

# FAQs: Navigating your Guide Dog journey

Find and explore valuable information and answers to frequently asked questions about our Guide Dog program, covering topics such as funding, training, dog care, and support services.

## NDIS and funding

- **If there is an issue with NDIS funding and a dog becomes available before my funding is approved, will I be allowed to begin training with my dog?**

Guide Dogs Victoria (GDV) is committed to offering a comprehensive range of services for people of all ages and levels of vision, regardless of funding. We understand that each individual's situation is different and work hard to accommodate specific needs and circumstances. Rest assured, should any issues arise with funding or funding approval, we will work with you to ensure a seamless transition.

- **How does GDV support Clients to ensure that funding is ready to go to avoid any delays with matching or Guide Dog Handler training?**

Our organisation works closely with Clients to complete and submit all necessary documents on time, helping to ensure that funding applications are reviewed and decided on as quickly as possible. If there is a delay in a response about funding, we have an escalation process that we can activate and follow. We also have a dedicated team of specialists in our Support Coordination Team who can provide guidance throughout this process.

- **What options are available if I'm ineligible for NDIS funding due to my age?**

If you're ineligible for NDIS funding because of your age, GDV can support you in exploring alternative funding options, such as My Aged Care. We will help you understand your funding package and how it may cover the services and costs associated with accommodating a Guide Dog. GDV will work closely with you and your registered plan provider to identify and investigate the best available options.

## Guide Dogs

- **What is GDV's policy on replacing a Guide Dog that retires early due to health, behavioural issues, or injury, and how is that decision made?**

GDV adheres to a warranty schedule that assesses the funding gap if a Guide Dog retires earlier than expected due to health concerns, behavioural challenges, or injury. We are committed to supporting our Clients by helping them access all available funding to continue their program.

- **How is my Guide Dog's comfort and safety ensured during air travel, whether for my work, their training, or on holidays?**

For interstate or international travel, we use trusted professional animal transporters with years of experience in safely transporting Guide Dogs. When flying with you, Guide Dogs are legally allowed on any domestic flight and, with certain conditions, on international flights. Their training ensures the Guide Dog stays calm and comfortable, staying close to you throughout the flight, much like when they accompany you in a car's footwell. Operational, airport and aviation, and/or quarantine regulations may apply for international travel.

- **Will I receive open and transparent communication about my status on the waitlist, along with updates and notifications of any issues related to funding or matching?**

The team at GDV works with each person and their unique circumstances while awaiting confirmation of matching and funding approval. We aim to promptly provide the proper communication to each Client and encourage individuals to contact us if they require immediate assistance regarding their planning.

- **Can I know the age, any known health conditions, and whether the dog has previously worked with a Client when being offered a match?**

Yes, all relevant information will be provided during the confirmation visit, which takes place with every Client and their potential match. This ensures you are fully informed and involved in the decision-making process regarding your future Guide Dog. The only details withheld are those related to confidentiality, which GDV takes very seriously.

- **Is it possible for my Guide Dog to sit quietly under my desk while I'm working in the office?**

Absolutely! All Guide Dogs are trained by GDV to rest quietly and are well-behaved in both home and office environments. Clients will receive training and guidance on this, and we also provide support for colleagues to ensure a smooth transition into the workplace.

- **Can I receive a Guide Dog that is comfortable being left alone for short periods or when I'm not in sight?**

Yes, all Guide Dogs from GDV are specifically selected for their ability to be comfortable when left alone. This comfort level is assessed and built on throughout their Puppy Raising experience and during their training program.

- **Can I request a cuddly dog that loves to snuggle?**

Clients have the option to specify their preference for the type of dog they would like. While this may limit matching possibilities and could result in a longer wait time, GDV is strongly committed to supporting Client choice.

- **Can I go running with my Guide Dog and be active in suitable locations?**

While our Guide Dogs are not trained to guide while running due to the unique challenges it presents, they can run alongside their owner when being guided by a human guide. We recommend consulting with your Guide Dog Mobility Instructor (GDMI) to determine the best approach for introducing this activity safely.

## Vision Services and training

- **What is residential training, and is it a possibility for me? How much longer would I need to wait to join a residential class?**

Residential training is available without any added wait time, as the schedule of dogs coming through the training program aligns with the residential schedule. The training lasts for 12 nights at our facility, providing an opportunity to interact with other Clients. Alternatively, home-based training can also be arranged if it better suits your needs, and this can be identified during the assessment process.

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# Guide Dogs.

We're here whenever you need us.

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