



Barney

**Training school
has started!**

Pupdate 4

Welcome to your October Pupdate

I hope you're enjoying the start of the new season, as the leaves begin to change and the air turns crisper again.

Did you know that every day, 250 people in the UK start to lose their sight, four of which are estimated to be children? Nearly half report feeling isolated and cut off from the world around them. Together, we can change that.

Your support goes beyond helping puppies become life changers; you're also making a multitude of vital services possible. We're dedicated to breaking down barriers by providing information, advice and support for adults, children and families. None of this would be possible without supporters like you.

Thank you for your invaluable and continued support of Guide Dogs. Your generosity directly impacts the lives of people with sight loss, ensuring everyone can live actively, independently, and well. You are making a massive difference!

Yours sincerely,



Steph Potter
Puppy Sponsorship Manager



Thank you

for sponsoring Barney



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**Hello, it's
Sophie here,
Barney's
trainer.**

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I've been a Guide Dog Trainer for around six years, and I'm currently training four dogs, including Barney. Every day in my job brings something new. I work with each dog individually, adapting the training to suit their needs. Witnessing them blossom into confident guide dogs is incredibly rewarding.

Meeting Barney

Barney's a ball of energy who loves human interaction. He's very playful and enjoys carrying a toy around in his mouth. His volunteer fosterers are a lovely family with two older children. Puppy Raiser Jean kindly sent some familiar items with him: a blanket and his favourite toys. These helped him feel comfortable in his new home and he has settled in really quickly. He's a curious boy, and I'm sure he's going to be a quick learner.

Exploring

It's still early days for Barney at training school, and my focus right now is building a positive association with the training environment. Together we've been exploring different indoor and outdoor areas, playing with various toys, and of course, enjoying lots of cuddles! This helps us build a strong bond.

Barney's been enjoying the 'sniff area', a stimulating space with snuffle mats, empty boxes, and paddling pools filled with water and sand. I also sometimes scatter his kibble here, this encourages him to use his nose, which is a natural and calming activity for dogs. Barney's also starting to interact with his fellow trainee pups, including a lovely yellow Labrador called Vernon. I'm sure he'll make some great friends soon.



A new routine

Barney's fosterers bring him to training school each morning. Before training begins, he relaxes and plays with his toys in his pen, learning to settle in the office environment. He enjoys loose lead walks but can sometimes get a little overexcited and pull on the lead. I'm working on teaching him not to pull and that listening to me and walking calmly beside me gets lots of praise. During free runs, I practise his recall with tasty treats, kibble, and even carrots, which help a lot while training with positive reinforcement.



As Barney gets used to the new environment, I'm having three shorter training sessions every day, each followed by some resting time for him to nap. This approach is called 'latent learning' and allows Barney to rest between each training session so that what he's learnt can sink in during sleep. It also helps him to be ready and focused for what I'll teach him next.



Watch Barney show his skills on the obstacle course by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or going to:

guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-barney



Scan me

I've started to teach Barney to walk from one low platform to another; this skill will teach him to walk in a straight line while guiding. I also introduced the brown training harness to him: this is where I show Barney the harness and give him the cue 'head in'. He's learning to put it on, allowing me to fasten it.

Future plans

The plan is to work on Barney's skills within the training school grounds, and then transfer them to quieter areas off-site. Puppy Raiser Jean mentioned that Barney can be vocal sometimes when he sees other dogs. I'm helping him to overcome this with daily exposure to the many dogs in training around him, so he'll learn not to become vocal as he sees them regularly.

Thank you for sponsoring Barney. I look forward to updating you on his progress at training school in his next Pupdate in February.



Where is Barney on his Pupdate journey?



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The training harness

After around 12-16 months with their puppy raiser, our pups move to training school to learn more specific tasks related to their future career. Introducing a young dog to their brown training harness is one of the first milestones at training school. Most dogs have previously worn their puppy coat, meaning they're familiar with the body sensation. With this as a foundation, we build up to placing the harness on the dog's back and fastening it. Once a dog is partnered, they will wear the iconic white guiding harness.



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