



North West region: puppy raising update December 2025

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

As the year draws to a close, I want to take a moment to celebrate the incredible dedication and love you've shown to our puppies throughout 2025. Your commitment has helped shape confident puppies who are on their way to making a life-changing difference.

This month, we'll share festive tips for arriving visitors and keeping your pups safe during the festive season. Some highlights and inspiring stories, and provide you updates on upcoming coffee dates for the diary.

Puppy Raising Operations Manager's message

The main theme for this month's newsletter is setting yourself and visitors up for success. In the video, we look at avoiding some of the common issues puppy raisers encounter, how visitors to their home should behave around a guide dog puppy, and the desired behaviours a guide dog puppy should demonstrate when friends and family visit.

Christmas can be an exciting (and sometimes overwhelming) time for your puppies because of the extra visitors, noise, and changes in routine. For now, here are some practical tips to help settle your puppy around visitors:

Prior planning

Before your guests arrive prepare your home for visitors, plan and anticipate the doorbell ringing. What will you do to teach your puppy how to behave when they arrive? Always remember safety first, as your puppy will want to rush to the door to greet your visitors and say hello. Remember the two-door rule, there should always be 2 doors to the entrance / exit, such as closing another door whilst you answer the front door, or a baby gate so that it prevents your puppy from escaping onto the drive or the street. If you

have planned guests, you could always give them prior instructions on what to do when they enter / leave to keep the puppy safe and prevent any undesirable behaviours from your puppy.

Stick to routine

Keep feeding, toileting, and exercise times as consistent as possible. Predictability helps the puppy to remain as calm and as relaxed possible during periods of change. Remember there may be fireworks during the New Year celebrations so your puppy may be reluctant to go outside, refer to Kallidus for “fireworks and unexpected noises” see this recording for more information on how to manage your puppy around these noises.

To view the presentation, log into Kallidus, go to "All courses", type in "Puppy Raising" in the word and phase box and locate "Puppy Raising - National Learning Sessions - Recordings" in the list of courses.

Prepare a safe space

Prepare a safe place, a calm area away from the hustle and bustle, such as a crate, pen, or behind a baby gate. Make it cozy with their bed, toys, and maybe an interactive toy or a chew to keep them occupied. This gives them a retreat if things get too busy or if puppy gets too excited and needs a break.

Controlled greetings

As visitors enter the home ask them to ignore the puppy initially, no eye contact, talking, or touching until the puppy is calm. Reward calm behaviour with gentle praise. If your puppy gets overexcited, you can always pop them on a lead or give them a chew, bone or interactive toy to occupy them whilst your visitors settle in.

Introduce visitors gradually if possible. Keep interactions short and positive, then give the puppy settle time.

If your puppy is in on a lead, in a crate /pen or behind a baby gate when visitors arrive, wait until puppy is calm before releasing them to say hello.



As always, each puppy goes at their own speed and needs to be treated as an individual. There are many ways to teach your puppy the settle around visitors, and this will be done stage by stage, setting them up for success at every step.

It is also a good habit to think has the puppies mental and physical needs been met so far that day, to ensure success in the settle? To reiterate, every puppy is different and will need different levels of enrichment and training to ensure they are in the correct mental state to get the settle correct. If this is combined with the correct behaviours from the visitors, you stand a much higher chance of a successful greet and settle.

The use of food in these types of settings is dependent on your own puppy, some puppies can settle without food, or some may require food-based rewards. So please discuss this with your PDA.

Good luck with your visitor greetings and settle training and thank you for all your amazing efforts!

Good luck to Glynis

After 15 years volunteering with the Northwest puppy team, puppy raiser and mentor Glynis is on the move.

She'll be relocating to the Midlands later this month to be closer to her family.

Glynis was presented with her leaving gifts from the local volunteers and PDAs of Swarovski crystal labrador puppy and adult figurines, a wooden plaque with the names of the pups she has raised, and a theatre voucher.

Glynis has helped raise 12 puppies over the past 15 years - Thomas, Aruba, Nugget, Carla, Watson, Carol, Dennis, Arthur, Clara, Kola, Derek, and Kahn - so knows all too well the challenges and satisfaction of raising these little life changers.

As part of her puppy raising mentor role, which she has done for the past 6 years, she has supported the puppy development team across Cheshire and Greater Manchester helping other volunteers on their puppy raising journey.

This has included assisting with puppy classes, visits, off lead sessions, puppy placements with new volunteers, interviews, home checks and dog handling assessments, and has supported new puppy raisers in person, over the phone, or virtually over Zoom. Alongside all of this, she has also helped with fostering dogs for other puppy raisers while they are holiday and assessing pups in her own home.

