a wee). Then I feed her breakfast whilst I have a coffee and check for updates on Twitter, before getting ready for school.



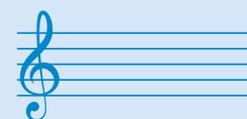
6.30am We're ready to leave home, Lacey guides me to the bus stop where I catch the bus across town.



7.13am I'm on the bus and use the time to check the Tube status and times on my phone.



7.50am I get the Tube to school and usually meet up with my friends who I walk to school with, if we have time we go and practice music, I use a recording device so I can improve my performance.



8.55am I head off to lessons with Lacey guiding me around school, in class I take notes with my Braille note or use my laptop.



1.15pm Lunch with friends, I might send a couple of texts and make sure to take Lacey out before afternoon lessons start.



3.15pm After school I take Lacey out again then walk into town with friends, we look around the shops and get a hot drink which I pay for with my smart watch.



4.30pm I catch the bus home and use Google maps to make sure I get off at the right stop. Lacey guides me home and when we arrive, the first thing I do is take Lacey out.



6pm I feed Lacey, then have my dinner. I head upstairs and listen to the news in my room using my digital assistant (Alexa). I might give my friends a call and spend the rest of the evening doing homework, before going to bed at 9pm.



Future Plans:

Finish my GCSE's, then study at higher education college rather than staying at my local school to do A Levels in English Lit, History and French and a BTEC in Braille.

After A Levels, I plan to go to university in Europe to study Political Journalism and then have a career as a Journalist.

Having a vision impairment can affect a person's ability to do their day to day activities, they may need to use an aid, or adapt to carry out a task. Think about the things that you do every day and how you might have to adapt if you lost some or all your vision, it could be something simple like how you could identify the right coins when shopping if you couldn't see?

Eye conditions:

Eye conditions that can affect children:

- Albinism
- Aniridia
- Coloboma
- Glaucoma (congenital)
- Leber's Amaurosis
- Nystagmus
- Optic Nerve Hypoplasia
- Retinoblastoma
- Retinopathy of prematurity
- Strabismus (squint)

The most common eye conditions that occur in adults are:

- Glaucoma
- Age related Macular degeneration
- Retinitis Pigmentosa
- Cataracts
- Diabetic Retinopathy

Task

Find out about any three of the eye conditions listed above for either children or adults, discuss/think about how each would affect your life? You may want to pick one eye condition and create a pair of simulation spectacles to show others how the eye condition can affect vision, use our sim specs template in the resource pack.

How would you feel?

If you lost some or all of your sight how do you think you would feel? Describe how those feelings may affect your life and your mental health.

Adapting to everyday life with a vision impairment

Watch the video "**Creating Partnerships**". The video gives an overview of common eye conditions and Steve a guide dog owner talks about losing his sight and how he has adapted. [Accessible version here.](#)

Most people with a disability are not looking for sympathy but seek understanding, to be treated equally and included, always ask if a person needs help and be respectful.

Watch this **BBC3 video** where young people with a vision impairment discuss assumptions and things people have said to them.

To hear more about Guide Dogs why not request a talk from one of our volunteer Speakers fill out the form on the web page www.guidedogs.org.uk/speaker

Take the [quick quiz](#) to find out how much you've learned in this section. Take a screenshot of your quiz score for your records.

Charity and Volunteering



Charity

Look up the word charity, you will find a description online or in a dictionary.

- What do you think the term not for profit means?
- How do charities and businesses differ, try to find three ways?

Charitable Aims

Our aim is to support people who are blind or partially sighted to live the life they choose by giving them freedom and independence.

Task

Guide Dogs has a group of trustees that support our aims.

Look up the role charity trustee and youth trustee, find out what they involve doing. What do you think the average age of a charity trustee is? Discuss the answer and reason why.

Volunteering

Watch the [video](#) about Guide Dog's Puppy Walker volunteer Sarah who has more than one volunteer role.

Find out about some of the other volunteering roles at Guide Dogs

- How do the roles support the people who receive services from Guide Dogs?
- Think about how the services would be affected if we didn't have those volunteers.

Here are a few of role titles to get you started.

- Boarder
- My Guide volunteer
- Fundraiser

In your group discuss the importance of charities and volunteering.

Watch the video of students at [St Barts School](#), they have been fundraising for Guide Dogs and have raised over £10,000.

Why do you think people volunteer or fundraise or take part in social action?

Play the [skills game](#) to find out more about charities. Take a screenshot of your score for your records.

CustomEyes®

CustomEyes® is a service that supports children and young people who have a vision impairment or dyslexia by providing large print books in the font, size and paper colour that they need.

