

Midlands and East region: puppy raising update February 2025



Hi All, Anna here, and I am the Puppy Raising Operations Manager for the Midlands and East. As I write this newsletter, we currently have 303 pups in our region, placing 28 this year so far which is brilliant and could not have been achieved without your support, effort and commitment to us as volunteers and for that I am so grateful.

Onward journeys

From January:

- **Puppies heading into the breeding programme:** Robyn, Patsy, Angel, Shakira, Heidi and Kerrie progress to their new careers within our breeding programme.
- **Puppies heading into training:** Inca, Theodore, Bentley, Sabin, Carlton, Donna, Pearl, Samson, Edi, Ruby, Holly, Eddy, Terberg, Morton, Storm, William, Hazel, Archie, Quaver, Maria, Bentley, Christine and Meadow.

I wanted to say a massive thank you to puppy raisers for supporting these dogs and I want to wish all the pups well as they progress onto their next stage of their careers.

As our dogs' progress into training, I'm eager to seek anonymous feedback from puppy raisers. So, at the end of each month I will be sending a feedback link for those volunteers whose pups have progressed into training.



I would really appreciate it if you could complete this and look forward to hearing your thoughts and feedback.

Introducing Puppy Development Supervisor, Jenny Mee

Jenny Mee is a Puppy Development Supervisor for the Midlands and East region. Based in Leicestershire, Jenny supports a few local puppy raisers but is mainly helping all over the Midlands - particularly with puppies who may be struggling or needing behaviour plans.

“My previous experience has involved lecturing, running my own training business and working for a large UK dog rehoming charity. I am relatively new to Guide Dogs, just coming up for four years. I started at Guide Dogs as Puppy Development Advisor for Leicestershire, inheriting lots of lovely, established puppy raisers. But I have also enjoyed helping to recruit new volunteers and sharing the first steps in their journey with us.

“For me, the focus is always on helping our volunteers to master the basics, as well as concentrating on keeping pups happy and healthy. Training-wise, if we can focus on lead walking, recall and general good manners (not jumping up etc) then we are more than halfway there to where we need the pups to be. Whilst always remembering that the puppies are young and very much still learning, so all training needs to be made fun and achievable - lots of small, bite sized sessions!

“Basic obedience for me is the foundation of guide dog training, and I also make use of my background in gundog training - where again the basics are so important. As well as meeting the dog’s individual needs - whether that be with free runs, sniffing time, social time or just helping them feel safe. Ultimately, I aim for happy puppies and happy volunteers, without those two things, we won’t get anywhere!

“It’s really hard to pick one puppy raiser or puppy that I have supported as they are all amazing and we massively appreciate them all. But one puppy raiser who stands out for me recently is Helen Hughes in Derbyshire. She is an experienced volunteer for Guide Dogs and so devoted to doing what is best for the dogs at all times. She gives her pups the perfect balance of love

and discipline, and always works within their individual thresholds and capabilities. Despite being an experienced dog handler and trainer herself, she is excellent at communicating with me and following any advice I give. She hasn't always had the easiest of pups to work with and is the first to put her hand up and offer to help an older pup in need - even when she is supposed to be having a well-earned break between pups! Her work ethic and devotion to Guide Dogs is incredibly inspiring, and she is a joy to work with.

Coffee dates for the diary

I really look forward to the coffee sessions that we have running in our region and hearing about your puppy raising, seeing you all and hearing updates.

It is wonderful to see so many of you in person and/or virtually on our quarterly catch-ups - thank you for making the time to attend and share your thoughts and views. It's wonderful to see our community supporting one another.

I continue to be so grateful for all the energy, support and kindness that you all demonstrate as volunteers, and I cannot thank you all enough for the support you give both myself and the Midlands Puppy Development Advisor team. Thank you also for those who endured (participated in) my Christmas dog related quiz. I hope you found this enjoyable!

Within our region, we'll continue to hold our quarterly coffee sessions in March, where we have volunteer breeding dog holders, training and partnership managers attending different events to provide us with updates.

Here are the dates/venues for your diary:

- **Virtual coffee session (Monday 3 March, 2pm-4pm):** for this drop-in session, there is no agenda, so please do come and join us. Sophie, a brood dog holder and puppy raiser, will be coming to talk to us. Zoom link: [virtual coffee session invite](#). Joining details: Meeting ID (993 7404 0686) and passcode (377002).
- **Friday 7 March, 10:30am-12:30pm:** Tracey Getten or a member of her team are attending to talk to us about partnerships. Address:



Collingham, Phoenix Community Hall, 47 Station Road,
Collingham Newark, NG23 7RA.

- Tuesday 25 March, 10:30am-12:30pm: Anika Halward, Partnership Operations Manager, will be our guest speaker. Address: Church Rd, Watlington, King's Lynn, PE33 0HE.

Just a reminder, these are informal sessions, so please speak to your Puppy Development Advisor (PDA), if you would like to bring along your puppy and they will discuss with you further. If you would like to attend, please let myself or your PDA know. Any feedback on these sessions would be greatly received and I look forward to seeing as many of you who can make it at these events.

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

Anna Standing

Puppy Raising Operations Manager - Midlands and East

Document ends.