

South West and Wales region: puppy raising update June 2024

Hello,

I hope that you are enjoying the lighter mornings and longer evenings with some days of warmer weather, the year seems to be flying by!

The summer is a busy season for the puppy team, and it's helpful to know in advance if you are planning a holiday. Please let your PDA know, or your boarder coordinator (if you have one in your area), so we can make plans for your puppy in good time.

Equally, if you are able welcome a new puppy into your home or support our puppy raisers who are taking holidays over the summer by fostering a puppy of any age, please let your Puppy Development Advisor know. They will be very pleased to hear from you! Thank you all in advance.

Meet the Team

I'm pleased to be able to introduce some more of our team, meet Barbara (Boo) Clark, Lucy Avery and Lisa Gibson.

Barbara Clark



Hi, my name is Barbara Clark but very often known as Boo, this nickname I acquired when I first join Guide Dogs back in 1980, that makes me feel very old!

I joined Guide Dogs as a member of the kennel staff team at the Wokingham site which sadly is no longer with us but was a lovely place to work. After a couple of years, I managed to successfully become

one of small team of puppy walking supervisors: I covered, Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire and parts of Southwest London.

After doing this role for 22 years, I decided to have a little break and moved with my family and my gorgeous daughter to Wiltshire where I spent some time working with preschool children. After having a few years break, I was very keen to come back and luckily was able to in the role that I'm in now as a Puppy Development Advisor covering Wiltshire and a little corner of Gloucestershire. Over the years, I have managed to also be a puppy raiser and a brood stock holder for Guide Dogs raising three litters.

When I'm asked what I love about this job, it is quite hard to put into words how lucky I am and privileged to work with some amazing volunteers who surprise me every day with their dedication.

Lucy Avery



Hello,

My name is Lucy and my Guide Dog career started in 1996 working in the Exeter centre, Cleve House, as one of the kennels staff, I then moved on to become a Guide Dog Trainer until 2002 where I then left to have my two beautiful daughters.

It wasn't long before I quickly returned to work at the Bristol office in 2006 as a Guide Dog Mobility Assistance, it was then in 2008 I finally moving on to my current role as a Puppy Development Advisor. I did have another year out to spend some time with Ben, my youngest child, before he started

school. I still feel very grateful that I was able to return to the same role covering the Bristol and Bath area at the time.

I currently cover parts of the beautiful Somerset region and have an amazing group of puppy raisers and fosterers in my group.

Out of all my roles, I have to say this is the best of them all, I love working closely with my volunteers and of course who doesn't love a puppy!

In my spare time I love getting out on the trails, I have completed a few Ultra marathons but yet to conquer the 100 miler, but that's in my sights 😊

Lisa Gibson



My name is Lisa Gibson, and I am a Puppy Development Advisor based in the South West region. My scheme is North Bristol so I cover all sorts of areas, from busy central Bristol, right up to beautiful rural Gloucestershire, and lots of variation in between. This is fabulous for my puppies' development as they get to experience busy town centre environments full of people and traffic, as well as quiet rural areas where you might meet a sheep or two!

I am fairly new to Guide Dogs, having joined in May 2023, and like many PDAs I am a people AND dog person. I absolutely love working with my amazing volunteers and am in awe of the work they do for us every day. I also find it such a privilege to watch my puppies grow and develop into

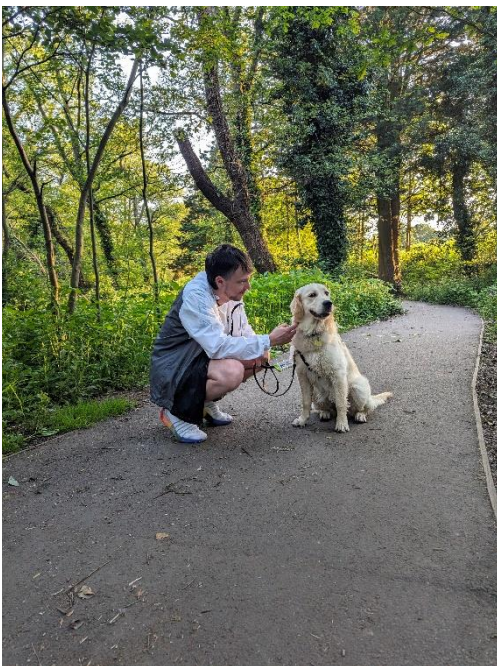
these amazing life-changers.

Before I started with Guide Dogs, I ran my own pet dog training business, offering group classes and one-to-one training for puppies and dogs of all ages. Having done that job for almost fifteen years, I felt the need last year for a new challenge and to be a part of something bigger. So, I brought my skills to Guide Dogs and the PDA role. And I'm so glad I did, it's a busy fast paced role where no two days are the same, I spend most of my time out

and about with my people and dogs, and most importantly I get to contribute in my small way to the bigger picture of helping people with sight loss.

Volunteer puppy raisers needed in the South West region

We are looking for more puppy raisers in **Dorset and Wiltshire (Dorchester particularly)**, to help us socialise and raise future guide dogs. If you can lend us a hand in finding more volunteers like you, please request a [Volunteering Champion Pack](#), which contains everything you need (posters and leaflets) for spreading the word in your area. We also know that it's common for members of the public to ask puppy raisers about their guide dog puppy when out and about. If this often happens to you, why not refer them to our website for further information, including how to apply.



“People often approach us when we are out walking and ask me what puppy raising entails. I tell them you get all the joy of having a dog and none of the stress or the bills. All you've got to give is your time.” Thomas, Puppy Raiser.

The year so far

This year so far, you've welcomed 110 new puppies into your homes and have raised and fostered 77 pups who have transitioned into training either with our regional teams or further afield to training centres in the North West or South East.



Those pups will be working with their Guide Dog Trainers or Guide Dog Mobility Specialists through the Standardised Training for Excellent Partnerships (STEP) programme, although a good number having already qualified as guide dogs.

If your pup has had a career change to buddy or rehoming - thank you for supporting them on their journey. With your work and insight of your pup's behaviours, it helps us to make the right decision at the right time, and remember they're all stars, just in different ways.

You will be aware we released updated puppy raising material on our eLearning platform, Kallidus, on 9 April. If you do not have access, please ask your PDA. It's available for all fosterers and puppy raisers either online or in PDF format, if required.

Please don't hesitate to email if you have suggestions for this regional update or subjects you would like us to include: Liz.orme@guidedogs.org.uk.

Many thanks,

Liz Orme

Canine Assisted Services Operations Manager - South West and Wales

Document ends.