

# Guide Dogs launches Tech for All scheme

Guide Dogs has launched 'Tech for All' which provides free assistive technology to all children with a vision impairment aged between three and 18 in the UK.



The scheme aims to help 3,500 children and young people in the first six months and potentially 10,000 by the end of 2022, if the pilot is successful.

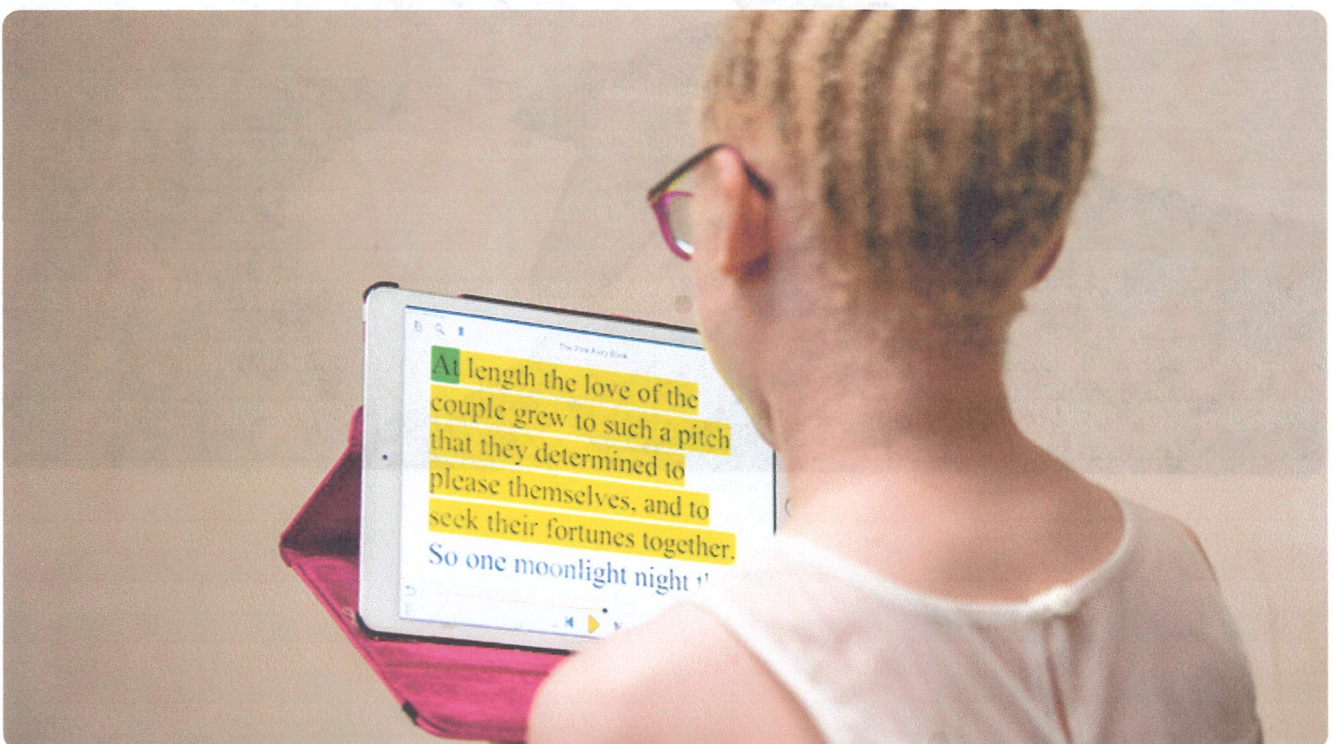
Kamsi, a nine-year-old from East England, who has ocular albinism, a condition which reduces the colouring (pigmentation) of the iris, and the retina, was previously given an iPad by Guide Dogs through a special grant scheme.

Her mum, Eremina, said: "Kamsi is really into technology, and we have a family laptop, but it's quite functional – she was only able to use it when I was sitting with her.

"She really wanted an iPad but I couldn't afford to get her one. We applied for a grant from Guide Dogs, with a supporting letter from her visual impairment teacher. We didn't realise all the different ways an iPad could help her until we had it. She's quickly learnt how to use the technology herself.

