

## North West region: puppy raising update August 2024

Welcome to the August update from the North West puppy raising team. We hope that you're enjoying the summer weather and for those who have been lucky enough to have a break, that you've had a relaxing time.

As usual our Puppy Development Advisors (PDAs) have been busy working with and supporting our puppy raisers with their pups to develop happy, healthy, confident pups that will progress into training or breeding programme with the goal of helping people with sight loss.

Our Puppy Development Supervisors, Nichola Steele and Jay Murray, play a huge role in supporting our PDAs to do what they do best. Nichola also assesses our breeding dogs so you may have come across Nichola out and about visiting your pups.

We have a healthy number of puppies in the North West region; to date there are 277 pups being raised by our wonderful puppy raisers and fosterers.

As you may be aware from the PDA emails, we are very short of homes for the rest of August to fulfil our placements. We appreciate you reaching out to your PDA to offer a temporary home for a short while, an overlap or to repeat puppy raise, in some cases helping out when you had planned a well deserve break.

As the puppy raising manager for our region, I wanted to say **a massive thank you** for doing this as I appreciate everyone's situation different, and that life can be busy, yet you still find the time to support the organisation.

PDA Jayne Allen will be going back to her Guide Dog Trainer role at the end of August. This has come a little sooner than we expected, however we wanted to thank Jayne for her dedication and commitment to the puppy raising team over the last few months. I'm sure for those who know Jayne she will be sadly missed as a PDA but knowing that there may be a time

when she intakes your puppy into training in Atherton is a blessing in disguise.

### **Puppy raiser recruitment event**

On Saturday 3 August, PDA Beth Dacey held an event at Barton Grange Garden Centre in Preston with our local Volunteering Coordinator, Rachel Patrick. In between 10am and 4pm, 17 puppies came along to join in for a short period at a time and we held three puppy class demos, all well-advertised by the Tanoy system in the store. We had a great turnout with eight people showing interest immediately in becoming puppy raisers/fosterers.

Members of public were coming in throughout the day to find out more about Guide Dogs, including puppy raising. And we also raised £100 in the bucket! Barton Grange also kindly gifted up some toys and treats for the puppies.

Our puppy raisers had a great time socialising with each other too. Thank you to all those who were able to make it a success!!

Here is a picture of our puppy raisers and pups from the event, stood talking to members of the public.



## Guide dog puppies score a visit to Chester Football Club to help achieve their goal of becoming life-changers



A group of special puppies from Cheshire recently visited Chester's football stadium, to help achieve their goal of becoming life-changing guide dogs.

The seven guide dog puppies, called Helen, Hattie, Barlow, Air, Comet, Sam and Indigo, were invited to the football club as part of their guide dog training. The goal for the session was to get them used to busy and noisy football stadiums.

Each pup was accompanied by their volunteer puppy raiser who supports them for the first 12 months of their life, teaching basic commands and helping them get used to different environments, before they begin their specialised guide dog training.

As part of the special training session, puppies were able to build their confidence on stairs, around novel gates, turning round in small spaces between the seating, getting used to Tannoy announcements and crowd



noise such as clapping, while experiencing a novel environment that they may encounter as a guide dog in the future.

The fun puppy class also included opportunities for the puppies to learn to ignore distractions, such as moving footballs and people running around, and practice settling at a seat with their puppy raiser.

The session was led by Puppy Development Advisors, Lisa Cooper and Beth McDonald, who cover the Cheshire area.

Lisa said: "It was such a fantastic learning opportunity for our puppies to experience a completely new environment, and to also gradually expose them to the sights and sounds of a football stadium. We aim to make learning fun for our pups and our puppy raisers.

"We are very grateful to Chester FC for allowing us to use their stadium for our training session. Thank you!"

Puppy raiser Val, who is currently looking after her eleventh guide dog puppy, a Golden Doodle called Barlow, said: "It was a great atmosphere at Chester FC. It's been a really positive experience for the puppies."

Albert Davies, Chairman of Chester FC, said: "We're a community football club and we're keen to get involved with charities, so something like this is really important.

"It's fantastic to hear that everyone had such a good day. Hopefully this something we can continue to do again here at the stadium."

### **Virtual puppy raising event**

On Wednesday 18 September at 6pm, PDA Lisa Cooper will be hosting a Zoom event for members of the public to join and find out more about puppy raising. If you're new to puppy raising, feel free to attend. We're also





going to be joined by a few puppy raisers and speakers. For more information, please email [lisa.cooper@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:lisa.cooper@guidedogs.org.uk).

### **Windermere swim**

On 31 August, PDA Beth McDonald will be doing a Windermere swim of 11 miles for Guide Dogs. Beth has given the link for anyone who would like to donate to Guide Dogs:

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/bethswimsforguidedogs>

### **Equipment amnesty**

This month, we're having an amnesty on equipment. So, if you have any equipment that you no longer need such as T-Touch harnesses, cages, baby gates etc that you would like to donate or hand back to Guide Dogs, please contact your PDA for more details of how to send back this equipment.

If you would like to contact me to discuss anything or share thoughts and ideas, please email me at [Vanessal.scott@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:Vanessal.scott@guidedogs.org.uk).

Throughout August and September, I will be visiting puppy classes so that I can meet our wonderful puppy raisers and fosterers, so I will see you there.

Thanks,

Vanessa

**Vanessa Scott**

**CAS Operations Manager - North West**

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