



People Awards 2023

Programme

Wednesday 8 November

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stream



Programme of events

11:30am	Guest arrival and seated welcome drink
12 noon	Lunch
1.30pm*	Live stream and awards ceremony begins with a welcome from hosts Sally Nugent and Jon Kay
1.35pm	The Person-Centred Award for Volunteers and Staff
1.40pm	The Expert Award for Volunteers and Staff
1.45pm	The Optimistic Award for Volunteers and Staff
1.50pm	The Partner Award for Volunteers and Staff
1.55pm	The Lead-by-Example Award for Volunteers and Staff
2pm	The Engage Award for Volunteers and Staff
2.05pm	The Long service award
2.10pm	Inspirational speaker Craig Lundberg
2.20pm	The Hero Dog Award
2.25pm	The Community Sighted Guiding Award
2.30pm	The Inspirational Young Person of the Year Award
2.35pm	The Outstanding Person of the Year Award
2.40pm	The Guide Dog Partnership of the Year Award
2.45pm	The Chairman's Innovation Award for Volunteers and Staff
2.50pm	The Princess Alexandra Award for Lifetime Achievement for Volunteers and Staff
2.55pm	Thank you and goodbye
3pm	Close of the People Awards and live stream

*All timings are approximate and, although we'll endeavour to stick to them as much as possible, there may be some alterations on the day.



Welcome

from Andrew Lennox, CEO

Welcome to our annual People Awards. Whether you are joining us in person or through our live stream, thank you so much for coming together to recognise the standout efforts and expertise of volunteers and staff, as well as the inspirational people and partnerships we help.

We would like to say a very special thank you to our hosts, Sally and Jon, your time is greatly appreciated.

It would not be possible to deliver our life changing services without the thousands of volunteers who give their time and energy, and the dedication of our staff. And whether it's their incredible achievements in the face of sight loss or just their everyday resilience, we've all been inspired by our incredible service users, time and time again.

The People Awards are a way for us all to show our gratitude and respect in a really impactful way. So thank you to everybody who nominated somebody for an award this year. Even those who weren't shortlisted will now know how much their contribution and achievements are valued.

We are surrounded by heroes at Guide Dogs and these awards give us the chance to recognise some of them. Thank you for joining us to celebrate this year's winners.

Best wishes,

Andrew Lennox
Chief Executive Officer

Will you help Douglas change someone's life?

There are hundreds of people in the UK ready to be matched with a guide dog. You can be part of their journey to independence, by sponsoring a puppy from just £1 per week.

Visit [guidedogs.org.uk/sponsor](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/sponsor) to sponsor Douglas or one of his puppy pals today. You can download your pupcard and certificate straightaway!



The logo for BBC Breakfast, featuring the letters 'BBC' in white on a blue square background, followed by the word 'BREAKFAST' in white capital letters on a blue rectangular background. The logo is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the page, partially overlapping a large circular graphic with blue and orange segments.

Your hosts Jon Kay and Sally Nugent

Jon Kay hosts BBC Breakfast in Salford every Monday-Wednesday with Sally Nugent.

Born in Hull, Jon spent most of his early life in Cheshire before studying Politics at the University of Exeter. After doing a range of jobs - from potato picking to cheese making - Jon joined the BBC as a trainee reporter at local radio stations all over the UK, before getting his first full-time job as a journalist at Radio Bristol. After a few years, he made the move into television at BBC Points West.

Journalism has taken Jon all over the world - from crime scenes to courtrooms, riots to red carpets. He has worked as a correspondent in Los Angeles and Washington, as well as covering stories in South Africa, Australia, Central America and Iraq. He has covered floods, snow storms and earthquakes - but his most memorable moment was discovering "Brenda from Bristol" while conducting vox-pops in the street during the 2019 General Election ("Not ANOTHER one!")

Last summer, Jon was appointed to his dream job - as one of the main presenters of the UK's most-watched morning show, BBC Breakfast. He says he loves the variety of the role - from grilling politicians and breaking news to interviewing celebrity guests and meeting incredible people with inspiring personal stories. This year Jon is fronting BBC Breakfast's coverage of 500 Words - the world's biggest children's writing competition. He is a regular host of Saturday Live on BBC Radio 4 and has also presented programmes like Crimewatch and Drive on Radio 5 Live.

Sally was born and brought up on Merseyside. She studied French at Huddersfield University and started her career in BBC local radio as a producer and reporter.

She went on to cover sport for BBC network news, travelling to the Olympics, several football World Cups and Euros. During this time she also worked on BBC Radio 4, Radio 5 and the BBC News channel. She travelled to Iraq in 2010 to film with the Iraqi football team as they continued to play despite the ongoing violence in that country.

During her time at BBC Breakfast she has covered several stories that have made a big impact.

During the pandemic Sally worked with footballer Marcus Rashford on his campaign to find support for the millions of children who were missing out on free school meals. Two-and-a-half million children were fed as a result. BBC Breakfast won a Royal Television Society Award for the story. Sally continues to work with a group of sportsmen who are living with Motor Neurone Disease and has made several documentaries on the subject with the former Leeds Rhinos player Rob Burrow. She has covered the fundraising efforts of Kevin Sinfield and others who are raising money to help fund research into the disease. And in 2022 the government pledged an extra £50 million for facilities and research.

The 2023 Award categories

The PEOPLE behaviour categories:

P – Person-centred Award – for Volunteers and Staff

E – Expert Award – for Volunteers and Staff

O – Optimistic Award – for Volunteers and Staff

P – Partner Award – for Volunteers and Staff

L – Lead-by-Example Award – for Volunteers and Staff

E – Engage Award – for Volunteers and Staff

The Hero Dog Award – NEW for 2023!

