

North East region: puppy raising update April 2025

Hi, it's Janet Champion here, Puppy Raising Operations Manager for the North East Region. Hopefully you have all been able to make the most of the lovely spring weather we have had recently, long may it last! We have been thoroughly enjoying the beautiful photos of puppies out and about that have been sent through to Puppy Development Advisors, keep them coming in.

Puppy Raising Operations Manager's message

In the last puppy raising newsletter, we introduced our focus for 2025, strengthening foundations, and we are building on that theme this month by looking at **consistency and routine**. While in the video we have concentrated on three key areas (watch the video to find out more), consistency and routine really are a hugely important factor in how our dogs react.

I know my pet dogs can behave differently at the weekend than they do during the week. My spaniel, for example, can be vastly different on her usual morning walk just when the timing changes by an hour or so; perhaps for her this is because there are more pheasants or hares about at this time or even because it's after her breakfast rather than before.

Whatever the reason we just need to remember the partner aspect of working with our pups, and advocate for whatever environmental or routine changes may have contributed to differences in how they are behaving. That said, I am not in any way suggesting that puppy raisers can't have a lie in, just be aware of what changes may ensue and be ready to manage them in advance.

In households where more than one person is interacting with a pup on a regular or not so regular basis, take that time to discuss the current areas you are working on and make sure you are all consistently adopting the same techniques so your puppy knows what to expect, but equally, if those

techniques are not working, with the support of your Puppy Development Advisor, you can all move on to something different.

On a slightly different note, but still linked with consistency and routine, is using different strategies to develop your puppy on specific behaviours or areas when things get tough. Our adolescent pups will often throw out challenges that make things less than enjoyable when out and about. For example, it may be a regression in lead behaviour in busier or more exciting environments especially for those sound and confident pups who want to take on the world.

For one of our “teenage boys” we have decided to focus for a few months on tasks away from those environments, bringing those positional cue responses to a higher level and applying them in exercises which will help get him ready for those next challenges. Such as being really good at getting in position on a bus or train, this can be started at home and can be made more fun and less pressured than when in a real-life situation.

If you are struggling with a training aspect that you feel has gone backwards, don’t hesitate to chat to your Puppy Development Advisor for other ways in which you can make progress without being under too much pressure.

New puppy raisers: make the most of Kallidus and events

We continue to welcome new puppy raisers to all our schemes in the North East region, and as we head towards our busiest time for puppy fostering for planned holidays, many of you will foster a puppy before taking one full time yourselves. Whereas others will dive in with an eight-week-old puppy. Often, we will get new puppy raisers who are familiar with raising a young puppy and are prepared for the chaos and fun that follows at every stage.

I would encourage all our new volunteers to engage with the **learning materials on Kallidus**. While some people find the technology a little more difficult at first (myself included!), a good tip is to open up the puppy progress chart, which includes links that you can click on that will take you

to all the learning modules or support documents within the progress chart itself.

As a new volunteer you will also be more than welcome to go along to **puppy classes or days out** to get a feel for what goes on before your puppy arrives. Puppy classes are run monthly in many different locations, but our Puppy Development Advisors also love to put on visits to local attractions. Earlier this month, Rebecca Stranney took a group of volunteers to Helios at Seaton Delaval, which Rebecca has described below.

“Seaton Delaval Hall very kindly welcomed a group of Guide dog puppies to attend the event Helios. An indoor art installation of the sun. The pups did so well practicing their foundation behaviours. Walking nicely on lead, showing doorway manners, carefully walking up and down stairs then settling outdoors while their puppy raisers had a well-earned cuppa. A lovely afternoon out for all and some really positive experiences banked for the puppies.”



A puppy raiser holds onto the lead while their guide dog puppy is in the down position in front of a wrought iron balcony, with an enormous, orange-lit ball is suspended from the ceiling.



A puppy raiser holds onto the lead of their guide dog puppy while standing in a large room underneath an enormous orange ball that is suspended from the ceiling. The orange ball is partly visible.

Thanks for your ongoing support.

Janet Champion

Puppy Raising Operations Manager - North East

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