



Betty

Betty's attending
training school!

Pupdate 4

Welcome to your October Pupdate

I hope you're enjoying these beautiful autumnal months.

Thanks to supporters like you, we can provide our incredible life-changing services. It's estimated that six million people in the UK live with sight-threatening eye conditions, and more than two million of these are living with sight loss that has a significant impact on their daily lives. At Guide Dogs, we want to support as many people as possible through these life-altering changes, providing the right services to help everyone.

Did you know that training and partnering our wonderful guide dogs isn't all we offer? We also provide support to adults through our My Sighted Guide service which partners trained volunteer guides with a person with a visual impairment. For children and young people, we offer a fantastic range of support, from companion dogs via our buddy dogs scheme to personalised, large print books through CustomEyes Books. Our expertise means we can make life-changing differences to those affected by sight loss, enabling them to live actively, independently, and well – however they choose. Thank you for helping us to do this with your generous support.

I'm pleased to share your sponsored puppy's latest Pupdate with you, and I hope you enjoy reading it.

Yours sincerely,



Steph Potter
Puppy Sponsorship Manager



Thank you

for sponsoring Betty



“
**Hello, it's
Sam here,
Betty's
trainer.**
”

I've been training dogs for nine years and I'm now a Trainee Guide Dog Mobility Specialist. As a qualified GDMS, I'll be able to partner guide dogs and their future owners. The most rewarding thing about my job is seeing my dogs master their skills. And of course, I love to see them going out and supporting the independence of people with visual impairments. It's great to be part of their life-changing journey. I'm excited to work with Betty to help her progress further to becoming a life changer. We've already built a strong bond.

Settling in

Betty has settled well in the training environment; she likes meeting new people, especially the trainers and the dog wellbeing technicians – who check dogs' health and provide day to day care on site. She made herself comfortable straight away in her pen at the office, where she plays with her favourite toys; she likes anything squeaky. Betty also loves Kongs, which can be filled with dog food – she spends ages taking it all out! She's quite independent but has lots of play pals around for when she feels like it's time for a game.

Betty is enjoying staying with her fosterers too. They have children which is fantastic as she often played with her Puppy Raiser Geraldine's grandchildren. It's great for her to get used to people of all different ages.

Betty's very sweet and enjoys training; she usually looks at me, waiting for what's next. She's got so much energy and once she knows you, she always wants a cuddle.

In between training sessions Betty loves to free run, she likes anywhere in the woods but it's even better if there are puddles! When she's in harness she walks around them, but if she's running free and sees water she'll jump straight in! She's so funny.

Training begins

Betty's training routine starts early, her fosterers bring her to training school around 8am. During the morning, we go out to do some walks in harness. Betty has now learnt three different routes, including one to the shopping centre. Next, we'll work on some skills together in the training room or outdoors. Then, at lunchtime, she has a nap with lights out and relaxing music.



Find out more about how Betty is settling into training school by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or going to:

guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-betty



Scan me

So far, I've been working on basic skills with her, like food manners and platforms. She's learning to recognise platforms which I place on the floor for her. She will walk towards them and stop with all four paws on the platform.

When I first introduced the brown training harness to Betty, she struggled a little with the sensation of it on her back, even though Betty used to wear her puppy coat. Sometimes harnesses feel strange for some dogs to get used to. I made this experience a positive one with lots of praise and treats, and Betty now happily wears it.

Looking ahead

There's a little work to do on Betty's guiding tension and speed, I have to remind her to slow down and focus sometimes. It's important for dogs to guide with the correct tension as it helps them navigate their owner confidently around obstacles, without pulling. Betty will practise more over the next few months, as we start to walk in busier high street environments.

Thank you for sponsoring Betty. I'm looking forward to updating you with her progress in your next Pupdate in February!



Where is Betty on her 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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