Without CustomEyes® our readers wouldn't have access to books, this would affect their education and quality of life. Imagine not being able to read your favourite book, how would that feel?

Watch this YouTube video of Lauren talking about CustomEyes®, use the [link](#) or search for the video on You Tube by typing "Lauren" and "CustomEyes".



It is great, I can read Harry Potter books just like my friends. I can read to myself at bed time instead of my mum reading to me

CustomEyes® reader

How you can help

Fundraise

We only charge our young people the retail price for each book we create so that they can enjoy books as easily as you. It costs us an average £250 to create each one, that's the same price as a games console! The real cost of each book is funded through the donations we receive. Why not organise a Readathon or fundraising event? There's everything you need in the resources section to plan and get started.

If you raise over £250 we'll send you a certificate and a thank you gift.

Campaign

Can you help us raise awareness with publishers by letting them know the importance of books and how they can help, there's a letter template in the resources section to help you get started.

Where to find more information – www.guidedogs.org.uk/Customeyes

CustomEyes® Readathon

A readathon is a sponsored reading event that can last a day or over a few weeks, it's up to you. There are many ways you could run your event, you may want to get sponsorship for how many pages you read in a day, or for reading a whole book by the end of a week. To raise awareness you could involve others in a group reading activity such as a poetry event, or by reading a book out loud as a group relay. Think about adding a unique twist to your readathon such as holding the readathon in a public place (make sure you have permission). We have the planning action template and a template sponsorship form that you can use to help you decide.

1. Plan your readathon,
2. Encourage people to sponsor you or to join in with the readathon, why not involve your friends and family or a local library or primary school.
3. Arrange the date for your readathon and start promoting it (posters, ask for sponsors).
4. Start your readathon, this may last a few weeks or over one day.

5. Celebrate your success, shout about it on social media or on the radio, let us know.
6. Once you've completed your readathon remember to ask an adult to pay in any fundraising from your event through the options listed in the leader pack or ask a parent or guardian to contact Guide Dogs on **0800 953 0113** using the code **YOUTHACTION**.

Campaign for CustomEyes® by writing to publishers

The aim of writing a letter to publishers is to encourage them to support CustomEyes®, some are already doing this and it dramatically cuts the costs and waiting time for CustomEyes® readers, remember we said the average cost of a producing a bespoke book is £250. Unfortunately, some need encouragement and by writing to tell them about your favourite book (that they publish) and the importance of CustomEyes® to young people with a vision impairment or dyslexia, hopefully they will support us.

The following publishers are already supporting us by providing manuscripts:

Hachette, Usborne, Simon & Schuster, OUP, Child's Play, Pearson.

1. When you pick a book check the publisher isn't already supporting us.
2. Take a look at our template letter in the resources section, you can use it to get started.
3. When you write your letter, be mindful of the language you use and how you come across. This is about encouraging cooperation by using the knowledge you have gained to hopefully convince them to support the service.
4. Take your time to read it through.
5. Get someone to check your letters tone of voice before you send it.
6. Find the publishers address and send it to them by post.
7. Let us know if they reply through your group leader or at vinspired.



I remember the feeling of freedom when I first went out with my guide dog Goldie, it felt like all the doors that sight loss had slammed in my face were now being thrown open again".

Guide dog owner Lauren

The guide dog service

Guide dogs are trained to guide their blind or partially sighted owners (you don't have to be blind to have a guide dog) along the street whilst avoiding obstacles and people. A guide dog will stop at kerbs and steps and will wait for its owner to decide where to go next. Guide dog owners develop a very close relationship with their guide dogs.

A guide dog gives their owner independence and confidence to be who they want to be.

How you can help

Fundraise

Most of our funding comes from public donations and gifts in wills, without this we wouldn't be able to provide our life-changing guide dog service. In the resources section we've put together some templates to help you get started with planning your event and there are some fundraising ideas in this factsheet. If you raise over £250 we'll send you a certificate and a thank you gift.

Raise awareness

Tell people in your community about the guide dog service, what a guide dog does for its owner and/or how people should act around them. We've thought of some ways you can help in this factsheet and there are templates to help you plan and get started in the resources section.

Where to find more information

More about guide dogs

- www.guidedogs.org.uk/services-we-provide/guide-dogs/
- www.youtube.com/GuideDogsUK

More about eye conditions can be found by searching online and our [PowerPoint eye condition simulator](#) will give you an idea of how the more common eye conditions affect people's eyesight.

Five ways to fundraise for the guide dog service

- A sponsored event – walk, run, cycle, danceathon, mini/fun triathlon.
- Host a quiz.
- Hold a ticketed event - a fashion show, a concert, sports tournament.
- Dress up or dress down day.
- Make and sell - bake cakes, create jewellery or art.

