



# Dexter

**Dexter is making  
great progress!**

**Pupdate 2**

# 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



# Dexter continues his journey



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**Hello, it's  
Sheelagh,  
Dexter's  
Puppy Raiser.**

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Dexter is continuing to make wonderful progress with his learning. People always comment on how happy he is; he always looks like he's smiling! He is just starting to enter his 'teenage' phase and I've noticed that he's becoming a little bit more bolshy than before, particularly when playing with our pet dog, Dawson. He can also pull on the lead when he's excited. I'm not worried about this though; it's normal for pups of his age to become affected by hormone changes, so I'm confident that he'll grow out of it. In the meantime, I will continue to reinforce calm behaviour with treats and verbal praise.

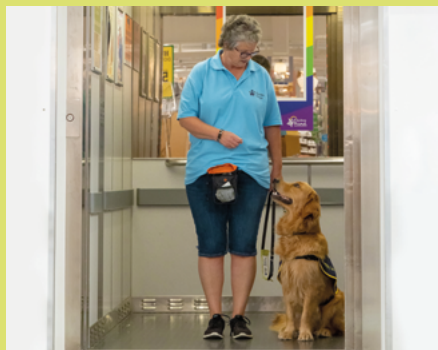
## **Out and about**

Since your last Pupdate, Dexter and I have been visiting a variety of different environments to build up a 'bank' of positive experiences. This will help to ensure that when he visits new places in the future, he will be calm and confident. He's excellent at settling in a café environment. He'll happily lie by my feet with a tasty chew – and he loves the admiring looks he gets from passers-by!

Dexter often accompanies me when I go shopping, so this is always a great chance for him to practise loose-lead walking, car travel and patience in a busy environment – all of which he’s fantastic at! He’s never been nervous in the car and he’s very happy to jump in and out by himself, although if he’s tired he does need a bit of encouragement. He’s very good in shops as well; he’ll walk calmly by my side and is very patient when I’m browsing.

## Overcoming challenges

I’ve spent a lot of time helping Dexter to feel comfortable in lifts, which will be really important for his future role. At first, he wasn’t too keen; I think he doesn’t like to be closed in, so the small space of the lift was quite unsettling for him. I used lots of positive reinforcement (tasty treats and plenty of fuss!) and he’s made wonderful progress. He’ll now happily trot into all sorts of lifts with me: fully enclosed modern lifts, old-fashioned lifts with collapsible metal gates and even glass lifts. I am so proud of him!



Discover how Dexter is navigating supermarkets by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or going to:

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





## Looking ahead

Over the next few months, I will continue to work with Dexter so that, when the time comes for him to enter formal training, he will be ready and confident. One skill that I will be focusing on is his recall. Although Dexter has excellent recall, he can be over-excited when returning and often arrives at a bit of an angle to me, which could prove challenging for a potential owner with sight loss.

I will miss Dexter when he leaves to go to training school; he's got such a fun personality and his tail is always wagging! I plan to volunteer to raise another puppy and the new pup will have very big paws to fill! Dexter is an absolute delight to work with and to have around the home. I am sure that one day he will be a fantastic companion for someone living with sight loss. Look out for your next Pupdate in February to hear how he's getting on.





## Training – puppy to qualified guide dog

It takes around 20 months of training to transform a pup into a qualified guide dog. The pups learn basic skills and are introduced to new surroundings with their Puppy Raiser. They then venture on to Guide Dogs Training School, where they learn the foundation tasks required of a guide dog. The final stages of training focus on their partnership with a new owner, where they learn specific skills tailored to their owner's specific needs.



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