

vi•sion•ar•y (vizh'n-eri || -erri) adj. 1. Characterised by vision or foresight

Visionary

Edition **54**
July
2024

Innovations
in harness design
and use

Collaborations
between guide dog
organisations



International Guide Dog Federation
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First and foremost, membership of the IGDF enables Guide Dog Schools around the world to join a community dedicated to serving the visually impaired. That community needs and wants to share its knowledge and the IGDF facilitates that.

The map below outlines the contributing countries for this edition of Visionary – **Canada, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, USA**



Cover Photo

Guide Dog from Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides

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Message From The Chair

Bill Thornton | Chief Executive Officer
BC & Alberta Guide Dogs, Canada

July 2nd, we held our 2024 IGDF Annual General Meeting via zoom. The Board and I were delighted with the numbers of attending members in person and by proxy. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board, committee members and all our supporting volunteers for their hard work and commitment to making the IGDF such a vibrant organization – thank you all. I would be remiss if I did not also make a special mention of our professional team in the UK of David Maynard and Clare Pritchett. Thank you both for your seamless support of operations.

At the AGM, Christine Baroni-Pretsch and I were up for re-election for a second term on the Board. I am delighted and thankful that the members re-elected Christine and myself. On behalf of both of us we thank everyone for your support.

Our Board, consisting of Myself (Canada), Christine Baroni-Pretsch (Switzerland), Christine Benninger (USA), Tim Stafford (UK), Seishi Tanoue (Japan), Antoine Bouissou (France) and Dale Cleaver (Australia) are a very collaborative and unified board. With the continuity of our team we are now well placed to continue our journey of modernizing the IGDF. There is much more work to be done with the Education Committee, further development of the new Standards Committee and the recruitment of more permanent staff members to support the volume of work ahead.

continued

Message From The Chair

In the next couple of months we will have completed our strategy review work with Space2BE. The Board will report back to the members with details of our new strategy before the year end. Exciting times ahead.

International Guide Dog Day 2024, held on April 24th, was celebrated all over the world. We have received excellent engagement and response to our IGDF social media activity. A big thank you to the Communications Committee, Chris Benninger (Chair), Antoine Bouissou, John Welsman and Dani Prebensen for their great work of raising the profile of guide dogs worldwide. I invite you to see details of IGDF's first year of social media on page 20.

As always, at the end of our AGM we sadly lose serving members who have completed their terms in office. This year we see the retirement of some very experienced committee members including:

- AC Members David Grice & Paul Adrian,
- DC Chair and EC Member Lukas Franck,
- DC Member Lee Stanway.

All of you have a long history with the IGDF. We wish you all the very best and thank each of you for all your hours and hours of dedicated service to the global Guide Dog movement.

The Board is delighted to announce the appointment of two new committee chairs:

- Dr. Chris Muldoon, Chair of the AC, and
- Jane Bradley, Chair of the DC.

Congratulations and thank you both for accepting your new positions. We wish you every success.



The IGDF is a living breathing entity that is dependent on the support of our member organizations and their individual staff members filling the various committee and volunteer roles. Please do not be shy in stepping forward as we are constantly looking for volunteers to fill a variety of positions and I ask Managers to please encourage your staff to participate. We are currently recruiting for Assessors, Development Committee Members and Education Committee Members. See page 22 for further details.

Finally, and with great excitement we are looking forward to the 2025 IGDF Conference (June 19th to 22nd) being hosted by Guide Dogs UK, to be held at the Warwick University Conference Centre. The Board and I hope that we will have a record attendance in Warwick and look forward to seeing you all there. We wish our host every success in their preparation to welcome us to Conference 2025. Please visit page 18 for further details and a photo of the venue.

Midway through 2024 I trust that your plans for the year are running to schedule and wish you all the very best for the rest of the year.

Bill Thornton
Chair, IGDF

IGDF Assessments

Update from **IGDF Office**

Congratulations to the following organisations which have passed their IGDF accreditation assessments:

- Czech Guide Dog School
- Hong Kong Seeing Eye Dog Services
- Hokkaido Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, Japan
- Kyushu Guide Dog Association Japan

Congratulations to the following organisations which have passed their accreditation assessments to become the newest members of IGDF:

- Stichting DCN Geleidehonden, Netherlands
- Pomocné tlapky, o.p.s. (The Helping Paws), Czech Republic

A reminder to members, that should you wish to understand our IGDF Investigation, Suspension and

Termination Policy, you can find information including the policy itself and a summary overview on our [website here](#)

Standards Review Update

Update from **Standards Committee**

The review process of the current 2024 standards is progressing well.

Each member of the Standards Committee led a review panel on each of the standards with over 30 volunteers from IGDF members providing technical expertise.

The review panels have considered the feedback received from the first round of consultation from IGDF members and committees and have aimed to strengthen the Standards in terms of their technical content, ease of understanding and closer alignment with the standards of Assistance Dogs International.

This process is now complete, and the draft documents will progress to wider stakeholder consultation; firstly, with the

chairs of the other IGDF committees and then a final round of consultation with our membership.