Any dog, be that a guide dog, a buddy dog or one of guide dog mums or dads, who has gone over and above or is just an everyday hero who deserves to be recognised for everything they do.

The Community Sighted Guiding Award

Re-launched for 2023! The award recognises volunteers who have transformed individuals' lives by supporting them to access their community through guiding assistance.

The Inspirational Young Person of the Year Award

Someone under the age of 25 who is achieving their goals, inspiring others to enjoy life to the full.

The Outstanding Person of the Year Award

Someone who has overcome challenges, made a difference and inspired others.

The Guide Dog Partnership of the Year Award

A partnership that supports each other to live an independent life.

The Chairman's Innovation Award

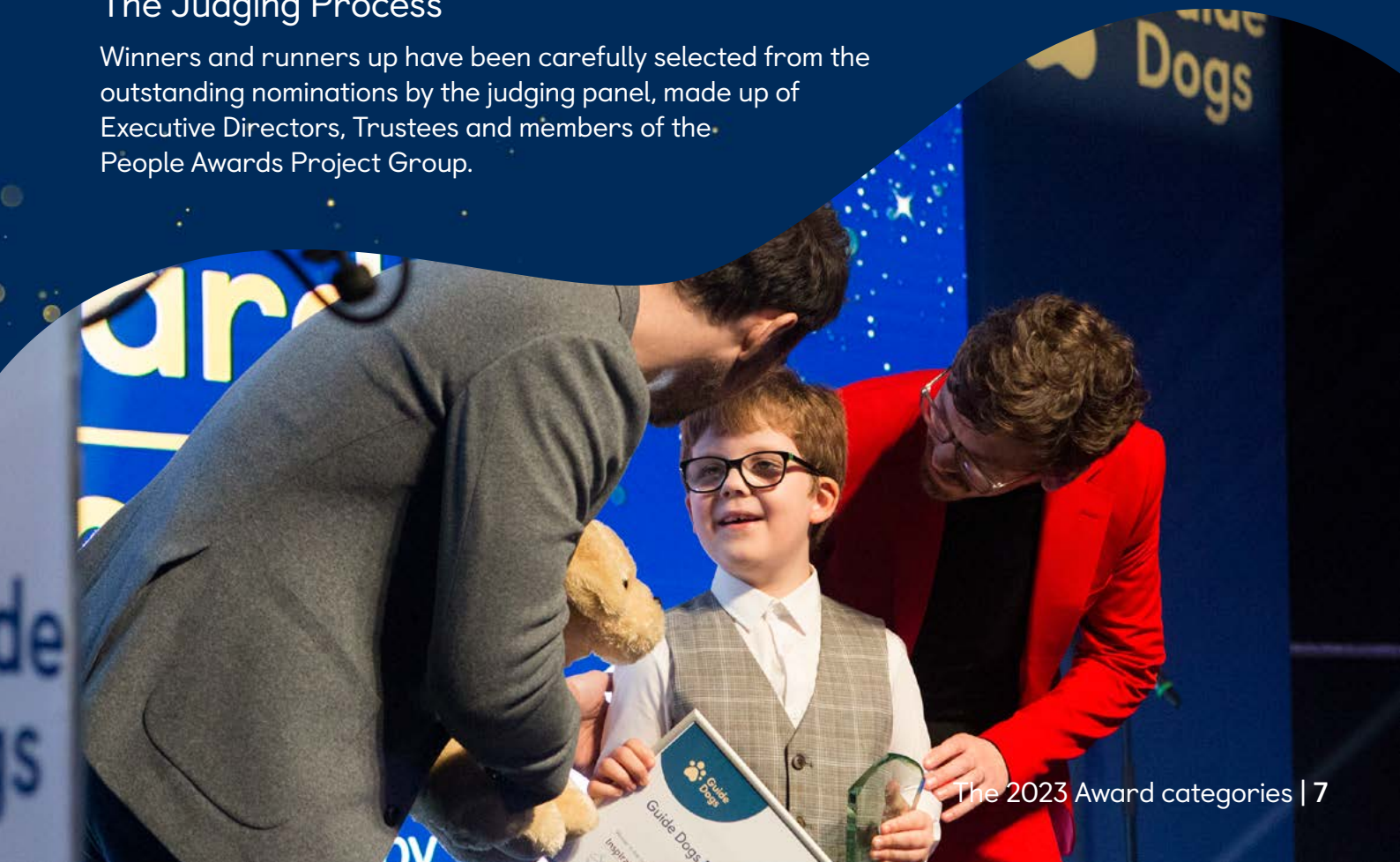
Re-launched in 2023 for Volunteers and staff! Recognising brilliant ideas and encouraging innovation from anywhere in the organisation. It will help recipients build on achievements by providing a grant to scale up, fast track or widen the reach/impact of that individual or team's organisational work or project.

The Princess Alexandra Award for Lifetime Achievement

This headline award, for staff and Volunteers, commemorates the patronage of HRH Princess Alexandra. It encompasses exceptional lifetime achievements (a minimum of 10 years) and dedication to Guide Dogs.

The Judging Process

Winners and runners up have been carefully selected from the outstanding nominations by the judging panel, made up of Executive Directors, Trustees and members of the People Awards Project Group.



Person-centred Award – volunteer finalists

Linda Page, My Sighted Guide



Linda is a volunteer My Sighted Guide and her person-centred approach to her partnership with Adam has made a huge difference. She took the time to understand Adam's needs and goals and has supported him to go at his own pace. The results have been fantastic. Going out with Linda has truly boosted his confidence. Together they have practised bus routes into town, and he has now joined a drama group too. The positive impact Linda has had throughout their partnership has been nothing short of extraordinary.