What next

- Pick a fundraiser and plan your event (using the plan template).
- Have fun fundraising, then bank your cash using the code YOUTHACTION.
- Tell us about it.

Always keep yourself safe, if you are under the age of 16 you cannot:

- Fundraise without permission from your parents/guardians.
- Buy or sell raffle or lottery tickets.
- Collect money door-to-door, in the street or ask strangers for sponsorship.
- Run a fundraising event alone - there must be an adult (over 18 years old) present.
- Bank the money, a parent or guardian or leader will need to do this for you.

Raise awareness about the guide dog service

Research the guide dog service, you may want to find out what to do if you see a guide dog owner out with their dog, or where guide dogs are allowed to go, or what a guide dog does. Use your research to:

- Deliver a presentation about what you've learned, to the local community, or a school, or youth group.
- Create a leaflet, or run an information stall in your town to tell people about guide dogs.



Having to walk in the road because of cars parked on pavements is terrifying, no matter how busy the street.

Guide dog owner

Streets Ahead

When vehicles are parked on pavements or when wheelie bins block the pavement, people who are blind or partially sighted may have to risk their lives by walking into the road just to get by. This is an issue that also impacts parents with prams, wheelchair users, older people and many others. We've been raising awareness in parliament and communities across the UK about the dangers inconsiderately parked vehicles and wheelie bins can cause.

In this next [video](#) two guide dog owners talk about their experiences of pavement parking.

How you can help

Start by surveying your local area, use our questions to help you write your survey. Once you have the facts then you can raise awareness in your community, you can choose wheelie bins, pavement parking or both.

Raise awareness about wheelie bins

Use your research from the local area to create a presentation about wheelie bins and deliver it to people in your community. You could arrange to speak to a community group, or at your school, or even to your family and friends. Think about how you can raise awareness and positively influence people to change.

Raise awareness about pavement parking

Use what you have found from your survey to create a presentation about pavement parking and deliver it to people in your community. You could arrange to speak to a community group, or at your school, or even to your family and friends. Think about how you can raise awareness and positively influence people to change.

What next

- Plan what you are going to do (use our planning sheet).
- Gather your evidence by surveying in your area, is there an issue?
- Use your findings as evidence to form your presentation.
- Raise awareness.

Survey ideas

Please do not approach people about their vehicles or bins when conducting your survey, this could put you at risk. Headings you may want to use:

- The name of the road/roads you survey.
- The number of vehicles with 4 wheels on the pavement.
- The number of vehicles parked partially on the pavement.
- How many bins blocked the pavement.
- Was there enough space to get a wheelchair through? Yes or no.
- Are there any places where pavement parking or bins blocking pavements are worse or is it worse at peak times (for example outside of a school, in residential areas or when shops are open)?

Think about any other evidence you may need to form your presentation to influence change in your area. If you would like to use images or videos, please use the resources on our website rather than creating your own.

Other ways to raise awareness about pavement parking and wheelie bins

- Share information from our Campaigns Team Facebook page [@campaignsatguidedogs](#)
- Put up leaflets about pavement parking and/or wheelie bins, but make sure to ask before you put the leaflets up in community centres or shops etc. You are not allowed to put posters/leaflets up in the street, on lampposts etc (it's against the law).
- Contact campaigns@guidedogs.org.uk for copies of the leaflets.

Do's and Don'ts

- Don't touch people's vehicles/bins or put leaflets on them (we need your help to make changes to society, not to challenge individuals)
- Do remain calm when talking to people and keep to the facts.
- Do have a responsible adult with you.
- Do get permission, if you intend to use a public place, you may need permission from the council to hold your event.
- Don't take video or photographs for your presentation or for social media, use our resources on the website.
- Don't put leaflets/posters up in the street, it's illegal, if you want to put leaflets/posters up in shops or community centres etc get permission.

Plan your Social Action

Plan

After looking at the options and watching the videos you should now have an idea of what Guide Dogs does and how you can help. It's important to plan what you are going to do and how you are going to do it.

- Measuring your success - do you need a method to count how many people attend your event or presentation, or do you need something like a questionnaire?
- Think about how you can evidence your hard work. An important part of planning is measuring your success.
- If you decide to use a venue check if it's insured, do you need public liability insurance? Guide Dogs cannot accept liability for any loss, damage or injury suffered by yourself or anyone else as a result of taking part in a fundraising event. For more information on planning an event visit our [Keeping it Legal page](#).
- Use the resources in this section to help you plan and carry out your social action.