IGDF has a proud reputation for the quality of our standards, the robustness of the accreditation process and the professionalism of our membership. The fact that IGDF Standards (along with those of ADI) are widely accepted across the world demonstrates their value, but we must always be open for our Standards to evolve if they are to remain credible.

Please be prepared to receive a draft document of the proposed new Standards and get involved in the final consultation process as we would like to launch new Standards in the Autumn/Fall ready for 2025 assessments.

Field Testing and Implementing Harness Design Upgrades at The Seeing Eye

Michelle Barlak
The Seeing Eye, USA



The Seeing Eye harness

Since its founding in 1929, The Seeing Eye has consistently explored improvements to guide dog harness design.

"It's important to us that we ensure the best for both dogs and their handlers. We approach changes to the harness design with thoughtful consideration and through testing," says Jim Kessler, director of instruction and training at The Seeing Eye.

The Seeing Eye has partnered with the same harness maker, the Chabot family, for more than 30 years, a testament to the enduring quality and reliability of their craftsmanship. While the core material remains high-quality leather, the harness has evolved over the decades.

One early and notable improvement was the transition from a soft leather handle to a more rigid one with a metal core. This change enhanced communication between dog and handler, allowing for more precise feedback for the handler. Other changes included the addition of padding underneath the handle and reflective safety tape.

Today, customization options for the harness handle include offset and ergonomic handles to accommodate individuals with unique gait patterns, injuries, or chronic conditions. These handle options can improve comfort for the individuals who need them, enhancing the overall experience for the guide dog team.

"Before a harness modification or design change reaches the hands of Seeing Eye graduates, it undergoes extensive field testing," says Kessler. "Our instructors rigorously evaluate each prototype, providing valuable feedback that informs further refinements."

This process can last for a few years with only the most effective and reliable designs implemented. Most recently, The Seeing Eye has replaced the traditional buckle closure on the chest strap with a magnetic closure.

"This simplifies the process of putting on and taking off the harness, particularly if the handler has limited dexterity. After years of field testing, the magnetic closure is now standard issue, but we still offer the buckle closure for those who prefer it," says Kessler.

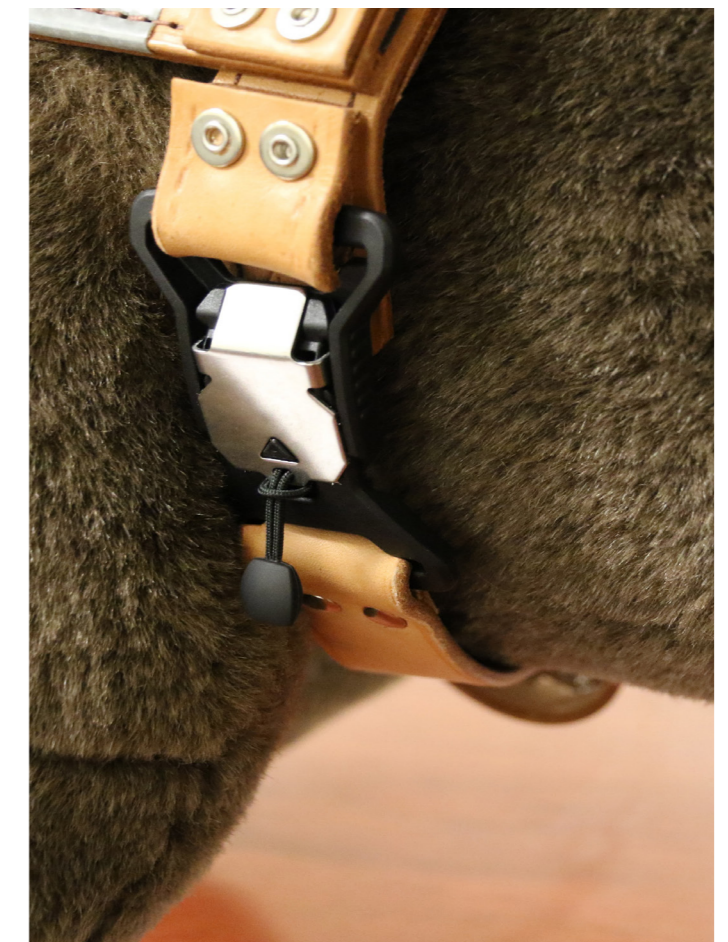
Seeing Eye Outreach Specialist Chelsea White was one of the graduates who helped test the magnetic closure in the field, "I love it because it's just easier to use. You can open and close the magnet with one hand, and it's easier to take the harness on and off in tight spaces such as the aisle of an airplane."

We are currently developing prototypes for a detachable handle with the goal of developing a handle that is easy to attach and detach. This feature is particularly beneficial when settling the dog in tight spaces such as buses and planes, providing the handler with greater adaptability.

Additionally, a telescoping cane holder that attaches to the harness handle is

in development. This would allow handlers to easily access a cane when needed. These canes and holders would become standard issue for all Seeing Eye dog teams once they pass field testing.

The traditional leather harness remains the preferred tool for guide work at The Seeing Eye. However, maintaining an open-minded approach to exploring improvements ensures that instructors and handlers continue to benefit from the latest advancements. By balancing tradition and innovation, The Seeing Eye seeks to prioritize the well-being of both the dogs and their handlers.