Marilyn Fisher, Volunteer Voices representative, Speaker, Fundraising group Coordinator, Collection Box Coordinator and Merchandise coordinator



Marilyn embodies a person-centred approach to all of her volunteer work. She cares deeply for Guide Dogs service users in her local area and will often provide a listening ear on the phone for anyone who needs support. Marilyn is a Volunteer Voices representative and engages with volunteers to hear their views. She has built incredible relationships and friendships across groups and everyone who has contact with her leaves feeling encouraged and built up. She brings a lot of experience and wisdom to her volunteer roles and has made a huge impact her local community.

Anne Pollock, My Sighted Guide



Anne is fairly new to the My Sighted Guide role but has already gone above and beyond to support her partner's aspirations. She has supported Rebecca since December 2022 and within a couple of months she volunteered to support her during a singing competition in Leeds. The trip involved a whole day out, a long train journey and navigating a new city together. She showed great determination to support Rebecca to do something she loves and is passionate about.

Person-centred Award – staff finalists

John Turnbull, Specialist Education Support Officer with supporting team Rachel Graham, Tony Murray and Catherine Power

John recently took the lead in planning a visit to the National Centre for a group of young people with a vision impairments from Ukraine as part of a mini tour across the UK. John wanted to make their visit as exciting as possible and reached out to LOOK-UK who he knew could connect him with British children of similar ages and interests who also had sight loss. John led this wonderful day with support from Rachel, Tony and Catherine who either contributed on both the day or throughout the planning stages. John sorted the seat planning for the day to help create friendships, as well as organising catering and decorations. John and the team were absolutely person-centred in this project placing emphasis on making sure the young people enjoyed their day with us.



Anna Standing, CAS Operations Manager

Anna is described as a fantastic, supportive and helpful colleague who cares enormously about her work and the puppy raisers she works with. She has been a huge help to the Marketing, Digital and Influencing Directorate by suggesting people who could take part in regional and national media opportunities, most notably the recent Channel 5 programme Puppy School for Guide Dogs. She clearly knows the people she supports inside and out, and always places the person at the centre of every decision and suggestion she makes.



Emily Booth, Guide Dog Mobility Specialist

Emily was nominated by a client who she recently matched with a new guide dog. Emily is described as calm, funny, kind and natural and as part of the matching process she shared her own life experiences to help build honesty and trust with her client. Emily takes the time to really listen and answer every question to make sure her client understands each response. During their training Emily helped her client through a panic attack and ensured they got back to the car safely, calmly and was reassuring. Emily's heart, passion and drive make a huge difference to her clients' lives.



Expert Award – volunteer finalists

Sue Marks, Fundraising Group Coordinator, Treasurer, Merchandise Coordinator and Fundraiser



Sue's passion to try new and innovative ways to fundraise means she is always coming up with novel ideas. The group have held everything from dancing events to concerts and even a murder mystery evening – which was a huge success – as well as organising the staple events such as collections, pub quizzes and coffee mornings. Sue never shies away from a challenge and has recently been juggling two key roles within the group – Coordinator and Treasurer. She offers the group valuable feedback to make improvements and is described as an absolute pleasure to work with.

Lisa Allison, Puppy Raiser, Speaker and Fundraiser



Lisa is described as being 'relentless optimistic' in seeking to help others. She goes beyond her role as a puppy raiser to support potential, new and existing volunteers. She set up a WhatsApp group for puppies in her current litter, which has provided support, advice and camaraderie for all its members. She is a trained speaker and regularly visits local groups to promote Guide Dogs. Most recently, she offered her support to the national puppy raiser recruitment campaign, including appearances on television and radio which helped encourage many more vital applications.

Sarah Hammett, Safeguarding Trainer, Advanced Training Fosterer, Fundraiser and Dog Exerciser



Sarah is nominated for her expert contribution in delivering safeguarding training sessions with the Southampton Team since 2015 – in the region of more than 30 sessions in total! Sarah's background is in teaching and her knowledge of safeguarding issues and experience working with children and young people is extremely valuable and appreciated here at Guide Dogs. She has excellent skills delivering training and her passion and expertise shine through to all her participants.

Expert Award – staff finalists

The Breeding Dog Advisor Team

The Breeding Dog Advisor Team received multiple nominations for their expert skills, knowledge and work ethic. They are all described as hard-working individuals who truly care for our dogs and people. The team have had to manage some changes within Guide Dogs' breeding operations and they have shown enthusiasm to learn and embraced new ways of working. They have truly adopted a learning culture and thrown themselves into learning about dog training and behaviour. One example of this is implementing the new breeding dog classes, which they are now planning and running for all volunteers.



Puppy Raising Department

The Guide Dogs Puppy Raising department is a team that embraces new challenges, tackles problems head-on and always remains solution-focused. They have a can-do attitude and remain positive and motivated in their mission to coach our volunteers to raise our future guide dogs. They rely on experience within the team to provide a great mentoring journey, while also learning and embracing ideas from new colleagues. During the pandemic the team lost 40% of their volunteers. The team have worked tirelessly to recover and recruit new puppy raisers, they manage busy workloads, have introduced new tools and improved communications. There were also 16 separate nominations for individual members of this department.



Pete Lock, National Habilitation Lead

Since joining Guide Dogs, Pete has been a leading voice in promoting the habilitation profession and the importance of this support to children, young people and families. He works tirelessly to extend his own knowledge and expertise and has also created pathways to advance all staff in the habilitation role through links with universities and expanding support and mentoring for trainees. Pete has set up additional CPD opportunities for staff such as the Hab Coffee Stop and a two-day conference promoting a culture of continuous learning. Pete is always approachable, supportive and open to new ideas and ways of working.



