



Guide
Dogs

Sponsor
a Puppy



Willow

Continuing to progress

Pupdate 2

Willow continues her journey



“ Hello, it’s Christine here, Willow’s Puppy Raiser. I’m excited to update you on her progress. ”

Although lockdown restrictions changed the usual training plan for Willow, she has continued to progress in her training. Willow has grown a lot since her last Pupdate – not only is she a bigger dog than we anticipated, she has also become strong-willed and her confidence has certainly increased.

Life at home

It’s a joy to have Willow; she has continued to have a lot of fun with us at home. She is always playing with her squeaky toys and has invented her own game of fetch. For this she tosses the toys in the air and looks at me to go fetch them!

I’ve been working on fine-tuning a lot of skills with Willow. She is already very good with her lead work, ‘sit’, ‘stay’ and ‘wait’ commands, and her kerb drills.

Her recall is good, providing there's no other dogs nearby. Willow is a very sociable pup and can often get a bit distracted with other dogs, which is something we're working on with her.

Prior to lockdown we took Willow to the pub, and the owner came out to give all the dogs a piece of sausage. Willow got very excited and now has him marked as the sausage man!

Visiting new places

Prior to lockdown I introduced Willow to lots of new environments. We went to shopping malls to get her used to the sight and sound of escalators and she was completely fine with them. I also took her on the bus again, when it was safe to do so, and we had no problems at all. In supermarkets and shops she has behaved really well, and is patient when waiting in queues. She's even cottoned on that we need to wait two meters apart from others!

(Continued overleaf)



See how Willow has grown in her own video:
guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-willow

Looking ahead

I am going to focus Willow's training around calming her down when she gets a bit too excitable. I'm sure she'll quickly fall out of this behaviour as she gets a bit older. Although we've had a few socially distanced puppy classes I am also going to focus on helping her with dog distraction, as this can be tricky to practise in lockdown. When it is safe to do so, I hope to take Willow out on a walk with another puppy raiser's pup who lives quite close to us. Here we can practise in a calm and controlled environment.

I can't wait to see Willow progress further in her journey to becoming a qualified guide dog. Look out for your next Pupdate in June!



Training – Puppy to qualified guide dog

It takes around 20 months of training to transform a newborn pup into a qualified guide dog. The pups learn basic commands 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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