



## North West region: puppy raising update June 2025

Hi All, Vanessa Scott here, and I am the Puppy Raising Operations Manager for the North West region.

### Puppy Raising Operations Manager

As we approach summertime, I wanted to send a warm and sunny thank you to all our incredible puppy raisers in the Northwest! Whether you are just beginning your puppy raising journey or are a seasoned volunteer, I wanted you to know that you are very much appreciated for all the hard work and dedication that you give to your pups and to Guide Dogs.

In this month's edition, we will be focusing on positional cues.

Positional cues can be a fun, interactive and engaging activity which can help with our puppies training, as well as help tighten the bond between handler and pup. The main ones we use at Guide Dogs are "sit", "down" and "stand". These can be trained in a way that is not only useful within a household but can then be taken out to external areas to help assist your pup with their training.

As with many of our training sessions we advise to keep positional cue training short and always end on a high note! Focus on the quality, over quantity of sessions, and be led by your own individual puppy's enjoyment and understanding of the exercises.

The good thing about practising positional cues is that they can be done in all weathers. So, if it's too hot or too cold, use positional cue training to keep your puppy entertained in a calm and productive manner. The other positive with this training, is that the difficulty level can always be increased; both the duration of the cues, and the distance between you and the pup, with distraction elements thrown in to test your puppy's understanding.

Once a good solid understanding has been undertaken at home, this can be generalised by asking the puppy the same cues on the lead, and then in different external environments.

There are many examples with puppies on schemes, where a good understanding of a positional cue then aids another area of training. For instance, if a pup is struggling with dog distraction, positional cues can benefit a pup's learning if we ask them for a behaviour they already know, such as a sit. Think of it as a helping hand for your pup. So, when a dog is approaching, and if they're unsure what to do, ask them for something you know they understand. Remember, sits, downs and stands will continue to be used when a pup enters a training school and will remain consistent throughout their training.

We will continue to practise these positional cues in virtual and in-person puppy classes, as well as in regular visits from your Puppy Development Advisor. As ever, there is online documents on our e-learning platform, Kallidus, to help your learning and understanding of these.

## **Puppy Development Advisor update: Shrewsbury scheme**



You may be aware that Puppy Development Advisor Jess Jarvis (pictured on the left) will be going on maternity leave in the coming weeks. I wanted to update you to let you know that we have recruited a replacement, temporary Puppy Development Advisor, Jayne Allen, who is currently a Guide Dog Trainer.

Jayne (pictured below) will be covering Jess's maternity leave until she returns. I'm sure you will join me in wishing Jess good luck for the birth of her new baby. We can't wait to meet the little one soon.



## Local fundraising

Puppy raiser Catherine and pup Nelson (pictured below left) did a fantastic fundraising event. They had a home cake sale (pictured below right) with friends and family and managed to raise an incredible £500 for Guide Dogs.





## Equipment box

For anyone with puppy equipment that's no longer need (your puppy may have outgrown it or entered training), there is now an equipment returns box in the reception area at our North West Regional Centre in Atherton.

## Coffee dates for the diary

We aim to meet up every month as an opportunity for our pups to socialise and for us to get to know each other: retired guide dogs, fosterers, puppy raisers, pups and friends. Currently meeting at Partridge Lakes near Culcheth. There is good parking, a bus stop is close by, and a great cafe for refreshments. If you need more information, please contact Joan: [Usincroft@aol.com](mailto:Usincroft@aol.com).

Coffee mornings Chester - guide dog owners, puppy raisers, fosterers, all volunteers all welcome. 'Get together coffee mornings' held in the Cloister room at Chester Cathedral (enter via side exit, 10.30am-12.00pm) every first Friday of the month. £2.50 for tea/coffee and biscuits. If you need more information, please contact [langmancyril@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:langmancyril@yahoo.co.uk).

Stockport and South Manchester - Guide Dogs get together for puppy raisers, fosterers, guide dog owners and supporters (all welcome). The group meets from 1pm to 3pm on the first Thursday of the month at The Sea Cadets Unit, Pear tree Mill, SK6 2BP. The building is dog friendly, and the car park is secure. There is good public transport access. We ask for a £3 donation to cover refreshments and room hire. Contact Lisa for more information and directions [lisaanndavenport1@gmail.com](mailto:lisaanndavenport1@gmail.com).

Crewe/Nantwich area - a get together on the last Thursday of every month, starting on Thursday 29th August 1-3pm. Meet at Wistaston Memorial Hall 75 Church Ln Crewe CW2 8ER. Coffee, tea and biscuits available at a nominal fee (just to cover costs). For more details, contact [dipiggott22@gmail.com](mailto:dipiggott22@gmail.com).

Southport area - puppy raisers coffee mornings. We are a relatively new group but meet up on the third Monday of the month, from 9am to 11am at



The Richmond Pub, 234 Scarisbrick New Road, Southport, PR8 5HL. We welcome all puppy raisers (with or without their pups), guide dog owners, fosterers, any volunteers and withdrawn/retired guide dog holders. There is plenty of parking in the pub car park and it's on local bus routes. We have the use of a private function room with adjacent outdoor area, allowing our pups to socialise and for us to chat. Tea, coffee and food can be purchased from the bar. There is currently no charge for room hire. For any further information please contact Jane [jigriff@mac.com](mailto:jigriff@mac.com).

Thank you once again for being such an essential part of what we do. If you have any questions or suggestions for the next regional update, please contact me at [Vanessal.scott@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:Vanessal.scott@guidedogs.org.uk).

**Vanessa Scott**

**Puppy Raising Operations Manager - North West**

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