Optimistic Award – volunteer finalists

Mandy Pike, Fundraiser and Speaker



Mandy has shown incredible optimism in really changing times. When her beloved guide dog Fable passed away suddenly after a short illness she was understandably devastated and shocked. Despite also having to manage without her guide dog, she immediately turned her attention to raising funds to name a puppy in Fable's memory. Within eight months of Fable passing Mandy had raised an incredible £5,000. Mandy chose to name the puppy Mali, meaning hippo, as Fable loved to jump in puddles and was affectionately known as Mandy's hippo dog.

Yvonne Smith, Puppy Raiser and Puppy Fosterer



Yvonne began puppy raising after being diagnosed with a terminal medical condition. She decided to quit work and volunteer for Guide Dogs to provide focus to Yvonne was medically retired from work and she decided to volunteer for Guide dogs to provide focus. That was three years ago and now her specialists are delighted that her condition has stabilised, which could be a result of the exercise she receives running after puppies! Yvonne is also a speaker for Guide Dogs and is happy to share her volunteering story. She's dropped everything to take part in last-minute media opportunities to promote volunteering for Guide Dogs as part of The Big Help Out. Her story touched everyone and she's a brilliant example of how volunteering can change your life.

Liz Sykes, Fundraising Group Coordinator, Merchandise Coordinator and Fundraiser



In 2012 Liz offered to lead the Deal, Dover and Sandwich fundraising branch in Kent, with her husband who also took on the role of Treasurer. Liz had the enthusiasm and confidence to 'turn the volume up' for the group. Since then, she has steadily networked throughout the area, she inspires and encourages local businesses, she links up with medical practices to promote eyesight awareness, and encourages and supports her fellow volunteers. The group has hosted a huge number of successful events, which has led to their annual income raising from £3,000 to £15,000 under her leadership.

Optimistic Award – staff finalists

Janine Dixon, Head of Breeding Operations

Janine is nominated by the Guide Dogs Communications Team for her can-do attitude towards accommodating demands from the media, even when facing challenges and barriers. The nature of the media is that requests often come in last minute, day and night. Janine always goes above and beyond to help make the opportunities happen. Janine is passionate about Guide Dogs and the puppies she works with and the Comms Team say they wouldn't be able to do their jobs without her.



Molly Line, Family Events Officer

Molly is described as having a talent that simply can't be taught – the ability to befriend, effortlessly welcome and enthuse everyone she meets. At events, Molly is an incredibly positive force in the room. In her role she interacts with a wide range of people from colleagues, children, young people and families, external agencies and partner organisations. Everyone always comments that she is a delight to work with. She has brought fantastic new ideas to the team and recently developed two new events for young people that focus on inclusive sports. She has enthusiasm and passion for helping people to try something new.



Laura Bradley, Operations Support Coordinator

Laura is nominated for her support of the Guide Dogs Open Doors campaign, which she manages on top of all her daily responsibilities. Laura generously gives her time to support the Campaigns Team at party conferences and she's always confident, upbeat and approachable. Even when the focus is often on the difficult and challenging issues we are working to address, Laura constantly finds opportunities to share positive stories about her partnership and the difference Guide Dogs makes in people's lives.



Partner Award – volunteer finalists

John Fairley, Fundraiser, Speaker, Campaigner, My Sighted Guide, Fundraising Group Coordinator, Treasurer and Collection Box Coordinator



John started volunteering as a fundraiser three years ago and quickly took on the role of Collection Box Coordinator. With his love of data he began to collate lists of locations and, together with a puppy raiser, managed to win the trust and friendship of 70 new locations. John also began to organise events and collections, including rekindling contacts with Birmingham International Train Station, and made many new ones. The fundraising totals for Solihull have more than tripled thanks to John's passion and enthusiasm. John has also challenged himself to complete 12 challenges for Guide Dogs throughout the year.

Mid-Wiltshire Fundraising Group



The Mid-Wiltshire Fundraising Group is a new group that has already made a positive impact in their area. In the short few months they've been active they've already raised £3,700, which is mainly due to the relationships they've built with supermarkets. They've placed over 30 collection boxes in the area, and Eleanor, the group lead, has brought in many new volunteers and companies to support the group. Nick Dark, the Treasurer, is also brilliant at keeping a smooth record of the finances. The group have really hit the ground running!

Sevenoaks Fundraising Group



The whole team at the Sevenoaks fundraising group is nominated for the outstanding contributions they have each made to help the branch become one of the most successful in the South East. The team is very proactive in reaching out to the community to offer support at events and they always maximise every opportunity. If there is ever a national fundraising initiative the group will organise an event together. If an individual has an idea, they will all get behind it. They are a passionate and innovative team who make every opportunity a first-class event.

Partner Award – staff finalists

The National Events Team

This year the Events team managed all the logistics of the Guide Dogs Run event in-house. They were meticulous in their planning, reduced costs to Guide Dogs by more than £25,000 and delivered a fantastic and engaging event for our participants. Alongside this the team were faced with the shocking news of the passing of their much-loved colleague. The team made the collective decision to proceed with the event, dig deep and showed incredible resilience to come together and put on something fantastic. Despite emotions being high, participants wouldn't have known, runners were smiling all day and we had nothing but positive feedback.



Suzanne Sharples, IT Business Analyst

Suzanne joined the Project One team at the start of 2022 to support our volunteering projects. In every call, meeting and chat, Suzanne adopts a friendly and open tone to seek everyone's views and make all participants feel welcome. She builds good working relationships by taking the time to get to know each member of the team and all stakeholders. Her objective, patient and pragmatic approach means she can persuade those with different viewpoints and behaviours to agree. Suzanne's contribution has ensured the project is in a great position with some of our most complex processes mapped out, linked and understood.



John Welsman, Customer Experience Lead

John has played a key role in many projects with the Communications Team and has been instrumental to their success. He is always helpful, highly collaborative and takes a positive approach to any challenges. He has supported the development and running of our first Guide Dogs Live Webinar for current and future guide dog owners, he played a key role in our partnership with Virgin Atlantic and helped develop of a number of new podcasts. John is a great asset to Guide Dogs – he is genuinely keen to help other teams, share his expertise and work together in partnership.