The Seeing Eye Magnetic Closure

Guide dog harness; why choose a handle with only one bar?

Peter Lasaroms
KNGF | Royal Dutch Guide Dogs
Foundation, Netherlands



Guide dog harness and handle viewed from above

The problem with regular guide dog harnesses and their handles, is the handle will be held in an unnatural way.

If you leave your arms hanging relaxed they will be slightly turned and your left thumb will point a little to the right and in a slight angle forward, and not towards your left leg.



If you look at the traditional handles you see they force your arm to turn a little to the right. This can possibly lead to pain in the neck, shoulder, upper or lower arm or the wrist, because of the muscle tension.

The handle with only one bar can be turned in every direction, so you can work out together with the client what posture is the most convenient.



Arm held in the position as if holding a standard handle & arm in the anatomic position



Standard handle with some tension on the harness and handle with one rod conform anatomic position

The handle can not only be turned, to increase a more ergonomic posture, but the handle is also an ergonomic grip with handprotection.

Additionally, you can easily adjust the length of the rod to your size and the dog's size to make it fit completely.

The dog not only benefits from less pressure because the handle is held more relaxed, and the harness is not pulled sideways, but also the handle can't fall on the dogs head or back because of the construction between handle and harness.

The harness can be adjusted in front, left and right, to give more comfort, and will fit every dog. Both handle and harness are lightweight and the handle can be taken off easily with only one hand.

The handle provides all the information the client needs to be able to follow the dog, and feel as much as they can with the regular harness and handle.



Difference in length of the handle

Continued:
Guide dog harness; why choose a handle with only one bar?



Guide dog with harness with only one rod walking on left side as seen from behind



Guide dog with harness with only one rod walking on right side

Because of the ability to change the direction of the handle, you can also use it for those who need to walk with the dog on the right side (when not being able to use the left hand), or adjust it when the client can use their left arm, but not in the regular position.

Other advantages this harness provides are increased night visibility, machine washable at 40 Degrees and you can make a small package of it in case the harness and handle are not in use.



(Above and Right) A standard size harness versus the harness with one bar



Handle guide dog harness and DogSim II.

If the DogSim second version (handheld) is used in training the client, the guide dog harness is a logical follow up. Both have the same handlebar. So the client is already used to picking up the signals provided through the handle bar.

The first type of this guide dog harness was developed by senior guide dog mobility instructor Peter Lasaroms in 2010, who also invented the DogSim (first and second version). Further improvements and development were made with Visioptronic in France.



(Above and right) Young dog walking with guide dog harness with one-rod handle



Training with DogSim II

They took care of the further development, production and the logistics to get the guide dog harness there where it was needed.

If you want more content related information you can ask Peter Lasaroms by emailing info@dogsforcare.com

Or you can turn to Visioptronic by emailing: contact@visioptronic.fr



Evolution of the Bar Harness

Shiori Nishida
Japan Guide Dog
Association

History of the Bar Harness

Chronic shoulder pain caused by the U-shaped harness has always been a problem for many GDMI and clients. Since Lukas Frank presented the ergonomic harness at the 2002 IGDF conference in Seoul, JGDA has been working to develop an alternative to the U-shaped harness. The prototype of the bar harness was completed in 2008 and has been continuously improved. In 2012, JGDA introduced the bar harness for clients in class training and presented it as the new harness at the 2014 IGDF conference in Tokyo.



Evolution of the harness at JGDA

Features of the Bar Harness

- The shoulder does not rotate inwards when holding the handle, thus reducing pain in the shoulder and elbow.
- It is easy to change the handler's position with regard to the dog, by changing the holding position of the bar.
- The slide technique (sliding the bar in the hand and changing the holding position of the bar) allows dogs more freedom in their movement.
- The handler uses the palm, fingers, and arm to gather information from the harness, and can receive more detailed information compared to the U-shaped harness.
- It cannot be used for pulling applications, and directions to the dog are difficult to convey through the harness.
- GDMLs have noticed differences in the dog's learning process with the U-shaped and bar harness, such as the initiative to go forward without pulling on the harness. They are also seeing an improvement in the clients' reading skills of the dog's movement.
- There is no need to adjust the handle length for each client, and there is no need to have a variety of handle lengths.

What is required for guide dog walking in Japan? The information gathered in mobility are;

1. Corners
2. Curbs
3. Obstacles

The environment on Japanese roads is complex, with short blocks, narrow roads with many people, and mixed with and without pavements/sidewalks, even in urban areas. The bar harness provides detailed information from the dog to the client to process and navigate through town.

Telescopic bar harness

In Japan, guide dog users often have to use crowded trains, buses, and platforms. They go into small shops with narrow aisles. The conventional bar harness has a bar section of 40 cm (15.7 inches), which can get in the way when walking or having a dog wait in such places. The handle could get caught on chairs and desks when calling a dog waiting underneath, and the handle could easily hit surrounding objects as it swings from side to side when the dog shakes its body.



JGDA dog wearing a bar harness

To solve this issue, telescopic bar handles, which are still in use today, were introduced in 2018. These handles can be retracted and stored up to about 22cm (8.7 inches) when the harness is not in use, making them more compact and convenient.

