

North East region: puppy raising update - December 2023

Welcome to the December North East Regional Update for Puppy Raising.



I can't really believe that we are nearing the end of 2023, how time flies. I also can't believe that we have reached the end of an era within our region as one of our amazing puppy raisers and puppy raising mentors, **Elizabeth Edmondson**, has decided it's time to call an end to her monthly newsletter for puppy raisers in Yorkshire and Pennine.

Elizabeth has put a huge amount of work into collating information and editing these newsletters over the past 10+ years and I certainly used to love reading them and finding out what was going on in our region. I would like to say a huge thank you Elizabeth, on behalf of all the North East puppy raising team for your hard work, and to those puppy raisers who contributed over the years.

Reaching out for support

Raising a puppy is challenging at the best of times, I have to say that sometimes I liken it to bringing up children on fast forward. You just get one thing sorted and they throw something else in to challenge you.

Guide dog puppies are no different and they will all test us in their own ways. Within the region, we have masses of support available, but what works for you all as individual puppy raisers will vary. The really important thing is that you don't feel isolated and always have the confidence to feel there is somewhere to reach out to when you have a question.



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Sometimes it's the case that the support that is currently in place may not be best suited to your needs and that we need to adjust what it looks like. We're always welcome to ideas and as well as the usual support from our **Puppy Development Advisors (PDAs)** and **puppy raising mentors**, don't forget the **information on Kallidus**, the **regional weekly zoom calls** and we also have situations where friends or family members who live close to you have applied to be puppy fosterers with the sole aim of being a support to you and your pup.

We can also look into whether there are other puppy raisers who live close to you who you can get in contact with for moral or actual support. There are also many areas which have groups of puppy raisers who have their own support network going and meet up for coffees etc. If you are not aware of anything in your area, speak to your PDA and perhaps there may be other puppy raisers who would also be keen to get something going.

A reminder to use the NEPuppyRaising@guidedogs.org.uk email or call Guide Line on 0800 781 1444 if you need to contact us during office hours with a question or problem.

If you have an emergency situation outside of office hours, please use our **emergency number 0345 143 0217**.

Meet the rest of the team

In October's newsletter we introduced some of our fantastic North East puppy raising Team. I am pleased to be able to complete this now with the final five.

Kay McGuire, Puppy Development Supervisor

Hi, I'm Kay one of two Puppy Development Supervisors in the North East. My journey at Guide Dogs began in 2016 as a Dog Care and Welfare Technician at the Hull Mobility Team. I then moved to the wonderful world of puppies in 2019 as a Puppy Development Advisor before moving into my current role in May 2023.



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Prior to Guide Dogs I completed my Masters Degree in Clinical Animal Behaviour, gained accreditation as a Clinical Animal Behaviourist for the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors and opened my own dog behaviour and training business.

Away from work, I live at home with my partner and stepson. We also have a baby on the way in May 2024 followed by getting married in September 2024! We share our home with a whole host of animals, including one German Shepherd, one Belgium Shepherd, one cat, two guinea pigs, one tortoise and one hamster!

In an ideal world I would add a few acres of land and some alpacas and donkeys to my list (I can dream)! Alongside looking after all the animals, I enjoy getting out on walks with the dogs, open water swimming, paddle boarding and meeting up with friends. However, I have a feeling that with such a busy 2024 some of these activities may become less frequent!

Alana Marriott, Puppy Development Advisor - South Yorkshire



I have always had a love and interest in dogs and their behaviour, which led me on to studying for my Honours degree in Canine Behaviour.

I have since worked various roles within the dog training industry and volunteered and shadowed anywhere that would take me to gain valuable experience, and I am now very pleased to be the new-ish

Puppy Development Advisor in Sheffield for Guide Dogs.

It has been a great and very busy few months for me, new job, and new house all at the same time but I've loved every minute of getting to know all the Sheffield puppy raisers and their pups and I'm excited to see how they progress on in the coming months.