Lead-by-example Award – volunteer finalists

Catherine Pitney Green, Fundraising Group Coordinator, Collection Box Coordinator, Merchandise Coordinator and Fundraiser



As Fundraising Group Coordinator for the Havant and Hayling Island group, Cathy has limited volunteer support in the area to lean on. But she has somehow managed to develop and manage several successful relationships and events with local Supermarkets including Asda, Tesco, Morrisons and Co-op, as well as attending fetes and school events. She is amazing at selling trading merchandise and has a real impact on ensuring Guide Dogs has a presence in her local community. Cathy also supports volunteers in other areas, and does this on top of being a busy mum to three children and working full-time.

Sophie Vann, Breeding Dog Holder, Fosterer, Puppy Raiser, Speaker and Specialist Volunteer



Sophie has a number of volunteer roles at Guide Dogs. She is very talented in the field of dog training and behaviour and she's also a qualified teacher. Last year, Sophie was set up as a Specialist Volunteer at our National Centre, where she has made a huge contribution to running the training classes for breeding dogs, including writing lesson plans and training materials. The classes simply wouldn't have been as successful or well-organised without Sophie's support and expertise. She has created a long-lasting impression on everyone she's worked with at the National Centre.

Jan Wallace, Merchandise Coordinator and Speaker



Jan has been a volunteer since 2012, holding several roles, including being the group and merchandise coordinator for Gwynedd. The group includes a range of people with different skills and backgrounds, and Jan is always acutely aware of this and supports others in a way that has brought out the best in them. If someone in the group needs some help Jan never hesitates to offer her guidance and support. She gives fantastic support to new volunteers, providing encouragement and adapting tasks to make sure they feel confident and welcome. Jan is described as 'the glue in our group'.

Lead-by-example Award – staff finalists

Georgie Fields, HR Business Partner (Operations)

In her role, Georgie often has to deal with difficult, complex and confidential matters, which she does with the utmost professionalism. She has a wealth of knowledge and is excellent at advising and supporting teams within the guide dog service. She is solution-focused, consistent, fair and transparent in how she works. Her way of working promotes trust, understanding and support. Georgie is an inspirational member of the team who, although extremely busy, always puts people first and brings positivity and enthusiasm in all her work.



Dee Beach, Vision Rehabilitation Specialist

Dee has made a long-lasting impression on learners from the Guide Dogs Academy and received multiple nominations for her role. She has a wealth of knowledge and expertise, incredible communication skills and is always positive and professional. Her ability to coach and impart her knowledge in a way that meets each person's needs is truly unique and inspiring. Dee has an impressive calm, authoritative but personable approach to coaching, which builds a safe space for learners while also empowering them to grow and find their own way.



Tony Benham, CAS Operations Manager

Tony is described as an inspiring and motivating leader, whose passion and drive is refreshing and contagious. Last year Tony inspired a whole team to challenge themselves and take part in the Total Warrior obstacle course event to raise money for Guide Dogs. Tony tackled barriers to motivate the group. He sourced sponsored places to cover the entry fee, he developed personalised training plans and shared his own personal struggles to encourage others. The team say his actions brought motivation, self-belief, team building, fundraising, nerves, elation, achievement, and... a lot of mud!



Engage Award – volunteer finalists

Lynda Browett, My Sighted Guide



Lynda became a sighted guide in 2019 and is in two partnerships with clients who she helps in completely different ways. Since beginning her role she has shown a huge passion for helping others. She works brilliantly within her partnerships and always finds new ways to support their needs. During the pandemic Lynda took on extra responsibilities as a volunteer keeping in touch caller, and helped make regular calls to people who were waiting to be matched in new partnerships, offering a friendly ear during a difficult time.

Lynne Fear, Puppy Raiser, Fosterer, Collection Box Coordinator, Fundraiser and Speaker



Lynne is relatively new to volunteering with Guide Dogs but she has embraced the role with open arms. She takes every opportunity to engage others in our vital work, visiting schools, groups and attending fundraisers. She is currently raising her second pup and has secured exclusive opportunities for other puppy raisers, such as an agreement with the NEC in Birmingham for our dogs to travel to the site on their bus services which are quieter for pups on non-show days than regular buses. She is always kind and supportive of others, but most importantly always puts her puppy and their training first.

Becky Dytham, My Sighted Guide and Sighted Guide Trainer



Becky is a volunteer trainer who helps to deliver sighted guide training. She has been very engaged since the start of her new role, always keen to learn and engage with people living with sight loss to better understand their lived experience. She always makes time to engage with people who come along to the training and learn their stories. She makes sure she involves all participants in the training and takes time to understand the audience to adapt her training style. She is a great asset to the team.

Engage Award – staff finalists

James Betts and Clare Hellery, Spotlight Team

James and Clare have developed a series of excellent Spotlight films which shine a light on different roles across Guide Dogs. The films are produced to an incredibly high standard and demonstrate exceptional storytelling talent. Together, they work with different teams across the charity, and both have a natural ability to put people at ease and engage people within the series. They are an ambitious and dynamic duo and are an asset to Guide Dogs.



Anne Rowse, Community Fundraising Relationship Manager

Anne is a very valued member of the Community Fundraising Team. She is so committed to her role, every day she goes above and beyond her normal working day to ensure everything is completed and others do not miss out. She attends her group events, makes sure any equipment or items are delivered on time (even being the delivery driver herself if needed) and always thinks of others first. No task is ever a problem for Anne, and she'll always find a way to overcome any difficulties. On top of this, Anne is also a volunteer Puppy Raiser for Guide Dogs.