JGDA clients can choose whether to use a traditional U-shaped or a bar harness; currently, around 80% of JGDA clients use the bar harness.

There are still issues to solve in the future, such as improving the durability of the bars and making them lighter. JGDA's harness innovation will continue for our future guide dog clients and instructors. We are keen to hear new ideas from other schools about their harness and share ours. If you are interested, please contact our international team (international@moudouken.net) for further information.

Harnessing Innovations: The Evolution of Guide Dog Gear

Allison Ashworth
Lions Foundation of
Canada Dog Guides

Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides started as a Guide Dog school in 1983 and has since expanded to include six additional Dog Guide programs: Hearing, Service, Seizure Response, Autism Assistance, Diabetic Alert, and most recently, Facility Support. With these advancements, our guide dog harness has also evolved to meet the changing needs of our clients.

Initially, our harness was a thick, heavy, double-leather design with a metal handle wrapped in leather. Over time, it transitioned to a lighter, simplified version, still made of leather. However, feedback from our clients highlighted several issues that prompted a reevaluation of our design. Clients reported that when they dropped the handle, it would often flop to one side, pulling the harness with it. This issue was worsened by the addition of a fabric pouch containing necessary identification signage, which added extra weight.

Moreover, the leather harnesses began to show signs of wear quickly, losing rigidity and potentially compromising comfort and safety. Concerns about the ergonomics of the leather harness design led us to consider alternatives. The challenges with our supplier and the easing of COVID-19 restrictions provided an opportunity to experiment with new solutions.

We decided to trial the UniFly Harness from Ruffwear, which brought mixed reactions from our clients. Some loved the new harness, some were indifferent, and others disliked it. However, we believe the UniFly harness offers several advantages.

It provides more comfort for the dog, allows for adjustability in handle position for client comfort, distributes weight more healthily on the dog, and offers better signage opportunities. Additionally, the quick release handle is particularly beneficial for travel.

Despite its benefits, the UniFly harness has some downsides. It is more expensive and features two clips instead of one, which some clients find less convenient. The head hole is also smaller, which can be uncomfortable for dogs sensitive to touch. Additionally, when the dog is not in harness, the design makes it difficult to carry over the shoulder, limiting the client's ability to keep their hands free.

As we continue to innovate and refine our equipment, client feedback remains crucial. We are committed to providing the best possible gear to enhance the safety, comfort, and effectiveness of our Dog Guides, ensuring that both dogs and handlers can navigate their world with confidence and ease.



Dog Guide in a UniFly Harness

IGDF Organisation Collaborations: ADI and IGDF Joint Survey on Access Refusal

Data is key when advocating for better access and improving accessibility for our graduate teams – which is why we are working with ADI to carry out a joint survey of all graduates on their experiences of access refusals.

In September, ADI and IGDF will send an email asking our members to send the graduate team survey link, together with a

short explanatory note to all our graduates, asking them to spend a few minutes (that's all it takes!) to complete the survey.

Every single experience – good or bad – will help plan strategic initiatives for greater awareness and advocacy for guide and assistance dog teams around the world. The survey will remain open until October 15, 2024.

Unleashing the Power of Collaboration

Rachelle Kniffen, **Leader Dogs for the Blind**
Karen Woon, **Guide Dogs for the Blind**

In the spirit of collaboration, unity and shared commitment, Leader Dogs for the Blind (Leader Dog) and Guide Dogs for the Blind (GDB) met this past March with the overall objective of ensuring that individuals who are blind or visually impaired receive high quality services and needed support to empower them to lead independent and fulfilling lives.

The three-day meeting is a catalyst for positive change in both organizations. Driven by a central theme of client focus, discussion centered upon services offered by one of the organizations that is of interest to the other.

Leader Dog wanted to learn about the support GDB provides their clients especially as it relates to their physical and psychological well-being. GDB shared the role nurses and psychosocial support professionals provide to enhance the

learning environment for their clients. From what they learned from GDB; Leader Dog has added these positions to their organization.

GDB's interest centered around Leader Dog's 22 years of experience providing Orientation and Mobility (O&M) services. Leader Dog staff shared their journey from serving 168 clients during the first nine years to serving 160 clients annually. GDB's program has been in place for five years and it has essentially doubled the number of clients each year with approximately 75 clients served in FY24. As GDB further expands their O&M offerings, this exchange of knowledge and experiences will help them avoid potential pitfalls and accelerate their ability to serve more clients.

Other areas of discussion spanned a wide range of areas, including residence

Continued:
Unleashing the Power of Collaboration

facilities, outreach activities, advocacy, and accessibility. "Collaboration is essential," affirmed Melissa Weisse, Leader Dog President and CEO. "Due to limited access to needed services nationwide for people who are blind or have low vision, it is imperative that we partner together to better serve our community."

This sentiment resonated throughout the discussions, as both organizations acknowledged the shared challenges and opportunities they face, recognizing that by problem-solving together and sharing learnings, they can be more efficient and impactful in their work.

