



North West region: puppy raising update December 2024

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

As Christmas is almost upon us, I wanted to write and give a special thank you to our 236 wonderful puppy raisers and fosterers, to show our appreciation for all your hard work on behalf of Guide Dogs.

During 2024 we have placed 161 puppies into schemes throughout the region.

Thanks to your time commitment and dedication:

- 161 dogs have progressed into training
- 18 dogs have entered the breeding programme
- Between 95 and 100 dogs will qualify with their guide dog owners

Puppy raising is a way of life, I very much appreciate the sacrifices that you make which enables blind and partially sighted people to get out and about to live the life they choose. Without puppy raisers, we simply would not be able to create our life-changing partnerships. On behalf of our all staff and our service users in the North West region, we'd like to say a big thank you for everything that you do.

PDA, Rachel

My name is Rachel Adams, and I am the Puppy Development Advisor (PDA) who is leading a new puppy raising scheme in Cumbria. It has been amazing the amount of people who have come forward to express interest in joining the scheme as a volunteer, whether that is to puppy raise, foster, or give their time in other ways.

We have had 14 puppies on the scheme so far, with hopefully many more to come. I am so grateful to all the volunteers who open their homes and give their time, patience, and training to raise one of our little life-changers.



Raising a puppy isn't easy at the best of times and some of my volunteers have had to overcome complex behaviours such as being uncomfortable traveling in a car - and as you can imagine it is very important for our pups to be relaxed and happy when traveling (especially when you need to travel to get to anywhere in Cumbria). But through the time, patience and support from myself and other puppy raisers, the puppy is now successfully travelling in the car and has been on trains and buses with no problem. Some may say they are a seasoned traveller now!

One of my puppy raisers is based in Keswick which has been classed as the most dog friendly town in Britain. Which is brilliant! But it does mean there are a lot of dogs there, so they have had to work extra hard on reducing the pup's distraction levels towards other dogs (and she is acing it by the way).

Another puppy raiser lives in a small, secluded village just outside of Carlisle with narrow paths and limited public transport. So, they have been mindful in slowly introducing busier towns and cities to their pup, to ensure it is not overwhelming. The puppy in question now goes everywhere with them and often frequents the train onto their next adventure/experience.

I am genuinely so proud of what everyone has achieved with their puppies, and what they will go on to achieve during their time as a Guide Dogs volunteer. I am so honoured to be a part of that journey with them and it will always be a huge thank you from me and I'm sure I can speak for all the staff at Guide Dogs too.

PDA, Beth

My name is Beth Dacey, I cover North Lancashire, South Lakes and North Fylde puppy raising schemes.

This year, we've covered a huge range of behaviours, from self-control to car and van travel, lead walking and handling. We had a fantastic experience at Blackpool Dungeons with a handful of pups experiencing a challenging environment, as well as group public transport and shopping centre visits.

I'm lucky to have a wonderful group of puppy raisers who all work hard to support each other and raise some great puppies. A special mention to

Gillian and Paul who have worked tirelessly on car travel with pup Mulligan for 10 months, getting him from being sick in the car and doing anything to get away from it to jumping in and travelling for a four-hour trip on holiday. Also, a huge thanks to those puppy raisers who have taken eight-week-old puppies on for a few weeks until a permanent home has been found. Thank you to all puppy raisers - what you do is incredible and makes a huge difference.

PDA's, Andrea and Lisa

Hi, we are Andrea Deller and Lisa Cooper who look after the Cheshire and Manchester schemes. We have an amazing mentor, Glynis, who has been so incredible in supporting the Cheshire scheme, we have now stolen her for Manchester as well!

We couldn't do our job without her. She helps at face-to-face and Zoom puppy classes, placing puppies, supporting new and existing puppy raisers with 'problem' pups, co-ordinates off-lead exercise (free run sessions) at a secure field, and helps with fostering dogs and assessing pups in her home etc. She's just amazing and will help wherever she can.

Some pups can be more challenging than others and need additional support between PDA visits. Glynis has filled this role on numerous occasions. Including using her own and her friends pet dog to help build a pups' confidence around other dogs, recall from other dogs and walking on a loose lead past other dogs. This additional support has led to dogs meeting the standard to enter training, as well as increase the puppy raisers' confidence and therefore likelihood that they will volunteer again. In short, she's amazing!



Coffee dates for the diary

Coffee, puppy raisers and pals (North Cheshire)

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

Coffee mornings Chester

Guide dog owners, puppy raisers, boarders, volunteers all 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.

Crewe/Nantwich area (new group)

A get together on the last Thursday of every month, starting on Thursday 29 August 1-3pm - coffee, tea and biscuits available at a nominal fee (just to cover costs) at Wistaston Memorial Hall 75 Church Ln Crewe, CW28ER. 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 5HL. We



welcome all puppy raisers (with or without their pups), guide dog owners, fosterers/Boarders, 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.

Puppy raiser talks on class pilot

Lastly, I wanted to give a quick update on the puppy raiser on class pilot that we are trialling in the North West.

Puppy raising speakers have been attending class with guide dog owners while they are training with their new dogs. The purpose is to explain what puppy raising involves and to share the speakers experience of raising puppies with the hope that it generates communication between guide dog owners and their dog's puppy raisers once they qualify.

Post qualification communication was the missing link that came through loud and clear in some of the recent puppy raising surveys, stating that knowing what happens to the puppy that they raised once it qualifies is the biggest motivator for puppy raisers to continue in their roles.

Thank you again for all you are doing, from all staff and service users in the North West we wish you a Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Vanessa

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Puppy Raising Operations Manager - North West region

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