Vanessa Scott, Puppy Raising Manager for Central and North Regions, said: "We are very thankful for all the support and dedication Glynis has shown to puppy raising over the years. Glynis's wealth of expertise, thoughtful mentoring, and tireless commitment to Guide Dogs have left a lasting impression. As Glynis begins a new chapter in a different region, we want to express our sincere gratitude for everything she's contributed. Glynis will be truly missed by all puppy raisers and staff in the Cheshire area. Not forgetting the lives, she has changed by raising her pups to become little life changers."

PDA Lisa Cooper said: "Glynis has been invaluable to the NW team, it's hard to put into words how much she has helped the PDAs and volunteers over the past 15 years and what a big thank you we owe her. We will miss her greatly but wish her every happiness in the next chapter spending precious time with her family and new grandchild."

Glynis said: "I'd like to say thank you for the kind wishes and the lovely presents and cards I've received. My involvement with Guide Dogs in Cheshire, and the wider Northwest has been very happy and fulfilling. I've met some great people both staff and PRs and some fantastic pups over the 15 years or so in the various roles I've held. You've all been so friendly and enthusiastic, and I will miss you. Good luck with your current pups and the future ones. Keep up the loose lead walking!"



Photo caption: Glynis pictured with her leaving gifts with a black labrador on her left and her pet black labrador x retriever on her right.

An amazing achievement to be proud of

Paul is a puppy raiser from Whitchurch, Shropshire and was a finalist in "citizen of the year awards" for his volunteering work involving guide dogs and walking groups, he was invited for the town Christmas light switch on to join other finalists on stage. He went with current puppy Boro, he should be very proud!



Photo caption: Paul's Citizen of the year finalist certificate.



Photo caption: Paul on stage receiving his award with puppy Boro.

Singing for success!

Janet and Stephen, from Cannock, who are raising puppy Jamie, have been busy this November raising funds to [name a puppy](#). They aimed to raised £2,500 to name a puppy after Simon, a Choirmaster who runs nine choirs in the area. By the end of the concert, they managed to raise a fabulous amount: £4,023! With still a few pounds coming in, Janet and Stephen said they are so pleased to do this for Guide Dogs. We thank them so much for their fundraising efforts.



Photo caption: Puppies Jamie and Zizi, with their volunteers, waiting for the concert to begin.



Photo caption: A packed hall during the concert interval.

Coffee dates for the diary

Coffee, Puppy Raisers and Pals (North Cheshire)

We aim to meet monthly providing opportunity for our pups to socialise and for us to meet up. Retired Guide Dogs boarders, PRs, pups and friends. Currently meeting at Patridge Lakes near Culcheth there is good parking and a bus stop close by and a great café for refreshments. If you need any more information, please contact Joan Usincroft@aol.com.

Coffee mornings Cheshire

Guide dog owners, puppy raisers, fosterers, all volunteers welcome “Get Together coffee mornings”. Held in the Cloister room at Chester cathedral. Enter via side EXIT 10.30 -12.00 every first Friday of the month. £2.50 for tea/coffee and biscuits. If you need any more information, please contact langmancyril@yahoo.co.uk.

Stockport and South Manchester Guide Dogs Get Together

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 lisaanddavenport1@gmail.com.

Crew/Nantwich area

A get together on the last Thursday in every month. 1-3PM. Coffee, tea and biscuits available at a nominal fee (just to cover costs) at Wistaston Memorial Hall, 75 Church Ln, Crewe, CW2 8ER. For more details contact dipiggott22@gmail.com.

Southport Area Puppy Raisers Coffee Mornings

We are a relatively new group, the third Monday of the month from 9am to 11am at The Richmond Pub, 234 Scarisbrick New Rd, Southport, PR8 5HM. We welcome all Puppy Raisers (with or without their pups), guide dog owners, fosterers, volunteers and withdrawn/retired guide dog holders. There is plenty of parking on 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 jjgriff@mac.com.

How to keep your pup safe this Christmas

Christmas is a joyful time, but it can bring changes to your dog's routine and environment, along with potential hazards.

Our [Christmas Guide](#) provides essential tips to ensure your dog's safety and well-being during the festive season. Learn how to maintain routines, create a safe space for your dog, and manage potential risks like decorations, presents, and toxic foods. Discover how to handle emergencies if your dog ingests harmful items and find contact details for Guide Dogs support services.

Our promise to you

Thank you to all our puppy raisers who took time to complete the survey about the communications you receive once your puppy has left you and



entered training. PDS Jay Murray received some good feedback which was overall very positive. We heard loud and clear the importance of quality, consistent communication which when given in a timely manner creates a positive experience for our puppy raisers. Knowing how your puppy is doing in training is a real motivation to continue puppy raising for the future, so it's important we get this right! Due to the feedback received the survey will be sent out nationally, and the feedback will be collated in January 2026. If there are any common themes and improvements, then these will be considered as part of the review. I will keep you updated.

Thank you again for all you are doing, wishing you a happy Christmas and all the best for the New Year! And I look forward to seeing you all soon,

Vanessa

Vanessa L Scott

Puppy Raising Operations Manager - North West

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