As the meeting progressed, a sense of unity and shared purpose emerged. Susan Armstrong, GDB Vice President of Client Programs, articulately summed up

the experience: "I was struck by the power of guide dog schools coming together to use their collective voice in service to clients everywhere, it truly raises all boats."

This collaboration did not end with GDB flying home. "We agreed on several areas for further discussion," confirmed Christine Benninger, GDB President and CEO, "these being advocacy, training, and accessibility. Leader Dog will be coming to GDB's headquarters to discuss these topics and learn more about our Alumni Association; we are looking forward to hosting them!"

If you would like to learn about how this collaboration originated or are interested in speaking with either of these organizations, you can reach out to them at LeaderDog.org and GuideDogs.com.



Leader Dogs for the Blind and Guide Dogs for the Blind Collaboration Meeting Group

Samsung Guide Dog School working with Texas Guide Dog Association

Baron Jang
Samsung Guide
Dog School, Korea



Patrick Glines with Samsung Guide Dog School staff

On May 13th and 14th, Samsung Guide Dog School held a two-day seminar, where Patrick Glines, CEO of the Texas Guide Dog Association, came to advise us on our training.

Patrick first advised Samsung Guide Dog School back in October 2022. Based on the content from that first visit, we had an opportunity to review how our performance was progressing and learn new training methods.

Our facility has recently undergone renovations and we learned how to use newly created training areas to conduct recently introduced basic handling tests. We also learned how to introduce a number of different training behaviors at our facility.

To maximize training efficiency, we systemized training into three stages. We were happy to learn to train beyond the traditional training method which consisted of just training outside of campus.

The stages are:

1. Introduction stage on campus;
2. In-depth stage through external training;
3. Generalization/application stage in various environments.

In 2006, Samsung Guide Dog School introduced clicker training. This was done with an instructor exchange program with Guide Dogs for the Blind in the United States. We were the first country in Asia to utilize clicker training and we are happy our clicker training continues to develop with continued exchanges.

SGDS expresses its gratitude to Patrick Glines for the opportunity.

Samsung Guide Dog School continues to work with guide dog experts from around the world, seeking solutions to create better trained dogs.

IGDF Conference 2025: The Power of Partnership

Tim Stafford
Guide Dogs UK

Guide Dogs (UK) is proud to host the International Guide Dog Federation Conference 2025.

Taking place from Thursday 19 June to Sunday 22 June 2025 at Warwick University Conference Centre in the United Kingdom, the biennial conference gives guide dog schools the chance to come together in one place for inspirational learning, networking, and collaboration.



Andrew Lennox, CEO of Guide Dogs (UK), with yellow Labrador, River

Focussing on the theme of 'The Power of Partnership', this event for guide dog professionals will feature internationally respected speakers and industry leading experts who will deliver exciting and thought-provoking plenary sessions and workshops on all aspects related to the guide dog sector.

In addition to the main conference, Guide Dogs (UK) are hosting the following events:

- Executive Leaders Network on Thursday 19th June.
- Practical Skills Workshop 23-25 June. Delivered by Guide Dogs Academy, at the new Redbridge Training Centre in the London area, participants will share their experiences, learn together, and hone their practical skills in dog training, puppy development and dog welfare.
- Delegates will have the opportunity to visit Guide Dogs (UK) National Centre (home of the world leading breeding programme) and other Guide Dogs centres for anyone taking a longer trip.

We are doing everything we can to ensure the conference is accessible to as many members as possible with the fully inclusive conference package (which includes accommodation for the duration of the conference) being in the region of £850 per person. In the spirit of the conference theme, and to enable affordability, we're delighted to offer various sponsorship opportunities for members wishing to partner with us and support the education work of IGDF at this much anticipated event. For more information, please contact lorna.maffei@guidedogs.org.uk



The Slate at Warwick University, U.K.

If that's not enough, IGDF are working closely with the International Working Dog Association who are delivering the Breeders Conference (23-24 June) and the International Working Dog Conference (27-29 June) also at Warwick University. Aligning these different events supports our commitment to sustainability, reducing airmiles and avoiding extra travel cost.

So, June 2025 is certainly the time to book your trip to the UK – we can't guarantee the weather, but we can certainly guarantee an excellent conference with many other options to provide your staff with exceptional opportunities for learning and networking.

