



Scotland and Northern Ireland region: puppy raising update December 2024

Hi all, its Fiona Fraser here, and I am one of the Puppy Development Supervisors for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Lorna Barclay and I would like to thank all the staff and volunteers who have helped support Scotland and Northern Ireland's puppy raising schemes in 2024. Lorna and I have had the immense pleasure of overseeing all the areas across Scotland and Northern Ireland and have enjoyed meeting many of you and your pups while out and about with our Puppy Development Advisors.

We currently have 170 puppies in homes across Scotland and Northern Ireland.

We want to welcome all our new puppy raisers and fosterers who have joined in 2024 and thank our existing volunteers for making them so welcome. It's not easy and with your first guide dog puppy, we know it can feel overwhelming at times. We are truly grateful for all the time and effort people give. Often puppy raisers say they feel much more relaxed with their second and subsequent puppies. We have many puppy raisers that are well into double figures. Without all of you we would not be able to provide life-changers. So, when people ask you "what did you achieve in 2024?" you can say "I contributed to changing someone's life through volunteering my time to Guide Dogs". Now isn't that a great statement to think about at the end of 2024!

Puppy Development Advisors (PDAs) Tara Green and Lynsey Anderson Fell have been in their role for one year now. Tara is in Glasgow and Lynsey in Edinburgh. Thank you for making them feel so welcome this year. Here is some feedback on how they are feeling about their role.

PDA, Lynsey Anderson Fell

“I've really enjoyed learning more about puppies, what's normal for age and stage and the impact hormones can have on behaviour. The part I get the biggest buzz from is seeing the puppy raisers get wins with their dogs, especially when they have put in so much and made adaptations to their homes and lives. As an ex-trainer, the thing I find the hardest is keeping my hands in my pockets and not handling the pups! I feel lucky to have the support of a good team, who I frequently call to ask questions.”

PDA, Tara Green

“Just over a year ago I applied to become a PDA, I can now say it was one of the best decisions I have made in my career path. I enjoy working with such amazing resilient colleagues and volunteers and enjoy seeing the progress made with our four-legged friends. I have learnt so much and still have a lot more to learn on this very exciting journey. Can't wait to see what the future brings.”

Puppy Development Supervisor, Fiona Fraser

“It's been lovely to see both Tara and Lynsey settle into their roles, Tara coming from a Dogs Trust background and Lynsey coming with 20 years of guide dog training experience. Both have enjoyed meeting all the new and current puppy raisers and have brought a lot to the roles. We look forward to seeing the schemes grow as we move into 2025.”

Thank you

When we hear the statement “help change a life”, we want our volunteer puppy raisers to know that even for the dogs that have not made it as a guide dog for health or temperament reasons, those journeys with you were still vital.

There will always be some that don't make it as guide dogs - the job is quite rightly not for every dog, and this can be decided at any stage. But please know whatever your part, fosterer, puppy raiser or a supportive family



member in a puppy raising home you have played your part in creating a guide dog partnership. And we are so very grateful to have your support.

Puppy raising in the spotlight

We have been exceptionally busy promoting Guide Dogs and puppy raising and wanted to give a huge shout out to all our volunteers that not only puppy raise and foster but do fundraising and public relations for us. There are too many to mention everyone, but we have had amazing football coverage for Arbroath and Celtic, more than one puppy raiser skydiving, sponsored walks and events, “Dogs with Jobs” filming in Northern Ireland, and many amazing, TV, newspaper stories and radio pieces to promote puppy raising.

We have been working hard to build links with new venues such as Edinburgh Dungeons and City Link Buses to name but a few. We are excited to have many more links happening in the new year. Again, it might seem like a small thing to agree to be in a newspaper article or to be filmed at a puppy class, but we can assure you that having our puppy raisers visible and getting a good and consistent reach across Scotland and Northern Ireland goes a long way to promote fundraising and recruitment of volunteers.

Additional opportunities for support roles

We value all our volunteers and there are additional roles that some of you may not be aware of. In 2025, we will be offering more opportunities to those who would be interested in doing more. You may not be in a position to take another pup into your home, or you might have a pup but would like to do more on scheme. We will be looking for more mentors, puppy class helpers and boarding coordinators in 2025. We honestly love upskilling our volunteers and value their support. Additional role availability can be discussed with your PDA. A huge thank you to all our current volunteers who already do these roles, PDAs and puppy raisers really do value that support.



Dates for the diary

We plan to have Forfar Induction days in 2025. Your PDA will share dates with you, and we'll also publish dates in our regional puppy raising updates next year.

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

Fiona Fraser

Puppy Development Supervisor - Scotland and Northern Ireland

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