Paco Villalvilla, Guide Dogs Mobility Specialist

Paco recently supported an incredible media opportunity with the CBeebies TV show Dog Squad and volunteered to take on the role of our 'bubbly' guide dog trainer. This opportunity took months of planning with Paco finding the time to speak with the production team several times to share his expert knowledge. When filming commenced he perfectly took on the role of child-friendly TV star and spoke with the clarity and enthusiasm needed to engage a very young audience.





Inspirational speaker Craig Lundberg

In March 2007, Craig was on his second tour of duty in Iraq when he was hit by two rocket-propelled grenades. Craig said: "I had so much shrapnel in my face that I couldn't see. But I just got up and tried to carry on the fight."

The former Lance Corporal's injuries were so significant that it was touch and go whether he would make it. He was placed in an induced coma and underwent a 12-hour operation to remove shrapnel, but his left eye had totally gone and his right was damaged beyond repair. Craig had also broken his jaw, nose and cheek, and his left arm was broken in several places. He needed a metal plate in his face and left arm, and plastic surgery to piece him back together. When Craig finally woke up, he was in a German hospital and told the devastating news that his sight was gone. "My career in the Army was over and I was only 22," he said. "I didn't want to be vulnerable. I was determined to still make something of my life, even though I couldn't see."

Craig was transferred back to the UK and once discharged from hospital, began rebuilding his life. In 2007, Craig threw himself into sport. He completed the London Marathon in 2008 and started playing Blind Football for England. The travelling backwards and forwards prompted Craig to apply for a guide dog. And in March 2009, Guide Dogs united him with black Labrador cross, Hugo. "Having Hugo made travelling around so much easier," Craig said. "I had grown up with dogs and liked them, but having a guide dog just felt like a real safety net. I was never lost any more."

Hugo became such a massive part of his life that when his first son was born, Craig named him Ben Hugo. When Hugo retired he lived the rest of his life in the family home. In 2019, Craig qualified with his second guide dog, black Labrador Comet. Craig recently appeared in a documentary Martin Clunes made with Guide Dogs. Martin said: "Craig is a genuinely inspiring person, and he's really good company. To see him thriving now thanks to Guide Dogs, after everything he's been through, it's incredible and shows what life-changing animals these really are. It was such an honour to meet him".

The Hero Dog Award – finalists

Lassie

Lassie is a hero dog who has saved Anica's life, not once but twice! Twice Lassie refused to cross a road when a speeding car was approaching. Lassie has also enabled Anica to progress her career and accompanied her on numerous international trips. Through all her amazing work, Lassie's tail always wags, sometimes even when she sleeps! She brightens every day and if Anica ever fees down, Lassie brings her favourite squeaky toys and squeaks until Anica start laughing. Lassie also supports Anica with fundraising and always brings the highest donations in their slot as nobody manages to resist her 'puppy-eye-waggy-tail' treatment.



Elsa

Guide dog Elsa has experienced a lot of change in the last six months, when her owner Mel received a cancer diagnosis. Their routine changed considerably and Elsa had to quickly learn new routes in and around Nottingham City Hospital. Elsa goes with Mel to chemotherapy and sits quietly for several hours while she has treatment. In the days after treatment, Elsa will often sit close. She seems to instinctively know when to up the game or when to slow down the pace. Elsa really is going over and beyond what is usually expected of a guide dog by providing emotional and practical support.



Stormzy

Stormzy is the best buddy dog for Josselin and has transformed her whole family's lives. Josselin has had more than 30 operations in her life so she's understandably anxious in hospitals. Stormzy now goes with her and has a calming effect. Their wonderful partnership was noticed by the Children's Hospice where Josselin attends and they were invited to be the stars of their Christmas Appeal. They raised an incredible £50,000 for children living with life-limiting conditions. Stormzy has quickly learnt how to walk next to Josselin's wheelchair and will help lead the family to a ramp. He brightens everyone's day and is described as a truly special soul.



The Community Sighted Guiding Award – finalists

Phillip Storey



Phil and Clare have been in a My Sighted Guide partnership since December 2022. Clare says that with Phil's support she has gone from being quite restricted to being confident exploring new places. This has helped improve her fitness and her wellbeing as she feels happier that the world is more manageable. Phil's local knowledge is excellent and he takes a person-centred approach to their walks, making sure to go at Clare's pace and planning some much-appreciated coffee stops along the way. Thanks to Phil, Clare now has the confidence to walk routes independently with her cane.

Bryan White



Bryan is described by his My Sighted Guide partner, Keith, as a 'shining beacon of hope' and having an unwavering commitment to providing exceptional guidance and support. By guiding Keith through various activities including long walks, social activities, gym sessions and bustling city streets, Bryan has not only made a positive impact but has also been an inspiration. His approach to volunteering goes beyond navigation – through their regular gym sessions Bryan is also empowering Keith to pursue a healthy and active lifestyle, promoting not only physical wellbeing but also boosting his confidence and quality of life.

Maureen Harle



Maureen always adopts a 'can-do' attitude in her partnership with Mary and embraces new ways of working. Without Maureen's support Mary says she wouldn't have been able to do the social activities she enjoys. Together, they get out in the fresh air, take a stroll along the seafront, enjoy exercise and pop to cafes for coffee and a bite to eat. At the beginning of the year their partnership had to be put on hold due to Mary's health but when they could meet again in May 2023, it helped improve her mental health enormously. Maureen has shown real dedication and has made a big difference to her partner's life.

The Inspirational Young Person of the Year Award – finalists

Owen Agombar

Owen was fully sighted until just before Covid, when, aged 12, he lost his vision initially in one eye, quickly followed by the other. Due to Owen's suppressed immune system his family also must live quite isolated lives and he's unable to attend school, which affects him being able to socialise with friends. However Owen remains cheerful and positive, and he's now learning to play the drums, to bake, he's learning Braille and through having buddy dog Oona, he's motivated to begin learning long cane skills. Owen's ability to remain positive and willingness to take on new challenges is a huge inspiration.