<https://www.igdf.org.uk/members-area/whats-new/2025-igdf-conference/>

<https://www.igdf.org.uk/about-us/seminars/>



Guide Dogs (UK) National Centre

IGDF Social Media Update

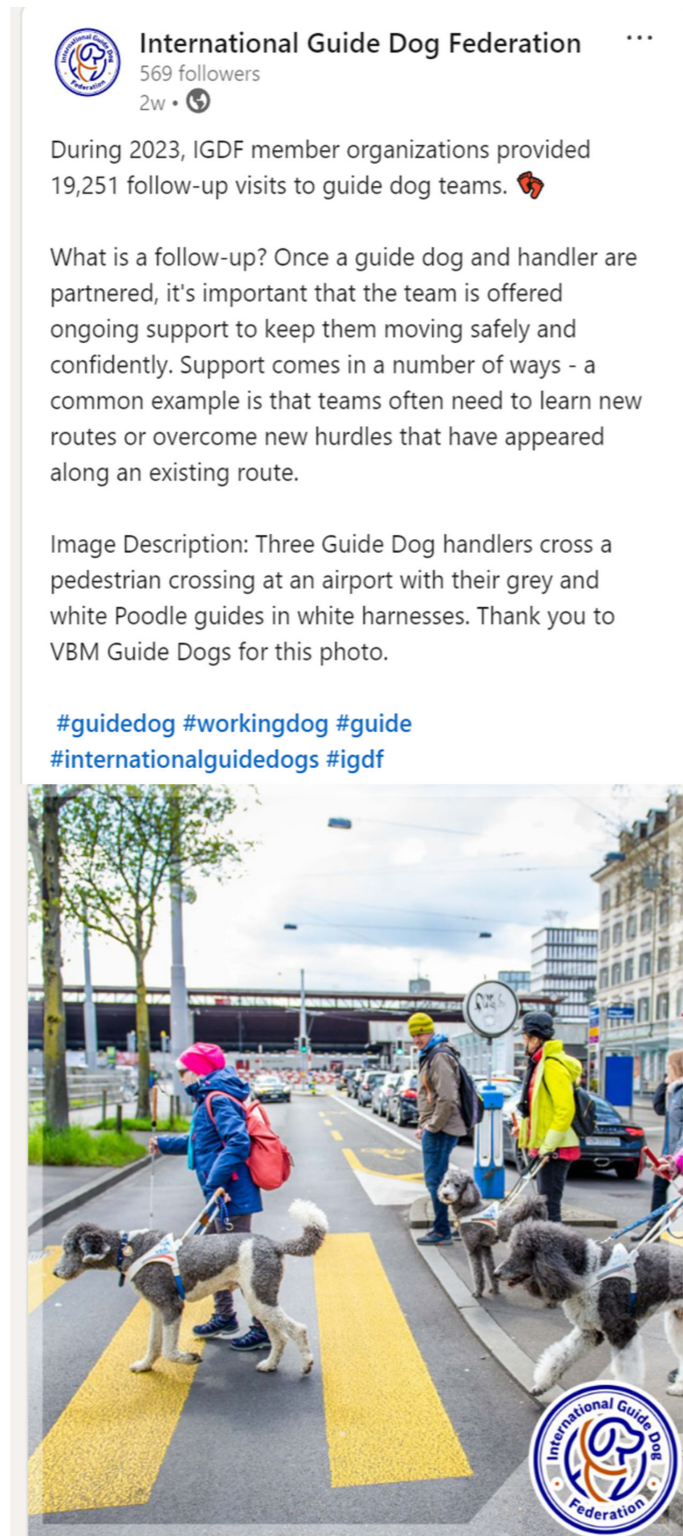
In April 2023, IGDF launched its social media presence across Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Since then, we have gained over 364 Facebook followers, 244 Instagram followers and 469 LinkedIn followers. This has resulted in over 70,000 people reached (including adverts) and 14,400 engagements (likes, comments, shares) across these platforms.

Our social media adviser, Dani Prebensen has worked hard to achieve this engagement and created some amazing content. Dani believes it is important to share informative content that educates the public about guide dogs whilst also supporting IGDF members in promoting accessibility, volunteer engagement, animal welfare and client service standards. Some of the popular IGDF posts have been about International Guide Dog Day, access rights, the history of guide dogs and IGDF Standards. However, we are also getting great engagement with stories from our members, such as the App from Seeing Eye to help combat access refusals and Fundación ONCE del Perro Guía working together with rideshare company Cabify. Additionally, the photograph we are posting are generating positive comments and questions.

We would therefore like to thank everyone who has contributed and helped us to achieve such a positive start on social media; and encourage you all to keep sending us through more of your stories and pictures to keep the posts and engagement growing.

[IGDF LinkedIn](#)
[IGDF Facebook](#)
[IGDF Instagram](#)



IGDF Social media post

Dog Welfare Working Group Update

IGDF and ADI have a memorandum of cooperation that includes seeking to collaborate on issues of mutual importance. For some time, both boards have recognised that demonstrating commitment to dog welfare is of strategic importance and we need to be prepared to robustly defend ourselves against critics now and in the future. This was the original idea behind the creation of the Dog Welfare Working Group – initially created by IGDF but soon opened to ADI participation.

Dr Bob Proesmans has led and developed this group and under his stewardship the working group has delivered the [joint position statement on dog welfare](#) and have engaged with members to understand what is important to them.

We have learnt that there is significant benefit to engaging with a range of different experts and specialisms who can help develop our ways of working, challenge our thinking and provide us with evidence based best practice.

Accordingly, IGDF/ADI boards have decided to build and strengthen the original concept of the Dog Welfare Working Group and create a Dog Welfare and Ethics Advisory Panel. Thus, we will stand down the Dog Welfare Working Group prior to replacing this with the new Dog Welfare and Ethics Advisory Panel.

We would like to thank all the members of the Dog Welfare Working Group, named below, for their hard work in progressing to this important milestone, which we believe will further strengthen ADI and IGDF's



Dr Bob Proesmans, Chair DWWG

credibility as professional bodies that take their responsibilities for dog welfare and wellbeing extremely seriously.

