



North East region: puppy raising update June 2025

Hi All, Janet Champion here, and I am the Puppy Raising Operations Manager for the North East region.

Puppy Raising Operations Manager

You will see on this month's video, we have focused on the importance of strong foundations with positional cues and some of the common areas we work on - there may be something in this video which is familiar to you and that may give you ideas, or even prompt you to discuss things further with your Puppy Development Advisor.

A puppy who has a good response to positional cues and can transfer those cues between handlers by the end of puppy raising, will find the transition into training easier. Have a think about those mannerisms you may unconsciously do, especially with older pups, that perhaps make those verbal cues less reliable if someone else is handling your puppy. Your Puppy Development Advisor will be more than happy to work with your puppy at your next visit if this is something you want to check out.

I spent a large part of my lengthy career with Guide Dogs working as a Guide Dog Mobility Specialist and have trained many guide dog partnerships together. Whilst the obvious tasks of the guiding role are crucial, how a dog behaves in lots of other public places is also important, both for matching a dog to a future partner and during their working life together. Think about standing in a supermarket queue as you move towards the checkout, it's a challenging and cramped environment anyway and made much more difficult with a dog and a visual impairment. It can be made so much better when the dog can be relied on to sit or stand patiently by your side without investigating the people or shopping around you. It really helps if a guide dog owner is able to loop an arm through the lead and pay or pack shopping with both hands. You can set up a 'queuing' scenario to practice at home or perhaps ask your

Puppy Development Advisor if it can be practised at puppy class, as it will take time for your puppy to learn this skill and it will be very exciting for them to begin with but in time, it will help to build on the foundations of reliable positional cues and you and your puppy will get there in the end.

Photographing pups for weight assessments

Hi, Wendy Huggins here, Puppy Development Supervisor for the North East. When we request a monthly weight update, it is really useful for us to have photographic evidence, on your pup's file. The best way for this is a photo, so that we can see two specific views. Have a look at the following pictures, which give you a good indication of what we are looking for. And, how to best take the photograph.

One: taking a side profile photo



**Do:**

- Use good lighting
- Where possible have a contrasting background
- Enlist a helper! Having a helper to gain the pups attention and to encourage them to remain still
- Have the dog in the standing position, standing as straight as possible
- Crouch or kneel (adjacent to the dog) so that you are level with the dog's height
- Include the whole dog in the picture

Following these tips allows us to see the abdominal tuck clearly and identify any excess deposits of fat over the pelvis area, chest and sternum.

Two: taking an ariel view photo



Do:



- Use good lighting
- Have a contrasting background

- A helper is always useful!
- Have the dog in a standing position, standing as straight as possible
- The photograph is taken directly from above, standing behind the pup
- Include the whole dog in the picture

This allows us to clearly see the shape of the dog, demonstrating a defined waist. We can also see there is no excess of fat covering over the shoulder area or pelvic area.

When to seek help or advice



This is a photograph of an overweight dog, scoring 7/9 on an adult body condition score.

Note the following signs

- lack of abdominal tuck
- fat deposits over the lumbar area (lower back) & tail base
- fat pad over the sternum (front of chest)
- heavy fat covering over the ribs (no definition between rib cage and abdominal area)

If you ever need to send a photo in for your Puppy Development Advisor or the health team, please email it to Guide Line:

information@guidedogs.org.uk. They will then upload it to your pup's file. Please include the name/computer number and weight update in the subject.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, via Guide Line, if you need any further support.

Regional outings



Many of you will be aware that Puppy Development Advisors have been organising training days at interesting local venues to support puppy development. These trips often attract media attention, and this was the case recently when Laura took some of her puppy raisers and their pups to Canon Hall Farm in Barnsley which is often featured on TV. Everyone had a great day out and Laura has another trip planned next month along with a trip to the Yorkshire Wildlife Park. To read the article and see more photos from the day, please click on the following link: [Guide dog puppies enjoy 'school trip' to Cannon Hall Farm](#).

Thank you for all you are doing and look forward to seeing you all soon,
Janet

Janet Champion

Puppy Raising Operations Manager - North East

Document ends.