



Derek

Training school

Pupdate 4

Welcome to your October Pupdate

I hope that you and your family are well and enjoying these beautiful autumn months.

Thank you so much for supporting Guide Dogs by sponsoring a puppy. Considering the current economic challenges, we are so grateful for your continued commitment; you form an integral part of the Guide Dogs family. Your generosity is helping children and adults living with sight loss to live independent and confident lives.

Every day 250 more people join the two million already living with sight loss in the UK, and this number is set to double by 2050. Our services are needed now more than ever. Our guide dogs and buddy dogs really do change lives, and we couldn't breed and train these incredible dogs without you. Thank you.

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

Yours sincerely,



Chris Allum
Puppy Sponsorship
Manager



Derek has arrived at training school



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**Hello, it's
Laura here,
Derek's
trainer.**

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I've been at Guide Dogs for about 22 years and have always worked with the dogs; I started in dog care before progressing to training. My favourite part of the job is spending my days with the dogs! Each one is different and has a unique personality; I enjoy getting to know them and working out what makes them tick.

Derek's adapted well

Derek has settled in remarkably well to training school, as well as his fosterer's home where he stays during the evenings and weekends. I thought that he may struggle to adapt to the change due to his separation anxiety, but I'm delighted that he proved me wrong. When he first arrived, I made sure that he always had company as I wanted to help him feel comfortable in the new environment before starting to work on his separation anxiety. Now that he's completely settled, I will gradually start leaving him alone for very short periods of time and build this up in a positive way; with plenty of treats and playtime!

During the day, when Derek's not out training with me, he's got his own spacious pen. It's his safe space where he can relax and unwind and there's always a staff member around so he's not alone.

I've left a couple of items of clothing which belong to myself and to his Puppy Raiser, Glynis, in there. The familiar scents help him to feel comfortable, and I'm pleased with how well he now settles in his pen.

Derek loves to learn

Derek is a very tactile, loving dog. He loves to be around people and is always eager to please. He really enjoys his training; when I go to take him out, he greets me with a wagging tail! I can see his confidence building every day which is really lovely.

I've started platform training with Derek and he's learnt that when he stands on the low platform he receives food – as soon as he sees one he wants to get on! I use the platforms when practising the obstacle course with Derek. I place a platform at the end of the course to give him something to target. He naturally moves out of the way of obstacles and I use my body position to encourage him back onto a straight line once the obstacle has been passed. Derek is quite tall so bending around obstacles is slightly trickier for him than smaller dogs, but I'm really happy with his progress so far.



Hear about the skills that Derek is learning at training school by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or going to:

guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-derek



I've also been teaching Derek 'hand touch'. When I hold out my hand in a closed fist and give the verbal cue 'touch' he touches his nose to my hand. This is a useful skill as I can use this to teach him to locate items such as a crossing box. By holding my fist to the crossing box and rewarding him when he touches, he will learn to locate the desired item.

Looking ahead

Over the next few months, I will continue to work with Derek and progress the skills that he has started to learn. I'll also be focusing on helping him feel comfortable during short periods on his own. Derek is a delight to work with and I'm looking forward to updating you on his progress in your next Pupdate in February.





The matching process

Every person and dog is unique, so matching a guide dog to an owner is a complex and carefully managed process. Our trainers take into account a person's needs including lifestyle, walking speed and height.

Once a match has been made, our trainers spend several weeks training the guide dog owner and dog together, learning their common routes and making sure their partnership is a success.



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