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Outside of work I have 3 dogs, who keep me very busy and in my spare time I love nothing more than getting out into the Peak District for long hikes. Some of you know, but I do (for some reason) get up before the sun every morning to go to the gym before work, which I am in training for my competition next year!

Laura Lloyd-Anderson, Puppy Development Advisor - South Yorkshire

Hello! My name is Laura, a Puppy Development Advisor from South Yorkshire. I joined the North East puppy team back in April, which has truly been a dream come true for me! Before this, I gained three years of invaluable experience working for the guide dog operations department. In this role, I administratively supported all services and stages of your pup's journey as they transitioned into training schools or took alternative careers. Therefore, I deeply appreciate the tremendous work volunteers and PDAs put into raising our little life-changers and I am so excited and proud to now be a small part of that!

Despite dogs playing a huge part in my life growing up, I have yet to get a pup of my own as we recently moved into an 18th-century cottage that requires a lot of upkeep. But I do live with my partner Andrew, who I manage to keep fed and watered, along with doting hand and foot on our two giant house rabbits called Merlin and Ziggy. They are litter-trained and enjoy learning new tricks and behaviours, like 'place' and 'spin' (the rabbits that is).



In my spare time, I can often be found pottering about in our veg patch growing tomatoes, baking brownies, and drawing pet portraits. Although I think my garden might beg to differ, as it has been left to fend for itself at the moment!



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Helen Barley, Puppy Development Advisor - West Yorkshire



Hi! I'm Helen and I'm the PDA for West Yorkshire. I've been with Guide Dogs four and half years now and started off covering South Yorkshire but living in Leeds means a lot less miles to travel now.

Before joining Guide Dogs, I was working as a qualified teaching assistant and trained to support children with additional needs and autism. And before this, I owned and ran my own pet shop, specialising in natural pet products.

I live with my husband and our two daughters, three corn snakes, axolotl, tortoise and withdrawn guide dog puppy, Cookie. Last year, we puppy raised Fenton who has just started on class so fingers crossed we will get to see him working very soon!

Away from work I'm also a Scout Leader and run sessions every Monday for 10-14-year-olds. I also spend time with my three-year-old niece and enjoy going for dog walks with friends.

Wendy Huggins, Puppy Development Supervisor

Hi. So, a few of you already know me, as I have been working up here in the North East for the Past 13.5 years. My journey with Guide Dogs started way back in 1992 when I started at Redbridge down South, as a trainee Guide Dog Trainer. I then went onto the puppy department in 1997.

I have gained a huge tool kit over the years and there is nothing that really surprises me, in the world of puppies or dog behaviour. However, every puppy and every handler are different, so we never stop learning or trying to find ways, to improve support advice and make your lives that little bit easier. But we are all here for the same reason and that is to change people's lives, for the better. 😊



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Amongst all this, myself and Richard who is one of the Dog Health and Wellbeing Specialists got together and married then had two girls, who scarily are now 19 and 24. And in 2010, we made the move to the North East and have never looked back. We seem to collect animals of all shapes and sizes and currently have horses, dogs, cats, chickens, and ducks. But sheep, pygmy goats rabbits and guinea pigs have all made an appearance, as well as a goose! So, if I am not busy at work, I am most definitely busy at home. But wouldn't have it any other way.

Having a job where I have been able to build my career and feel very passionate about, is an honour and I take my role and what we do for our volunteers very seriously. Your commitment and love for the role helps us to ensure you have the best possible experience. And I have never stopped shouting from the roof tops, just how amazing you all are. We have raised many pups ourselves and had pups and training dogs home over the years. The time that they need, is and can be very overwhelming.

My role as a Puppy Development Supervisor is to look after our Puppy Development Advisor team, who look after you. And I shall be making extra time to come out with and without the PDA's to see as many of you as possible. So please do feel free to contact Kay or myself at any time. Even if it is to send us a seriously cute puppy picture or tell us of a success.

We really do love, hearing from you all.

Thank you to all the team for taking the time to write a bit about themselves and now, all that is left for me to do is wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy 2024.

Janet

**Janet Champion
Canine Assisted Services, Operations Manager - North East**

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