Mason Davies

Mason, aged 12, has inspired a whole community to raise money for Guide Dogs. He initially set himself a target of £500 but quickly exceeded that and went on to raise more than £30,000 within months! Mason began by tackling a 13-mile sponsored "Trig Trail" last summer over challenging mid-Wales terrain and inspired 115 local well-wishers to join him on the walk. He arranged a music event in December with an auction and raffle, and has placed more than 20 countertop boxes in the mid-Wales area. The amount of support he has inspired from his local community has been incredible and everyone is so proud of him.



Caitlin Leigh

At 19 years old Caitlin is an inspiration to us all. She uses her story and experiences to inspire and educate others. Caitlin is always willing to support Guide Dogs and taken part in numerous national campaigns. She's currently studying Sport and Exercise Therapy at the University of Wolverhampton and she's also a three-time national champion in Judo for her weight category. This year Caitlin spent her summer volunteering her time, going around different primary and secondary schools, speaking to young people with sight loss, showing them that a disability doesn't have to be a barrier.



Outstanding Person of the Year Award – finalists

Cheryl Bradshaw



Cheryl recently completed an incredible 1,100 mile tandem cycle ride from Land's End to John O'Groats, raising money to help more people with a vision impairment to enjoying tandem cycling. Cheryl and her tandem partner cycled almost every day for three weeks, overcoming various challenges along the way, including thunderstorms, traffic jams and wild camping. This is just the latest extreme challenge for Cheryl, who last year hiked to Everest Base Camp and next year plans to take on a marathon. Cheryl never allows herself to be defeated and is an incredible inspiration to others.

Scott Bailey



In the four years since Scott lost his sight, he has fought every day against depression and anxiety to regain his independence. He pushed himself to get back into education and has completed a college and university degree - and plans to work as a counsellor helping others with sight loss. He has taken up a new sport, Judo, and his dedication to train and learn has seen him picked for the Paralympic potential squad. Scott is a fantastic ambassador for Guide Dogs. He's made it his personal mission to meet everyone involved in making his incredible partnership with guide dog Milo possible.

Terry Quinn



The word 'inspirational' is often used by people to describe Terry. He's very generous with his time, spending many hours inspiring and helping others through his volunteering as a speaker and fundraiser, but also through his fascinating blogs. People contact Terry all the time, asking for his advice about travelling with his guide dog and admiring how he demonstrates that sight loss isn't a barrier. Terry lights up a room when he enters with his smile, his wit and his confidence. With Spencer by his side he says he can achieve anything, and while doing so he encourages and inspires others too.

Guide Dog Partnership of the Year Award – finalists

Tom McInulty and Toby

Wherever Tom and Toby go they leave people feeling positive, happy and in awe of the difference a guide dog partnership can make. Tom gives talks to a wide range of groups as a volunteer speaker, and Toby shares his love to make any nervous children or adults feel relaxed and safe. They are also fundraisers for three local Guide Dogs branches and meet with companies who are raising funds for Guide Dogs. Tom is also a volunteer sight loss trainer for student doctors at Southampton General Hospital. In the last year they have attended an incredible 65 events promoting Guide Dogs!



Dr Anica Zeyen and Lassie

Anica's guide dog Lassie has made a tremendous difference to her life, allowing her to get around safely without worry. Lassie has helped Anica with two major achievements – becoming a professor and an adoptive mum. Lassie helps Anica find her way around campus and travel to other universities to build her network. She also helps Anica when she's with her two boys, even learning how much extra space they need when she's holding their hands. Anica and Lassie have spent almost every day together over the last eight years and they've travelled to 15 countries.



Hilary Lester and Portia

Hilary is described as bold, fearless and an absolute inspiration, ready to give anything a go to highlight the important work of Guide Dogs. In the last year Hilary has shown her support to a group of local fundraising challengers in every way possible – giving interviews on radio, taking part in bucket collections and joining their challenging treks along the Welsh coastline with Portia by her side. Hilary and Portia are fantastic ambassadors for Guide Dogs, helping the group attract many more supporters and vital donations.



Chairman's Innovation Award - volunteer winner

Terry Quinn



Terry was nominated for the Chairman's Innovation Award by his partner, Dean, who says:

"When Terry lost his sight, I felt he also lost himself. He went from being a fun-loving, confident and exuberant person, to a frightened, sad, lonely, isolated and introverted shell of his former self. His spark had gone, his flame had been snuffed. He was always known for his smile that would light up a room, but the smile was no longer there.

"Since being matched with his incredible guide dog, Spencer, Terry's life has quite quickly come back, even become enhanced. He is confident once again, and continues to push the boundaries of his capabilities. Terry has thrown himself into a completely new vocation, learned new skills and developed ways around his limitations.

"He bought himself an industrial CO2 Laser, learnt new creative technologies and now has his own Etsy Store, where he makes and sells lots of different original crafts. He spends hours and hours every day, and often into the night designing and making. He has received so many positive and wonderful comments about his work, and received lots of orders for it. He donates up to 30% of every sale to Guide Dogs and has raised enough to name two puppies so far."

Chairman's Innovation Award – staff winner

Lisa Knight, Head of Community Fundraising, and her team (with special credit for volunteer Rob Armstrong)

In 2021 the Community Fundraising Team launched a six-month pilot to raise donations by collecting foreign coins and old UK currency. The pilot collected a wide mix of coins, including collectable coins, and raised approximately £2,000. After sharing the findings of the pilot, Lisa championed the project being rolled out nationally as a new method of community fundraising. This presents a range of new opportunities, including working with supermarkets who often hold bags of unwanted coins. Lisa and her colleagues have worked hard to deliver guidance and resources to support local fundraising groups with this activity.

