

## Midlands and East region: puppy raising update April 2024



Hi all, its Anna here and I am the Canine Assistance Services (CAS) Operations Manager for puppy raising in the Midlands and East.

I hope you have all had a lovely Easter and enjoyed the bank holiday and celebrations over this period.



It feels a little early to mention summertime with all this dreadful wet weather we have been having recently and limited sunshine. However, I did want to write to you all as we approach the summer with an ask around homes for puppies.



Please can you let your Puppy Development Advisors (PDAs) know if you are able to take a puppy over the coming months, June/July/August, and/or if you are able to foster during this time. As you know this is a busy season and it is helpful to know who is able to welcome a puppy into their home or support our puppy raisers who are taking holidays over the summer.

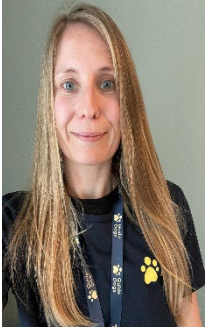
I am so grateful for our puppy raising community and for both our new volunteers coming into our community and for returning puppy raisers. If you are able to support us during this busy summer period, we would be really grateful. Thank you all in advance!

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

It would be great to know who would be interested in supporting us with the above to help us promote Guide Dogs and recruit new puppy raisers. I would be grateful if you could email me at [anna.standing@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:anna.standing@guidedogs.org.uk) if you are interested in supporting us and if you are happy for our communications team to approach you about this. Our regional communications manager, Eleanor, works really closely with our PDAs to ensure that pups are suitable and comfortable, and I would always advise you speak with your PDA to discuss suitability and pups needs.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to both introduce Eleanor Stephens and to thank her for helping us with our ongoing puppy raiser recruitment.

## Introducing Eleanor



My name is Eleanor and I'm the Regional Marketing and Communications Manager for the Midlands and East region.

One of my main responsibilities is securing positive media coverage for Guide Dogs within our region, which can help us both raise the profile our charity, and recruit new volunteers and staff. In practice, this means I spend time sourcing stories throughout the year, preparing press releases/media releases about these stories and trying to gain interest from local and regional media.

This may result in online coverage, such as this recent story about [reunited guide dog brothers Carlo and Chips](#), print coverage in local newspapers and magazines and/or broadcast coverage. When we secure broadcast interest, I'll often have to co-ordinate filming at our local sites as well as locating and briefing relevant spokespeople who are happy to be interviewed. I also work closely with our National Communications team when we have projects they are working on which require filming in our region. For example, I recently supported with the filming of Martin Clunes' documentary 'A Dog Called Laura,' at our National Centre and Midlands Regional Centre.

Outside of media work, I'm responsible for developing written case studies for our central database, which are used across our website, social media channels and in our printed literature, and also running our regional social media channels. I also contribute to our Guide Dogs blog on our website and to Forward magazine. This year I will have been working at Guide Dogs for 10 years, which have gone by very quickly.



I'm always on the look-out for new and interesting stories and case studies, and social media content, so if you have something to share, please contact me via [eleanor.stephens@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:eleanor.stephens@guidedogs.org.uk)

## Coffee dates for the diary

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 also really enjoy some of the stories I hear about our pups and the journey that they take.

I love a good question, please keep these coming as it's a wonderful opportunity to share your views and gain more information.

I love meeting up with everyone in person and hearing from other staff within Guide Dogs and the great work that everyone is doing, I am hoping as well to pop into more puppy classes to meet as many of our puppy raising community as possible.

It was so wonderful to welcome some of our qualified guide dogs with their guide dog owners at our coffee sessions in February and March, thank you to everyone who attended and for all the questions that were asked and the learnings and information I felt we were able to take away from these.

Within our region, we'll be holding several quarterly coffee sessions in May/June. We hope to have a guest speaker at these events, **further details will be sent via your PDA of who will be attending to meet with us.**

Here are the dates/venues for your diary:

- **Virtual coffee session:** 8<sup>th</sup> May 11.30am-1pm, for this meeting there is no agenda, and this is a drop in, please do come and join us. Please find the zoom link for this meeting below:

[Join the zoom meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 997 2269 4897

Passcode: 128426



- **Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June 10:30-12:30:** Harbury Village Hall- South Parade, Harbury Leamington Spa CV33 9JE
- **Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June 10.30-12.30:** Peopleton Village Hall, Main Street, Peopleton, Worcestershire WR10 2EG
- **Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June 10.30-12.30:** Collingham, Phoenix Community Hall, 47 Station Road, Collingham Newark, NG23 7RA
- **Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June 12.00-15.00:** Loddon and Chedgrove Jubilee Hall, Loddon Norwich NR14 6NB

Just a reminder, these are informal sessions, so please speak to your 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.

## **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: [anna.standing@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:anna.standing@guidedogs.org.uk)

As I've previously mentioned, we're very fortunate to have Guide Line supporting us initially as a region but now **nationally** as of the 5 February and acting as the 'front door' for all volunteers' queries/questions and concerns.

Your use of Guide Line also supports our fantastic PDA's to work with you and provide the support required, and to work with other knowledgeable teams within the organisation in your role as a volunteer for Guide Dogs.

To 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](mailto: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](mailto:anna.standing@guidedogs.org.uk)) or Hannah Peck ([hannah.peck@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:hannah.peck@guidedogs.org.uk))

Your feedback allows us to continually improve the support that we provide.

Anna Standing

CAS Operations Manager - Midlands and East

**Document ends.**