

Midlands and East region: puppy raising update - December 2023



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

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all! What a year it has been, a very busy year with a mix of fun and challenges.

I just wanted to say an ENORMOUS thank you to you all as none of what we have achieved in our region would have been possible without the care, dedication and support you have shown our team in this region. My team and I cannot thank you enough for all you do to support Guide Dogs.

People Awards

I hope you were able to watch the Guide Dogs People Awards that were recently held in Atherton, it was wonderful to see the achievements of both volunteers, teams, individuals and of course our dogs recognised and celebrated. I was very lucky to be able to attend and was absolutely thrilled and inspired to see the impact and difference that people have made to others. Well done to all those who were nominated, shortlisted and the winners.



Date: December 2023



If you didn't attend or watch the live stream, you can still catch up on all the action by watching the recording of the [People Awards 2023](#).

Coffee sessions: dates for your diary

We really enjoy meeting with you all and hearing about your puppy raising, and of course your feedback. It's amazing to see your enthusiasm, passion, and the effort you give, and this is evident in the pups coming into training.

For me, our coffee sessions are a highlight of my calendar. I love meeting up with everyone in person and hearing from other staff within Guide Dogs and the great work that everyone is doing.

Within our region, we'll be holding several quarterly coffee sessions between February and March. We hope to have a guest speaker at these events, further details on these events will come after the festive season via your Puppy Development Advisor. In the meantime, here are the dates/venues for your diary:

- Wednesday 28 February, 10:30-12:30: Harbury Village Hall- South Parade, Harbury Leamington Spa CV33 9JE
- Tuesday 5 March, 10:30-12:30: The Canine Academy, Tollerton Lane, Tollerton, Nottingham, NG12 4GB
- Thursday 7 March, 10:30-12:30: Peopleton Village Hall, Main Street, Peopleton, Worcestershire WR10 2EG
- Friday 8 March, 10:30- 12:30: Buckden Village Hall, Burberry Road, Buckden, St Neots, Cambs, PE19 5UY

Just a reminder, these are informal sessions, so please speak to your Puppy Development Advisor (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.



Date: December 2023



As we move forward into 2024, and after the 'Christmas period', I will be looking at other venues around the region to ensure that these are as accessible as possible for you all to enjoy and attend.

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

As I've previously mentioned, we're very fortunate to have Guide Line supporting our region 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.

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

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) or Hannah Peck:

- hannah.peck@guidedogs.org.uk

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



Date: December 2023

Christmas tips for you and your puppy

Christmas is an exciting (yet potentially stressful!) time for many of us. It's just the same for your puppy. Here are the most important things you need to be aware of that will help you keep your puppy calm and safe.

Guests

At Christmas we see more of friends and family. This can become overwhelming for your puppy. Make sure you plan any visits carefully and follow the same social rules as normal. Also, maintain your usual routines wherever possible to help manage any anxiety they may be feeling.

During the festive season, your puppy should still have access to their own space. This can either be a partially covered crate with cosy bedding or your puppy's normal sleeping area (away from a thoroughfare or busy area). If your puppy is making use of this space, please make sure that you and your guests do not disturb them. Your puppy should be able to enter and exit their space without any interference. It's always a nice idea to leave a food puzzle or kong in their space if you need to minimise interaction between your puppy and guests.

Decorations

Many things that appear around Christmas time, like trees and decorations, can be confusing or harmful to your puppy. Remember to place your tree out of the way and introduce it to your puppy carefully. Don't forget that although your tree is something you are expecting to appear, for your puppy it will be a surprise! Puppies are curious by nature and may try to eat tinsel, baubles, edible decorations, or bits of tree. It's best not to leave your puppy unattended with decorations that are within their reach.

Presents/Gifts

Check presents you want to put under your tree carefully. Wherever possible, ask whoever gave you the gift if there is



Date: December 2023

food or something else inside that could be toxic to your puppy. If that's not possible, try to hide the present in a place where your puppy can't reach. All gifts that contain food or potential toxins should be placed somewhere out of the reach. Exposure to potential poisons is very high during Christmas time, especially from products and items of food that could harm your Puppy. These include chocolate, Christmas cake, fruit cakes, mince pies, grapes, and alcohol.

Please also remember that Christmas dinner leftovers will not be safe for your puppy and may cause gastric upsets. Small bones are also dangerous. Please continue to feed your dog their normal diet.

If you have any other questions in the run up to Christmas on how to prepare - please feel free to contact Guide Line to speak with your PDA or Dog Care and Welfare Specialist.

And finally



I wanted to share four lovely pictures that have recently been sent to us from a young fundraiser, Millie McNulty, who has been working towards her brownie charity badge by raising an impressive total of £80. Thank you, Millie, for all your hard work fundraising and for painting these beautiful pictures, and for Sarah McNulty (Millie's mum) for giving us permission to share these with our puppy raising community.



Date: December 2023



Thank you for reading,

Anna Standing
Canine Assisted Services, Operations Manager - Midlands and East

Document ends.



Date: December 2023