The grant for winning this award will be used to increase awareness of this activity, including bespoke social media content and activity resources for schools.



Long Service Award 60 years

Marjorie Culham

This year marks an incredible milestone for Majorie Culham – an impressive 60 years volunteering for Guide Dogs.

Marjorie's involvement with Guide Dogs started when she was a Girl Guide leader in the 1960s collecting foil bottle caps, and later supporting her local fundraising group. When the Redbridge Training School opened 1986 she jumped at the opportunity to puppy raise, which she continues to do to this day and has now raised 31 puppies! Over 20 years ago, Marjorie set up the Stour Valley fundraising group, which she still runs with the support of her husband, David. Marjorie is a passionate advocate for the rights of people with sight loss and helps educate her local community about the importance of our work. At the beginning of this year, Marjorie was recognised in the New Years Honours List for her voluntary and charitable services to people with a vision impairment.



Princess Alexandra Award for Lifetime Achievement – volunteer winner

Janet and Clive Evans



Janet and Clive have been volunteering for Guide Dogs since 1981, and they have given a loving home to more than 100 of our dogs. Their unwavering dedication and passion for the work of Guide Dogs is an inspiration to not only volunteers but staff as well. They will take on any of our dogs, no matter the issue, and help work through the challenges they present. The couple won't ever give up, even when many others may do.

Janet and Clive recently supported one of our Academy Guide Dog Trainers with a dog who had separation anxiety that meant they couldn't go into kennels around training hours. Another staff member recommended Janet and Clive and as soon as the trainer got in touch, they were put at ease. Since the dog has moved to them, he has come on immeasurably with his settling and can now be left for over an hour when he couldn't be left for a minute before. They take on challenges, listen to our advice and then implement it. Their positive outlook is inspiring.

Princess Alexandra Award for Lifetime Achievement – staff winner

Peter Smith, Guide Dog Mobility Specialist

Peter has dedicated his whole working life to Guide Dogs and is awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for his incredible 50 years of service. He first qualified as a Guide Dogs Mobility Specialist in the 1970s and has held significant roles throughout his service at Guide Dogs, making a considerable impact in all of them. Peter is described by his colleagues as an excellent role model, manager and ambassador for Guide Dogs.

Since joining Guide Dogs, he has witnessed many periods of change and has always remained optimistic, honest and supportive. He is hugely knowledgeable and greatly respected. He is always committed to the highest standards for both clients and guide dogs, taking a person-centred and dog-centred approach, always in line with ethical standards. Peter received numerous nominations for this award from many of his colleagues who have worked alongside him at different points during his career. He is greatly appreciated and respected, and very deserving of this award.





Celebrating Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Marking the first anniversary of the launch of the Guide Dogs Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy, an awards event was held in July, recognising the contributions of employees who have gone above and beyond in supporting Guide Dogs to become a more diverse and equitable employer with a greater sense of inclusion and belonging. The celebration event was hosted by Trustees Patrick Moran and Ranjit Sondhi, and held virtually over Teams to remove some of the geographical barriers to attending and keep costs to a minimum.

Celebrating allyship and advocacy, our winners were:

Pillar One – Becoming a Gold Standard Employer

Winner – Simon Addison, I S Assistive Technology Support Technician.
Runner-up – Richard Ilett, Assistive Technology Trainer.

Pillar Two – Being inspired by difference

Winner – Emily Knott, My Sighted Guide Partnership Officer
Runner-up – Pippa Bolton, PPQ Training Specialist

Pillar Three – Levelling the playing field

Winner – Craig Speed, Performance Reporting Analyst
Runner-up – Dot Millar, Learning and Skills Consultant

Pillar Four – Building a culture of belonging

Winner – Luke Hughes, CAS Operations Manager & Hayley Moore, Guide Dog Trainer
Runner-up – Employee Network Chairs: Giri Gopalan, John Garrett, Sharon Swarbrick, Jayne Soames, Patrick Browne, Chris Mabbatt, Maik Muhle, Carl Freeman, Hazel Cattell, Nicole Walker

Senior Leader Award

Winner – Patrick Browne, Head of Events
Runner-up – Chris Austin, Assoc. Director Property & Workplace

Sunflower Award

Winner – Richard Bounds, Assistant Director, Adult Services

Overall Impact Award

Winner – Chris Mabbatt, Procurement Business Partner

Congratulations to all the winners and thank you for your commitment, hard work and allyship.

Thank you

The People Awards grows every year, and 2023 is no exception. To improve the reach of the ceremony we've introduced a live stream of the event, so everyone across the organisation can be a part of the celebrations. So our first thank you goes to all the virtual viewers for tuning in to support your unsung heroes.

Improving accessibility is always a key consideration, with a huge amount of thought from the DEI, Content and Design Teams, thank you.

Thanks goes to everyone who entered a nomination, we received the highest amount of nominations to date, which is phenomenal!

The judging panel need a big thanks, as they have the unenviable task of selecting our winners from so many outstanding nominations.

The dedication and collaboration of the People Awards project group has been the driving force behind this event, thank you to every single person who's been involved across the organisation, without you this event couldn't happen.

A massive thank you to our wonderful hosts Jon Kay and Sally Nugent, and to all the celebrities for their special messages.

Thank you so much to Craig Lundberg who inspired us with his moving and brave experience of sight-loss.

And a huge and final thank you to all our dedicated volunteers, staff and service users. To quote Andrew Lennox, 'We are surrounded by heroes at Guide Dogs and these awards give us the chance to recognise some of them. Thank you for joining us to celebrate this year's winners'.



People Awards 2023

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