

## North West region: puppy raising update April 2024

Welcome to the North West newsletter!

I hope that you all had a restful Easter break and are enjoying the lighter mornings and evening and those odd days of warmer weather.

All our Puppy Development Advisors (PDAs) have had a busy few weeks placing puppies and supporting those pups on their schemes. We're feeling very appreciative of our volunteer puppy raisers for helping us with raising our little life-changers.

### Andrea and Brea at Crufts 2024

One of our PDAs has been extra busy, I just wanted to share some good news of about Andrea Deller and her pet dog Brea who competed in Crufts 2024. We are so proud of Andrea and Brea performing for the first time at Crufts in freestyle heel work to music. To come 8<sup>th</sup> in such a strong competition is an amazing achievement, well done and we wish Andrea and Brea luck in their future competitions.





If you would like to watch Andrea and Brea in action, please follow the link: [Andrea and Brea at Crufts \(Facebook post\)](#).

## **Keeping our pups at a healthy weight**

A key factor for health and wellbeing of our dogs throughout their lives is maintaining a healthy weight from the start. This can be very challenging when navigating growth spurts, hormonal changes, and with every pup being different. As well as getting support from our staff - your PDA as well as the dog health and wellbeing team - there are other things you can do to keep on top of undesirable weight changes, but don't hesitate to get in touch if you need to check anything or feel things aren't as they should be. It's great practice to regularly weigh your pup. Many vet practices have scales in the waiting room and will have quiet times of the day when you will be more than welcome to pop in to use the scales, which has the added bonus of making the vet surgery a familiar place to visit. If you can make popping into your vet part of your routine, fortnightly weigh-ins for puppies are ideal; these can then be plotted onto your pup's growth chart which will give you an indicator of whether things are on track.

It helps us tremendously if we have an up-to-date weight on our computer system; your PDA will ask for this each time they see you, but you can also log it by contacting Guide Line (0800 78 11 444) and if you are concerned that your puppy is either over or under weight, Guide Line will refer your concern to the most appropriate member of staff. It's far easier to make adjustments early on than to address the problem later down the line. Pups that are overweight will not be able to enter training until their Body Score is at a healthy level so it's important to monitor and to reach out if you have any concerns.

## **Fundraising**

Puppy MaryAnn and her puppy raisers attended a fundraising event for the Mayor of Wrexham this month. MaryAnn and her puppy raiser enjoyed the full choir singing in St Giles Church. MaryAnn was a little superstar and attracted a lot of attention being such a beautiful pup.



## **Guide Line: information session Q&As**

Following the information sessions earlier this year about the changes to Guide Line and the support they now give to puppy raisers as their first port of contact, the Guide Line team have compiled a list of [Q&As from their information sessions](#) (available at the end of this newsletter).

A gentle reminder that Guide Line can support with a range of queries including health, behavioural, equipment, and general admin. You can contact Guide Line number on **0800 7811 444** or via email [information@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:information@guidedogs.org.uk).

## **Puppy raising mentors**

Most of our puppy raising schemes around the region are supported by our wonderful team of puppy raising mentors. Our mentors are volunteers who have more experience in certain areas of puppy raising and work very closely with the PDAs as well as with Nichola and Jay. They provide an extremely valuable support, as well as lived experience of raising puppies for Guide Dogs. If you are unsure whether there is a mentor in your area, or



it is something you're thinking about doing yourself, don't hesitate to contact us for more information.

If you would like to give any feedback or would like me to share any good news stories or information in our next newsletter, please contact me at [Vanessal.scott@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:Vanessal.scott@guidedogs.org.uk).

Once again, thank you for being an essential part of our volunteering community. Your commitment and contributions are making such a difference. We currently have over 253 puppies in our region and couldn't possibly deliver our services without you.

Many thanks,

Vanessa Scott

CAS Operations Manager - North West



## Q&A Puppy Raisers and Guide Line

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### List of Acronyms

The following table consists of two columns and eleven rows.