Founding members of the Dog Welfare Working Group were: Melanie Harris (GDB, San Rafael, CA), Prof Tiny De Keuster (Ghent University, Belgium), Dr Nicola Cotton (Vision Australia), Becky Hunt (GDUK) & Dr Bob Proesmans (Purpose Dogs, Belgium) with Tim Stafford (GDUK) as Board Liaison. The group was soon joined by Jennifer Rogers (PAALS), Prof Daniel Mills (University of Lincoln) and Dr Tiffani Howell (La Trobe University).

Recruitment:

If you are interested in applying to join the Dog Welfare and Ethics Advisory Panel the terms of reference and person specification is available under the IGDF website's [What's New section](#).

Applications close on September 27, 2024.

Recruitment:

Development Committee

IGDF is looking to recruit two (2) new members to the Development Committee.

The purpose of the Development Committee is to provide guidance and support to Enquiring, Applicant and Member Guide Dog Organisations in their preparation toward readiness for accreditation assessment or reassessment

and achieve and surpass the IGDF Standards.

Further information can be found on the IGDF website's [What's New page](#), or by emailing the IGDF office at enquiries@igdf.org.uk



Committee Updates:

Welcome Chris Muldoon

Congratulations to Chris Muldoon who was appointed the new Chair of the Accreditation Committee (AC) in May this year. Chris previously served as a member of the AC between 2016 to 2022.

Chris, who works at Hong Kong Guide Dog Association has also been an assessor for IGDF since 2007.

Chris has been in the guide dog industry for over 30 years and recently completed his PhD. You can view a presentation of his research, delivered at the Vancouver conference, on the IGDF [webinars page here](#).



Education Committee



IGDF is looking to recruit one (1) new member for their Education Committee.

The role of the Education Committee is to work on proposals for the promotion of education

and training. This includes the development of training materials for use by IGDF organisations, reviewing the IGDF GDMI curriculum, scheduling and producing webinars for IGDF; developing proposals for a system of professional examinations and developing proposals for a system of recognising GDMI qualifications. Further details can be found on the [IGDF website](#).

Welcome Ivana Merryman Boncori



We are delighted to welcome back Ivana Merryman Boncori as a member of the AC. Ivana currently works for two organisations:

Dogs for Life, Slovakia (an IGDF Applicant Organisation) and the Danish Association of the Blind, Denmark (an IGDF member).

Ivana was previously a member of the IGDF Development Committee from 2014 to 2021 and served as DC Chair until 2022.

With a PhD in Civil Engineering, Ivana started working in the Guide Dog industry in 1998. She has also worked as an O&M Instructor in Italy and as a specialist for barrier-free design at the Slovak Blind and Partially Sighted Union.

IGDF Assessors

IGDF is looking to recruit five (5) new IGDF Assessors.

The role of an IGDF assessor is to assess guide dog organisations in order to determine whether the agreed IGDF Standards are being met, provide both written and verbal reports detailing the outcomes of the assessment and make a

recommendation on whether an organisation meets the IGDF standards and thus may become or maintain IGDF membership. Further details can be found on the IGDF [AC What's New page](#) or by emailing enquiries@igdf.org.uk



Welcome Aaron Horsington

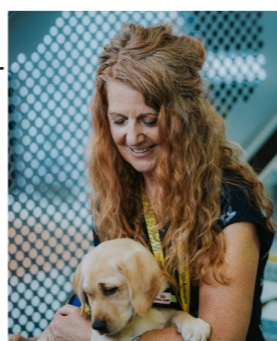
We also welcome as a new member of the AC, Aaron Horsington. Aaron started his Guide Dog career in 1996 at Guide Dogs for the Blind in the UK and has been with Guide Dogs Victoria in Australia since 2007.

Prior to that Aaron worked in the Royal Air Force as a RAF Police Dog Handler and served in the UK, Falkland Islands & Belize.

Aaron started his guide dog career as a Guide Dog Mobility Instructor and now manages the Puppy Raising, Guide Dog Training and Guide Dog Client Services teams for his organisation.



Congratulations Jane Bradley



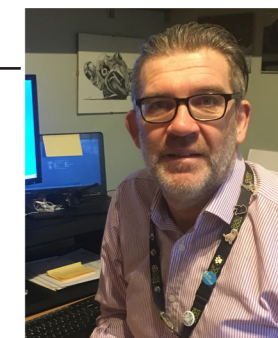
Jane Bradley has now been appointed as the new Chair of the IGDF Development Committee. Jane was appointed to the DC in 2021 and as an IGDF assessor in 2018.

Jane is the Manager of Puppy Development at Vision Australia and also serves on the ADI Standards Committee and ADI Education Committee.

We'd like to thank Jane for her commitment to IGDF and for the many late-night meetings she's undertaken on our behalf.

You can read more about Jane [here](#).

Farewell and Thank You to David Grice



David Grice has now stepped down from the IGDF Accreditation Committee (AC) and as an IGDF Assessor. He was appointed to the AC in 2020 and has been an IGDF assessor since 2015.