Do

You've planned what you are going to do, but before you set out follow these guidelines. Always keep yourself safe, if you are under the age of 16 you can't:

- Fundraise without permission from your parents/guardians
- Buy or sell raffle or lottery tickets
- Collect money door-to-door, in the street or ask strangers for sponsorship
- Run a fundraising event alone - there must be an adult (over 18 years old) present
- Sell alcohol

On the day make sure you do your risk check before you start and throughout the day make sure that everyone's okay.

Remember to avoid conflict when you are out and about.

Review

- Did your project go to plan?
- What have you learned?
- How has your project helped Guide Dogs?
- How do you feel about your success?
- Would you change anything for next time?

Tell us about your success

To get your certificate of social action we need to know what you did and how you did it and how much you raised. Let us know how your group got on and we'll send you each a certificate. If you raised over £250 we'll also send you a thank you gift. Ask your leader to pay in any fundraising from your event through the options listed in the leader pack and they can email us to get your certificate, or you can tell us through your vinspired account.

Thank you for supporting Guide Dogs

Next steps

You've completed your project but what's next? You may want to volunteer for Guide Dogs or another charity, details of all volunteering roles can be found at www.guidedogs.org.uk/local-to-you. For many of our roles you need to be over 18 but we do have some roles for young people age 16 and over.

	Risks	How can we overcome it
Health and safety – list any risks and how you can overcome them		

How will we know if we've been successful? Did you achieve your objective?	
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Help and support on the day	<p>Will you need an adult (someone who's over 18) to support your activity?</p> <p>Name _____</p>
------------------------------------	---

Permission from adult to go ahead (if U18)	<p>Name of leader _____</p> <p>Signed _____</p> <p>Date _____</p>
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Do



Keep a log of all that you do to complete your social action including your planning activities.

Date						
Today we plan to						
Today we achieved						
We worked for (number of hours)						

Review

This is an opportunity for you to reflect on the work that you have done and an opportunity to learn and improve.



Did your project go to plan?	
What have you learned?	
How has your project helped Guide Dogs?	
How do you feel about your success?	
Would you change anything for next time?	

Letter to publishers template

[Copy and paste into Word to write your letter]



[Your address]

[Town]

[Postcode]

[Date]

Dear **[Insert the name of the Publisher]**

I am writing to you about CustomEyes®, a service that supports young people with a vision impairment or dyslexia by creating bespoke books on a range of coloured papers, in the font and size that they need.

I recently read **[Name of book]** which you published and I wanted to tell you about why I liked the book.

[Write about why you like the book]

[And why reading is important to you]

CustomEyes® work under the CLA Licence and the Print Disability Act to reproduce the printed books, most of the time they have to purchase a hard copy of the book, which is then scanned into PDF before it's converted into text, where it is proof read. This can be a time consuming process that is not free from errors and each book costs the charity about £250 to recreate.

I am asking you to support CustomEyes® as some other publishers already have, by providing them with the text and image files of my favourite book in an electronic format. Please would you consider my request and if you feel you can support this valuable lifechanging service get in touch with the CustomEyes® team by email **customeyes@guidedogs.org.uk** or call **0118 983 8346**.

Yours truly,

[Your name]

Guide Dogs Sponsor Form

Name _____

Group _____

I am taking part in a _____

for Guide Dogs, an organisation that supports people who are blind or partially sighted by providing services that enable them to live independently. Visit www.guidedogs.org.uk to see how the money raised helps.



Thank you for your support

OFFICE USE:	Paying slip no. (if applicable) _____
Date banked _____	GA: £ _____
Part of total banked _____	NON GA: £ _____
Fundraising group no. _____	Date sent to Guide Dogs _____

Paying in your sponsorship:

Congratulations - you have helped to change the lives of people living with sight loss!

There are several ways you can pay in your sponsorship money - please choose one of the options below and use the code YOUTHACTION (please tick the one you will use).

- Credit or debit card: call us on **0800 953 0113** to make your donation over the phone
- Cheques: these should be made payable to Guide Dogs and returned to us along with your sponsor form to the address below
- To pay in cash or cheques via your bank, please call us on **0345 143 0192** to obtain details
- Use your online giving page to pay in your sponsorship

However you pay, please return your sponsor form to us using the address below:

Guide Dogs, Hillfields, Burghfield Common, Reading RG7 3YG



Simulation Spectacles template

Instructions: Use the template to create your simulation spectacles on card. Use clear plastic for the lenses and a permanent marker to recreate the eye condition. Images of how the more common eye conditions affect people's sight can be viewed on the [eye conditions online powerpoint](#).

