

South East region: puppy raising update March 2025

Hi All, it's Helena here, and I am the Puppy Raising Operations Manager for the South East Region.

Puppy Raising Operations Manager message

As we step into this new year, we're looking forward to continuing our journey with our wonderful dogs and volunteers. This year, we're placing a stronger emphasis on foundation behaviour (e.g. sit, stand etc) – not just as a skill, but to strengthen the bond between handlers and dogs. Foundation behaviours build trust, improves communication, and creates reliable behaviour when out and about. Whether it's walking calmly through busy areas or responding to cues with confidence, consistent training helps ensure our dogs are both happy and well-mannered companions.

Chatting to one of our Puppy Development Advisors recently I was reminded of how useful good responses to foundation behaviours or positional cues can be. She had been working with a young dog who had a tendency to jump up when excited. By reinforcing the clear cues of “sit” and “down”, the puppy raiser has done a brilliant job helping the dog understand an appropriate way to greet people, keeping all four feet on the floor! With patience, repetition, and positive reinforcement, the behaviour of sitting on greeting is becoming second nature, reducing unwanted jumping and encouraging calm interactions. This not only makes daily activities smoother but also enhances the dog's ability to focus and engage in new environments.

Looking ahead, we're excited to explore these topics further with our volunteers through 1:1 sessions, online learning, and hopefully some engaging video content. We value your input and would love to hear what areas of training or foundation behaviours you'd like to focus on. Your feedback helps shape our sessions, ensuring they are as useful and enjoyable as possible. Please do speak to your Puppy Development Advisor with any ideas you have.

Here's to a fantastic year of learning, growth, and strengthening the incredible partnerships we have with our dogs.

Puppy Development Advisor update



“Hi everyone, I’m Puppy Development Advisor, Louise Casey, and my puppy schemes cover part of Essex, around Chelmsford and Braintree.

“Having worked with the Guide Dogs for 35 years, I’ve had the privilege of seeing firsthand how training methods and approaches have evolved over time.

“I was an early adopter and developer of puppy classes, and it’s been incredible to witness the positive impact that structured training can have on both puppies and their raisers. I’m particularly excited about this year’s focus on foundation behaviours, as I know just how valuable it is in helping our puppy raisers build confidence and develop essential puppy skills. A strong foundation not only benefits the dog but also empowers the raiser to navigate the challenges of raising one of our amazing puppies with greater ease and success.

“One of the things that makes the scheme area I cover so special is the incredible community of volunteers. Over the years, I’ve been fortunate to work alongside so many positive, supportive individuals who are always willing to lend a hand, share advice, and encourage one another. Whether it’s offering reassurance during training, celebrating small wins, or simply being there to chat, our volunteers go out of their way to help each other and me! It’s this sense of teamwork and shared passion that makes the experience so rewarding, and I’m looking forward to seeing that continue as we embark on another fantastic year together.”

Our online learning is moving to Kallidus

Thank you for engaging with our online learning! We want to extend a huge thank you to everyone who has attended our online learning sessions which happen at 11:00am on the third Tuesday of the month. The uptake has been



fantastic, and we love being able to offer this opportunity to support you and your puppy raising journey. It's been wonderful to see so many of you engaging, asking questions, and sharing your experiences.

To improve our online learning experience, we're planning to move these sessions into our dedicated learning environment on Kallidus. This will allow us to better prepare the content, store sessions for later use, and make them more accessible for you.

Keep an eye out for details on how to book onto these sessions via Kallidus.

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

Helena Gibbons

Puppy Raising Operations Manager - South East

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