PR	Puppy Raiser
PDA	Puppy Development Advisor
DHWS	Dog Health & Wellbeing Specialist
SDH	Stud Dog Holder
RO	Rehoming Officer
RGD	Retired Guide Dog
Prep	Puppy Raising for excellent partnerships
PDS	Puppy Development Supervisor
BDH	Breeding Dog Holder

AT	Advanced Training
ET	Early Training

## Contacting my Puppy Development Advisor

1. How do I contact my Puppy Development Advisor?
  - a. Please contact Guide Line on 0800 781 1444 or [information@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:information@guidedogs.org.uk), your call will then be answered by a Guide Line advisor who will offer you support with your query. Your PDA will be updated on advice given and your call triaged.
2. Some contact with my Puppy Development Advisor is of a more personal nature that I don't feel comfortable discussing with anyone else, what do I do?
  - a. If your call is of a sensitive nature, please ask the Guide Line advisor to contact your PDA who will then respond to you within 2 working days. If your call is urgent then this will be triaged to the on-call PDA for immediate support/response.
3. In what circumstances can I contact my Puppy Development Advisor directly?
  - a. We advise that if the PDA has requested you contact them to respond directly to them, if you are at a pre-arranged meeting point and running late etc.
4. What happens when we need to arrange a meeting with our PDA?
  - a. Please contact Guide Line on 0800 781 1444 or email [information@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:information@guidedogs.org.uk) and your PDA will be notified and will get back to you within 2 working days.
5. What happens when my PDA is trying to contact me, do I have to return the call via Guide Line?
  - a. No if your PDA has initiated contact with you, please contact your PDA directly to return the call/email.
6. Can I request specific authority to contact my PDA directly rather than come via Guide Line?

- a. For all new puppy raising related enquiries please contact Guide Line on 0800 781 1444 or email [information@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:information@guidedogs.org.uk) where you will speak with a Guide Line advisor who will triage your call and offer you support using our PDA led decision trees. Your PDA will be advised and updated on your contact.
7. If I had to cancel an appointment/meeting at the last minute, who do I contact?
  - a. Please contact your PDA if this is on the day of the meeting however if appropriate, please contact Guide Line in the first instance who will advise your PDA of this cancellation.

## General

1. PDAs high workload, isn't this due to a staffing issue? And are you looking to recruit more PDA's?
  - a. No, we are currently not looking to recruit further PDAs into the organization. We are looking to support our PDAs with the existing framework of support from Guide Line staff and support our PDAs with administration tasks and queries which can be managed by other staff within the Guide Dogs organisation.
2. The trusted relationship between PDA and PR is essential to the success of the pups, how will we maintain this relationship?
  - a. As a PR volunteer we are committed to supporting you with regular contact with your PDA which includes face to face visits, telephone contact and puppy classes. Through this project we want to ensure that PDA's have the maximum capacity to support you as a volunteer in your role.
3. What issues should I be contacting Guide Line with and what issues should I leave until I am meeting up with my PDA face to face?
  - a. Any questions/queries that you have please contact Guide Line on 0800 781 1444 or email [information@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:information@guidedogs.org.uk), and speak with Guide Line advisors who will offer support with your

queries and triage your call appropriately. No question is a silly question, please do contact Guide Line to receive support.

4. Do you have enough staff on Guide Line to cope with the increase of calls/emails coming into Guide Line and will you be increasing the headcount?
  - a. This is something that we will be monitoring closely and will adjust, and support as needed. We have already been piloting this project in two other regions in PR and therefore have been seeking and collecting feedback to improve service delivery.
5. When a Guide Line Advisor forwards a query to a PDA what monitoring system do you have in place to ensure that the query has been picked up and actioned?
  - a. When a call comes into Guide Line, if further action from your PDA is required, this is allocated to your PDA via our reporting system GDIR. Your PDA is notified via email of this and then they are expected to close this on the system within 2 working days. This is reviewed on a weekly basis by the Operations Lead in Guide Line and CAS Operations Manager in PR to ensure issues are dealt with in a timely manner.
6. Who do we contact re Kalidus?
  - a. Please contact Guide Line on 0800781 1444 or email [information@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:information@guidedogs.org.uk) and you will receive support from a Guide Line advisor.
7. Will expense claims come via Guide Line?
  - a. Please contact Guide Line on 0800781 1444 or email [information@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:information@guidedogs.org.uk) and you will receive support from a Guide Line advisor.
8. When we contact Guide Line with an issue, how is the PDA made aware?
  - a. When a call comes into Guide Line, if further action from your PDA is required, this is allocated to your PDA via our reporting



system GDIR. Your PDA is notified via email of this and then they are expected to close this on the system within 2 working days. This is reviewed on a weekly basis by the Operations Lead in Guide Line and CAS Operations Manager in PR to ensure issues are dealt with in a timely manner. PDAs are also advised if a PR decision tree is used and advice has been given by a Guide Line Advisor, via email as this is recorded on our system.

