

## North East region: puppy raising update April 2024

Welcome to the April 2024 update from the Puppy Development team in the North East.

This time we have some really exciting news from the team! Many of you may be aware that Puppy Development Supervisor Kay McGuire has been expecting her first baby. I can confirm that on 25<sup>th</sup> March baby Maggie appeared in a bit of rush, a few weeks early but both Mum and Maggie are doing really well. We can't wait to meet the new arrival.



Luckily, just in time, Kay's maternity replacement, David Bailey, started in role to support us while Kay is on maternity leave. Some of you may already know David, who has a wealth of experience in Guide Dogs as well as other assistance dogs charities both in the UK and internationally.

David will be working three days a week and most of this time will be spent out and about, predominantly in the Yorkshire area. David has a particular



interest in puppy classes so hopefully many of you will get to meet him before too long.

## Equipment

A little while ago we encouraged an equipment amnesty, and we are hoping this will now become an ongoing process.

When your puppy either grows out of or no longer needs a particular piece of equipment, please return the item to us so it can potentially be re-issued elsewhere.

However, it is important that you keep a close eye on the condition of any equipment you are using and if it has become worn or frayed please contact Guide Line to get a replacement ordered and throw the original away - it just isn't worth the risk of something giving way at an inappropriate or dangerous moment.

Also a reminder that for puppies progressing into training who wear either car harnesses or Ttouch harnesses, please can you send that equipment in with your puppy. This will be familiar to your pup and help them with their onward journey.

## Fostering

As we head into our busiest time of year for moving pups about, with amazing support from our team of puppy raising fosterers, I wanted to take this opportunity for a few reminders:

- Please let Guide Line know whenever you have planned for your puppy to move to a fosterer so we can update our records and ensure the correct insurance is in place for when your pup is in a different home.
- Please complete the Dog Information form to handover to the fosterer with your puppy, this information can really support your puppy during their stay. The form can be found in your Puppy Information pack, alternatively you can email Guide Line ([information@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:information@guidedogs.org.uk)) to have a new one sent.
- It can also really help to keep a bit of a diary if you are fostering someone else's puppy. How a puppy copes with a change in

environment is really useful information and helps us to plan for other major moves in your puppy's life further down the line.

Some of you may remember a little while ago I asked if any of our volunteers were interested in the role of Fosterer Coordinator, helping our Puppy Development Advisors (PDAs) with the logistics of organising fostering for our puppies. Unfortunately at the time there were issues progressing this, but I am pleased to say we are now at a point that we can move forward. We have a few names already and, ideally, I would like a coordinator for each scheme/PDA so the role isn't too huge. There will be some online training that will be required and the role will be well supported by the PDA, especially in the early days. Please let us know if this is something you would be interested in,

## **Summer homes for puppies**

As mentioned earlier, summer is an incredibly busy time for puppy raising and nature also adds to the usual holidays etc as many of our guide dog mums will be whelping in the coming months. It is a lovely time to think about house training a young puppy as we would hope that the weather will be warmer and drier with much longer days as well!

We plan where pups will be going as soon as they are born so it is always really helpful to know when our puppy raisers will be ready to have another pup. If you have been on a break or know that your current pup will soon be heading into training, it is really helpful if you let your PDA know when you would like to have the next one. If you want to move on without having a break it will help for us to have 2-3 months' notice so we can add you to the list and allocate a puppy when one becomes available.

Equally if you know you have some time free to foster but can't commit to a long-term puppy it helps us considerably if we have that information in advance, messages to the team can be sent via Guide Line.



Here's hoping that we have some more consistent nice weather very soon and we can all fully enjoy the spring and summer ahead. Thank you again for all your support.

Janet Champion, CAS Ops Manager