



# Kevin

Kevin's making  
progress

Pupdate 5

# Welcome to your June Pupdate

**I hope you're enjoying these warmer and sunnier months.**

Thank you so much for supporting Guide Dogs by sponsoring a puppy. Did you know that in 2022 nearly 100,000 people were told they were losing their sight? This kind of news can have a huge impact, both practically and emotionally. Thanks to puppy sponsorship from our generous supporters, we're able to be there every step of the way for those who need us, delivering life-changing services, advice and support when it's needed most.

At Guide Dogs, we believe people with sight loss should live actively, independently, and well – however they choose. We're dedicated to educating, campaigning, and of course training incredible dogs like your sponsored pup. None of this would be possible without people like you; by sponsoring a puppy, you're helping to transform the lives of both adults and children with visual impairments. Thank you.

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

Yours sincerely,

*Steph*

**Steph Potter**

Puppy Sponsorship Manager



# Thank you

## for sponsoring Kevin



“

**Hello, it's  
Karen here,  
Kevin's Guide  
Dog Mobility  
Specialist, and  
my colleague  
Yvonne.**

”

I've been working at Guide Dogs for 25 years. When I was younger, I used to see guide dogs walking around where I lived and called up to see if I could get a job. I had to wait until I was 18 before I could apply, so until then I volunteered to help look after some of the dogs in training. My mum was also a puppy raiser for Guide Dogs, so I've been involved with the charity for a long time. My role is a Guide Dog Mobility Specialist (GDMS). This is slightly different to Kevin's previous trainer Steph, as I also match dogs to their new owners and look after their partnership going forward. Steph's done an amazing job at training Kevin and developing his skills.

### **Advanced training**

Kevin's adapted really well to advanced training and we've developed a great bond. I'm building on what Steph taught him, transferring his skills to real-life situations and encouraging him to take on more guiding responsibility. And hopefully soon, I will find him his perfect match!

Kevin is a very playful dog and still has his little quirks, but he's certainly matured since your last Pupdate. Everything is beginning to come together now for Kevin; all the pieces are falling into place like a jigsaw.



In your previous Pupdate, Steph mentioned that Kevin was wearing a gentle leader along with his guiding harness on training walks. This helps him to walk with the correct guiding tension. He's been doing great! I've been doing some blindfolded walks, this is where I wear a blindfold and ask Kevin to lead me on a familiar route we have been practising together. A colleague, such as Yvonne, will always be close by to make sure we're both safe. Blindfolded walks encourage Kevin to make his own decisions to keep me safe without any help from me.

On training walks, I've also been adding more active interference. This means I'll deliberately make changes to my walking style to encourage Kevin to take on more guiding responsibility. For example, I might walk a bit slower or act a bit off balance. I want Kevin to follow my lead and get me back on track safely. Kevin's doing amazingly well with the increased responsibility, I'm so proud of him.

Kevin's making progress with settling but is still learning what behaviours I'm looking for during quiet moments. If Kevin is struggling to sit still, I'll ask him to touch my hand with his nose and then reward him; this helps him to refocus on me. He's a clever dog, and this is working well as he's always interested in a tasty treat!



Learn more about how Kevin is getting on with advanced training by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or going to:  
**[guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-kevin](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-kevin)**



Scan me

## Looking ahead

Moving forward I will be working on consolidating all of Kevin's skills, practising these in real-life situations and preparing him for partnership training. Kevin loves to be on the go so he would suit someone who has a very busy lifestyle. He's a fast-paced dog so will need someone who can match his speed. He's a pleasure to work with and a fantastic dog, I'm looking forward to finding Kevin his 'pawfect' partner.

**Thank you for sponsoring Kevin. I'm really enjoying watching him progress. Find out how his training's going in your next Pupdate in October!**



## Where is Kevin on his Pupdate journey?



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### An additional skill

Although many guide dog owners will stop using their long cane once they are partnered, occasionally people with visual impairments still prefer to use it in specific environments. For example, some guide dog owners prefer to do so when moving around inside a familiar building where it is easier for them just to use a cane. To prepare for these situations, we sometimes train our dogs to walk on lead with their owner while they use their cane. This can be challenging at first, as dogs often try to race the cane, or even mistake it for a stick! Kevin's trainer has been introducing him to this skill, and he's picking it up brilliantly!



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