Dave has made a considerable contribution to IGDF not least through his dog care and welfare expertise, review of

the IGDF Standards and roll out of the remote assessments. He has also presented at many past IGDF conferences and you can see his latest contribution [here](#). Dave has also retired from Guide Dogs UK and we wish him well.

Farewell and Thank You to Lukas Franck



Lukas Franck has now stepped down from the IGDF Development Committee. Lukas was appointed as a

member in 2018 and as Committee Chair in 2022. Prior to taking up his role with the DC, he was an IGDF assessor, appointed in 2013.

Lukas's significant contribution to IGDF include the amazing '[History of Guide Dogs](#)' video which you'll find on our website, and he was also awarded the IGDF Ken Lord award in 2023.

Lukas has now retired from The Seeing Eye, USA, but you can find a tribute to his career on their website [here](#).

Farewell and Thank You to Paul Adrian



Paul Adrian has also stepped down from the IGDF Accreditation Committee and as an IGDF Assessor.

Paul was appointed to the AC in 2020 and has been an IGDF assessor since 2013. He was also an inaugural member

of the IGDF Education Committee where he made a significant contributions to the development of the Moodle platform currently used to educate new staff in the profession.

Paul has recently retired from Vision Australia and we wish him all the best for his retirement plans and future.

Farewell and Thank you to Lee Stanway



Lee Stanway has also stepped down from the IGDF Development Committee and as an IGDF Assessor. Lee was appointed to the DC in 2019 and has been an IGDF assessor, since 2010.

Lee's expertise in Additional Needs have been an invaluable support to many IGDF members and you can view some of what

he had to offer on our webinars pages [here](#).

Lee has now retired from Guide Dogs UK and we wish him well and thank him for his contribution to helping our IGDF members in their development and accreditation journeys.

Farewell and Thank You to Caroline Abraham



Caroline Abraham has now stepped down as an IGDF Assessor. Caroline was appointed in 2018 and her expertise in Quality Assurance were a huge asset to the IGDF.

Caroline has completed a number of valuable assessments with our members, embodying the professionalism of being

an assessor and recognised as outstanding in the field of guide dog mobility.

Caroline recently stepped down from her role at Guide Dogs UK and we wish her every success in her future endeavours.

Knowledge Sharing Webinars

Stay in touch with news, research, and best practice from around the world by attending our regular webinars. Webinars are open to all IGDF Members, Affiliates, Applicant Organisations and Enquiring Organisations. Registration details are circulated by the IGDF Office and are available on the IGDF website.

Dog Care and Welfare

Date: Tuesday 17th September at:
9pm BST; 1pm PDT; 4pm EDT; 10pm CEST;
JST 5am (Wednesday morning);
AEST 6am (Wednesday morning)

[Register for this webinar here](#)

Multimodal treatment of diarrhoea in puppies and the importance of the microbiome

Led by: Dr Michelle Van Lienden, Lions Foundation of Canada/Dog Guides Canada

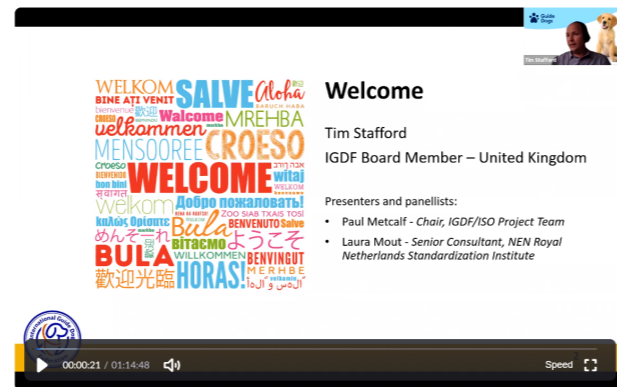
Date: Tuesday 1st October at:
3pm BST; 7am PDT; 10am EDT; 4pm CEST;
11pm JST; 00:00 AEST

[Register for this webinar here](#)

IGDF Standards Review

Led by: IGDF Standards Committee

Date: October/November 2024



Webinar Presenters Wanted

We are looking for volunteers interested in sharing their knowledge with the IGDF community. This could include a tour of your facilities, an introduction to a new programme or project, or an in-house presentation you think the wider IGDF community would be interested in.

We welcome pre-recorded presentations, including presentations not in English – although adding English subtitles would be desirable.

Please contact the IGDF office at enquiries@igdf.org.uk



Visionary

Next Issue

The deadline for articles for the next issue of Visionary is: **1st October 2024.**

Special Feature:

Ways that organisations have been able to reduce costs and/or improve efficiencies

Please send articles to the IGDF Office by the above deadline.

In the meantime, if your organisation has

any other stories it would like to share, it can do so on the new IGDF articles webpage [here](#).

Please supply your articles as a Word file with original images attached as separate jpeg images along with their captions.

Further information can be found on our website at <https://www.igdf.org.uk/>



Disclaimer | Whilst the International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF) retains editorial right to all articles presented within the Visionary, accuracy of specific detail and figures quoted are as provided by the author and their supporting organisation. The IGDF, whilst welcoming feedback on content, will not enter into any dialogue relating to perceived inaccuracies in these areas.