



South West and Wales region: puppy raising update - December 2023

Welcome to December's regional puppy raising update for the South West and Wales Region.

Hi Puppy Raising Team,

My name is Leah Rogers, and I am one of the Puppy Development Supervisors here in the South West and Wales region.

I work closely with the other Puppy Development Supervisor Mel Wharmby and the Canine Assisted Services Operations Manager for puppy raising, Liz Orme.

Team update

Our team has grown significantly over the last year with us recruiting more Puppy Development Advisors (PDAs) within the area to help our current PDAs reduce the number of puppies and volunteers that they manage.

Therefore, I would officially like to welcome Elli Cavazza who joins us from the South East. Elli will be in the Hampshire/ Dorset area sitting in between Leanne Kelly's and Kirsteen Welch's schemes where she has taken several volunteers from each of these schemes and intends to build the area up to full capacity very soon.

We have also recently successfully recruited a new PDA who will be running a new scheme in the Plymouth and Cornwall area. The successful candidate was Jenny Hardy who is currently a Guide Dog Trainer in the Exeter Team. Jenny is due to start her new role around March 2024 once she has finished training her current cycle of training dogs.

Our other three newest recruits Sophia Haig, Hannah Reed and Lisa Gibson are progressing well on their PDA learning pathway, well done everyone, keep up the good work.



Date: December 2023

Recently, we had a team day where we all got to meet up in person and discuss all things puppy related. We also had a team building exercise where we had to build a Christmas Tree out of dry spaghetti and Blue Tack!

As you can imagine this was not an easy task.

Here are a few photos of the team that day.



As you can see, we do have a lot of fun as well as the more serious side to our jobs!



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.



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Presents/Gifts

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

Finally, I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

See you all in 2024.

Leah Rogers
Puppy Development Supervisor - South West and Wales

Document ends.



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