9. Can we have a copy of the PowerPoint Presentation from the meeting?
  - a. Yes, please email [information@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:information@guidedogs.org.uk) and a copy of the Guide Line presentation will be sent to you.

## Equipment

1. Do I come to Guide Line for equipment?
  - a. Please contact Guide Line on 0800781 1444 or email [information@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:information@guidedogs.org.uk) and you will receive support from a Guide Line advisor.
2. Do we come to Guide Line for paperwork e.g. health card continuation sheets?
  - a. Please contact Guide Line on 0800781 1444 or email [information@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:information@guidedogs.org.uk) and you will receive support from a Guide Line advisor.

## WhatsApp & Technology

1. Can I continue to use WhatsApp to contact my PDA?
  - a. Please can you redirect your questions to our Guide Line number or email address. These will then be triaged using our decision trees and through person centred conversations with the Guide Line advisor as required and updates provided to your PDA.
2. Sending videos via email is tricky due to size limitations, why can't I use WhatsApp?

- a. Currently the organisation does not have the facility to use WhatsApp in a Guide Line function, however this is being explored.
3. I have a challenging pup and I like to send a quick video every now and again of a 'quick win' during training and a few comments about progress and updates am I no longer able to do this?
  - a. Please send this to Guide Line via our email address [information@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:information@guidedogs.org.uk) and the Guide Line advisor will ensure this is provided to your PDA.
4. Can we text Guide Line?
  - a. No currently this function is not available however options are being explored. If you would like to contact Guide Line in writing, please do send an email to [information@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:information@guidedogs.org.uk) and this will be picked up by a Guide Line advisor.
5. Can we WhatsApp Guide Line?
  - a. As an organisation this is currently not in place however this is being explored.
6. Can we have access to our pup's health records or is there an app that we can use to upload our health records.
  - a. Please speak with your Dog Health and Wellbeing Specialist by contacting Guide Line via 0800 781 1444 or [information@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:information@guidedogs.org.uk) should you have any questions/queries in respect of your pup's health and wellbeing.

## Boarding

1. We have a boarding co-ordinator, does that mean I now have to contact Guide Line?
  - a. No please contact your co-ordinator as you would previously.
2. Who do I contact re boarding my puppy - we don't have a boarding coordinator?
  - a. Please advise your PDA on any current visits/puppy classes of your boarding requests in advance of these being requested.

Alternatively, please contact Guide Line on 0800 781 1444 or [information@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:information@guidedogs.org.uk) and the Guide Line advisor will let the PDA know of your request. Priority boarding requests will be triaged in an emergency to the on-call PDA.

3. If we arrange boarding between ourselves, should we still contact Guide Line to let them know?
  - a. Yes, it is important that this information is known for insurance and health and safety purposes.

## **Mentors**

1. I am a Puppy Raising Mentor, what does Guide Line mean for me?
  - a. PDA's work closely with PR mentors and should be contacting and providing support to PR mentors with any tasks/support they have been allocated with another volunteer. PR mentors can use Guide Line for any queries/questions that they may have in their role.
2. Do I need to contact Guide Line re issues I am working on with a PR or can I go straight to the PDA?
  - a. If you are already working with a PDA on a specific issue or a PDA has contacted you directly, please continue to liaise with them on this. Any new questions/queries/enquiries please contact Guide Line on 0800 781 1444 or email [information@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:information@guidedogs.org.uk).

## **What kind of questions do Guide Line get asked by Puppy Raisers?**

1. Chewing Objects
2. Puppy Attack
3. Puppy Distraction
4. Puppy Stopping
5. Puppy Pulling on lead.
6. Puppy Won't get in the car.
7. Puppy Equipment Issues



8. Free Running
9. House training (night and day)
10. Puppy jumping up at another person and/or owner.
11. Mouthing
12. Counter surfing/scavenging.
13. Puppy not settling.
14. Scent marking.
15. Coming into season
16. Poor recalls
17. Ordering dog equipment

## Contact Information

1. What is the phone number for Guide Line (and what option do I choose)?
  - a. 0800 781 1444 and press option three
2. What is the email address for Guide Line?
  - a. [information@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:information@guidedogs.org.uk)
3. What is the emergency out of hours phone number?
  - a. 0345 1430217.
4. Is this a 24/7 service?
  - a. Guide Line operates Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm, our out of hours service operates Monday to Thursday 5pm - 9am (inclusive of Saturday and Sunday).

**End of Document.**