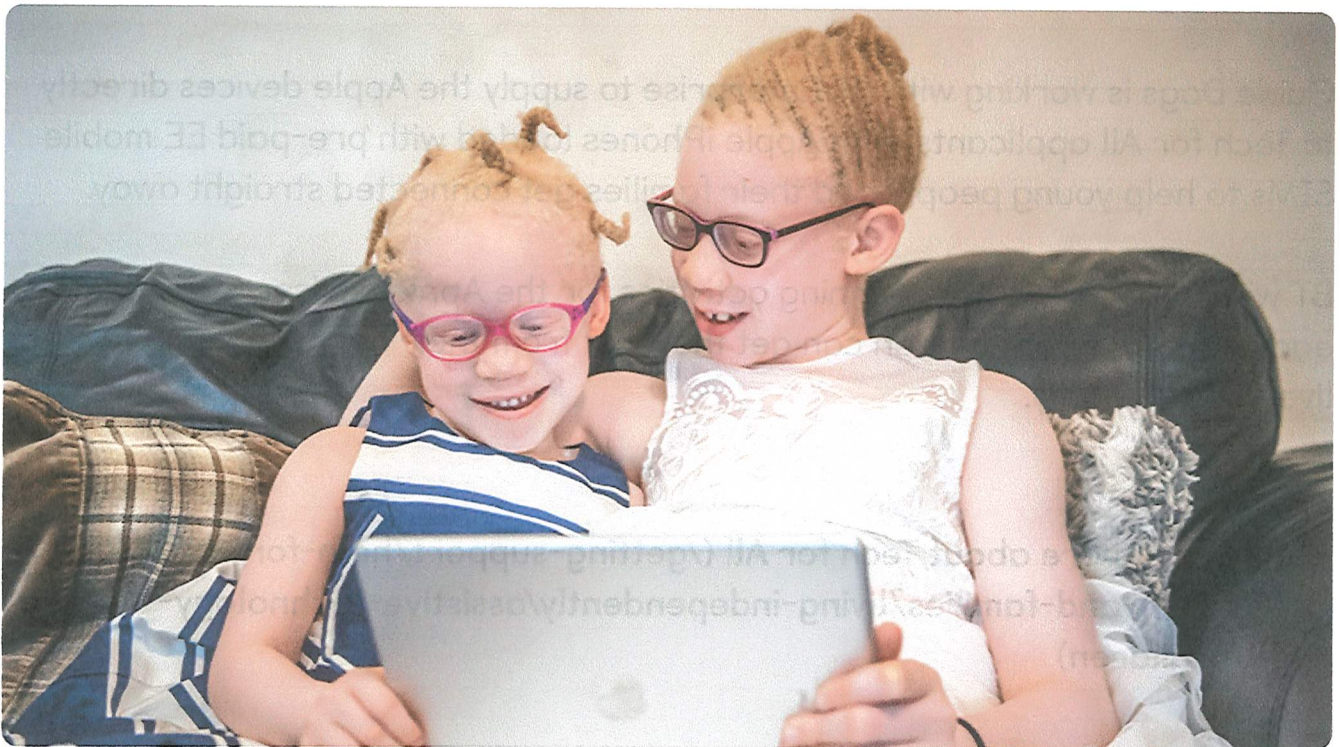
"The iPad is really user friendly, and she can navigate between screens herself, she's learnt to use passwords, and can enlarge text and images to a size that works for her.

"There are the obvious education benefits, like reading e-books, but it's mostly about her being able to play and have fun – which is really important for all children."



Kamsi now has access to the internet and has been researching albinism, which has helped her learn about her condition and enable her to discuss it with her mum, improving her communication skills and knowledge. She also uses FaceTime to keep in touch with her grandma, dad, and uncle.

Her three-year-old sister, Nnenna, has the same condition and she will also receive an iPad from Guide Dogs as part of Tech for All.



Emma Foulds, Director of Marketing and Strategy at Guide Dogs, said: "Technology is a great enabler and grants children a sense of normality, confidence and independence both socially and academically. The faster technology moves, the better their wellbeing. However, technology is still not accessible enough and this can be frustrating for both child and parent.

"Parents and guardians feel vision impairment can make it harder for children to make friends and parents stress that socialisation with other children is a vital part of their child's development."

Tech for All has been designed to enable children with sight loss to be more independent and do whatever it is they want to do or what their friends are doing. Whether it is Facetiming their mates, playing games, reading or learning, the accessibility features on an iPad or iPhone can be key to unlocking a child's world and maximising their potential.

Emma Foulds, Director of Marketing and Strategy at Guide Dogs

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Guide Dogs is working with BT Enterprise to supply the Apple devices directly to Tech for All applicants, with Apple iPhones loaded with pre-paid EE mobile SIMs to help young people and their families get connected straight away.

BT will also be providing learning activities for the Apple devices to ensure each child or young person can get the most from their device, helping them to live independently.

Find out more about Tech for All (</getting-support/help-for-children-and-families/living-independently/assistive-technology-for-children>)

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