

Midlands and East region: puppy raising update October 2025



Hi All, Anna here, and I am the Puppy Raising Operations Manager for the Midlands and East.

Puppy Raising Operations Manager's message

Well, we are now very much into Autumn and for me the dreaded spider season!

I cannot believe how quick time has flown and we are approaching Christmas and the end of 2025. Christmas is my favourite time of the year and so it's not too long before my tree will be up and I will be navigating this and my three dogs and decorations.

Thank you for all your hard work, commitment and dedication. As the manager of the region, I am increasingly proud of my team and you as volunteers for the wonderful pups who you are raising and sending off into their new pathways and their journey to support people with sight loss.

Puppy raiser recruitment

I am so grateful for our puppy raising community and for both our new volunteers joining us and for returning puppy raisers.

We continue to recruit new volunteer puppy raisers and often we need to reach out to our puppy raising community to support with advertising/radio interviews/TV appearances or adding posters/leaflets around the region.

I know I've asked in previous updates for people to come forward but if anyone else would like to be involved in any of the above activities to recruit puppy raisers/promote puppy raising, it would be great to capture this interest. If this sounds like something you'd like to try, please email me at anna.standing@guidedogs.org.uk.

Please note that if you are interested in supporting us, a Guide Dogs Communications Specialist will follow up with you. If there's a request for your puppy to be involved in any promotional activity, I would always advise you to speak with your Puppy Development Advisor to discuss suitability and pups needs.

A massive thank you to our puppy raisers who have kindly helped us out recently at local events; I've really enjoyed seeing the fun at the recent space centre visit.

We always welcome the opportunity to attend any events/places where we can recruit more volunteers so if anyone has any ideas or potential recruitment opportunities, please do contact me to discuss.

Social settling: a success story from Puppy Development Supervisor, Rachel Bagley

Coffee shops have been a stressful experience for puppy raiser Claire and eight-month-old Labrador, Trevor. Trevor has always been quite energetic and fidgety, and when he whined or barked, Claire understandably gave him treats to stop him disturbing others. Unfortunately, while this worked in the moment, it accidentally rewarded the unsettled behaviour.

With guidance from her Puppy Development Adviser, Claire went back to basics. She practised short "bench sessions" outdoors, teaching Trevor that sitting quietly beside her was part of everyday life. Claire also introduced a settle blanket, which Trevor gradually learned to associate with resting calmly when out and about. They gradually built up to sitting in busier enclosed spaces like the library, slowly extending the time he could settle at a pace that Trevor could manage, but always moving on before Trevor had a chance to bark. If there were social situations where Trevor might



need to stay settled for a longer period, Claire prepared a stuffed Kong or brought his Benebone or Yak Chew – special items reserved just for these occasions.

It took a couple of months, but now Trevor calmly lies on his blanket at Claire's feet – sometimes with a chew, sometimes without – and Claire can finally enjoy her cappuccino in peace!

A reminder to use Guide Line

A big welcome to all our new puppy raisers who are joining our puppy raising community both in our established and newly opened areas. Your support is greatly appreciated, and any suggestions/feedback is also welcomed.

Please do contact me directly through Guide Line or drop me an email if you would like to discuss anything further, please remember no questions/query/concern is a silly one and would welcome talking to you:

- anna.standing@guidedogs.org.uk

Please do continue using Guide Line as your first point of contact for support, if needed, between classes and visits, please use the following contact details

- 0800 7811444; or
- information@guidedogs.org.uk

If you'd like to share any feedback on your experience of using Guide Line, please send this to myself (anna.standing@guidedogs.org.uk) or Hannah Peck (hannah.peck@guidedogs.org.uk).

As we are now using Guide Line nationally to support our puppy raising community, we would like to continue for this service to grow and support us all in puppy raising and we can only do this through your feedback and comments.

Coffee dates for your diary – with mince pies!

I really look forward to the coffee session that we have running in our region and hearing about your puppy raising, and of course your feedback. I especially love our Christmas catch-ups as we near the end of 2025. This year, we will be having a guest speaker to come and talk about their role in Guide Dogs and how they support our organisation.

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. Within our region, we'll be holding several quarterly coffee sessions between November and December. Here are the dates/venues for your diary:

- Thursday 13th November, 10:30am-12:30pm: Peopleton Village Hall, Main Street, Peopleton, Worcestershire WR10 2EG.
- Virtual coffee session: Friday 28th November, 10am-12pm; for this meeting there is no agenda, and this is a drop in, please do come and join us ([Virtual coffee session Zoom link and access codes](#)).
- Wednesday 4th December, 1:30pm-3:30pm: Harbury Village Hall- South Parade, Harbury Leamington Spa CV33 9JE.
- Wednesday 10th December, 10:30am-12:30pm: Smith Hall, St James Mere Church Hall, Mere Green, Sutton Coldfield, B75 5BW.
- Date/venue to be confirmed and sent via Puppy Development Advisor for north coffee session.

Just a reminder, these are informal sessions, so please speak to your Puppy Development Advisor, 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 Puppy Development Advisor know. Any feedback on these sessions would be greatly received and I look forward to seeing as many of you.



I look forward to seeing you all soon, please never hesitate to contact me.

Take care,

Anna

Anna Standing

Puppy Raising Operations Manager - Midlands and East

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