



# Buttons

**Buttons begins his journey**

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# Welcome to your February Pupdate

**The colder months are nearly behind us and spring is just around the corner.**

The UK's first guide dog partnership qualified in 1931. Since then, we have matched over 37,500 people with a guide dog – that's at least one new partnership every day for the last 94 years. Our dogs help people with sight loss to get out and about safely, providing life-changing support every single day. They help people with visual impairments to enjoy the freedom and independence many of us take for granted.

1 in 5 people will live with sight loss in their lifetime. By sponsoring a puppy, you're helping us provide vital services, from mobility training to assistive technology and more, that enrich the lives of adults and children with visual impairments. None of this would be possible without supporters like you!

I hope you enjoy reading the latest news from your sponsored puppy. Thank you for being a part of their journey.

Yours sincerely,

*Steph*

**Steph Potter**  
Puppy Sponsorship Manager



# Thank you

for sponsoring Buttons



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**Hello, it's  
Ellen here,  
Buttons'  
Puppy Raiser**

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I'm new to puppy raising, and Buttons is my first puppy. I started volunteering after receiving a leaflet from Guide Dogs through the post. We've known about the charity for years and thought it would be a good opportunity for me to do something to help this fantastic cause. Since Buttons arrived, I've discovered that my extended family have also raised puppies! It's an amazing thing to do, and I'm really enjoying it.

## **Buttons' arrival**

It was the best day when I arrived at the National Centre to pick up Buttons. He was so small and fluffy, like a little cloud running around. I couldn't wait to bring him home and begin our journey.

He was a little unsettled for the first few nights, and I spent them sleeping on the sofa beside his crate. I wanted him to feel comfortable in his crate and know that it's his safe space, so that when he needs a break from whatever is going on in the house, he can go in there and relax. Now he loves it!

## A cheeky chap

Buttons is such a lovable boy. He loves to follow me around and watch what I'm doing. He doesn't necessarily want attention, but he likes to know where I am. He can sometimes be a little vocal if he can't find me. I'll work on this with him, as he needs to work up to feeling comfortable when left alone for a couple of hours without worrying about where I am.

I've got lots of toys for Buttons, and his favourites are enrichment toys, like his puzzle feeder. I usually put his meals in it, as it helps him to eat his dinner at a more leisurely pace and also encourages him to use his brain to work out how to get the food out. These toys are great at helping pups learn how to problem solve, which is an essential skill for a future guide dog so that they can navigate their owner safely around obstacles.

As adorable as Buttons is, he's got a cheeky side and loves to steal my socks and involve me in a game of hide and seek. I'm always finding socks in weird places! As he grows up, I'll teach him it's more fun to play with toys than socks.



See how well Buttons has settled in with Puppy Raiser Ellen by going to:

**[guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-buttons](https://guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-buttons)**



## Puppy classes

While Buttons is with me, I'll teach him all the basic cues, like 'sit' and 'wait'. We've recently started going to puppy classes to learn more cues, and he enjoys it so much. He's still young and wants to play with all the other pups, but I'm working on teaching him that he can't play every time he sees a furry friend.

Buttons is a smart boy and picks up cues very quickly. He's not always keen to stay in the 'down' cue and usually jumps right back up, as he's too excited for what's next. I'll continue to work on this with him over the coming months. He's got good recall, which is fantastic for a pup his age. I'm also working on food manners; teaching him not to be distracted by food on the floor. This will be very useful for his future career.

**Thank you so much for sponsoring Buttons. I'm looking forward to talking about his progress in your next Pupdate in June.**





## Our volunteers

We wouldn't be able to train our life-changing dogs without the help of our volunteer puppy raisers and fosterers. Once our puppies are 8 weeks old, they will go to live with a puppy raiser. These wonderful volunteers provide a loving home and the vital foundation needed for the pup's future role. They introduce early training, socialisation, and a variety of new environments. After 12-16 months, our dogs move on to training school, where they learn guiding skills. Evenings and weekends are usually spent with our fantastic fosterers who care for the dog, reinforce training, and drop them off to training school each day! **To find out more about volunteering, please visit [guidedogs.org.uk/GDvolunteer](https://guidedogs.org.uk/GDvolunteer).**



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