



Midlands and East region: puppy raising update - February 2024



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

Since Christmas, I've been involved in the national roll out of Guide Line which has now gone live as of the 5th February and I have had the privilege of meeting virtually 500+ puppy raisers nationally.

I was blown away with the enthusiasm, commitment and passion shown by these volunteers and again wanted to say a massive 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.

I'm also hoping to pop into more puppy classes this year to meet as many of our puppy raising community as possible.

My team and I cannot thank you enough for all you do to support Guide Dogs.

Easter

Easter should be an enjoyable and relaxing time. There are few dangers you need to be aware of that could affect your dog though - so here are our tips for keeping your dog safe.

Beware of Easter eggs

At Easter, many of us exchange chocolate Easter eggs that are brightly coloured. These will look interesting and smell delicious to your dog, so keep them well out of reach.

Chocolate is poisonous to dogs. If you find your dog has eaten



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some chocolate, you may need to make an emergency trip to the vets. Contact your Dog Health and Wellbeing Specialist first to check that they have ingested a toxic dose.

Why is chocolate so dangerous for dogs? Chocolate contains a substance called theobromine that is a major cardiac stimulant and diuretic for dogs. Cocoa powder, cooking chocolate and dark chocolate are the most toxic. Small amounts can be fatal. You may not see symptoms for several hours, but **ingestion can be fatal within 24 hours**. Large amounts of milk chocolate can cause pancreatitis. If you do know that your dog has eaten chocolate, it's vital that you act quickly.

Be careful with other presents

If you receive any other wrapped gifts besides Easter eggs, make sure you ask whoever gave you the present if there is any food (such as fruit cakes) or something else inside that could be potentially toxic to your dog. If that's not possible, hide the present in a place your dog can't reach.

Keep your dinner to yourself

Remember that although most of us enjoy a traditional roast dinner at Easter, this is not safe for your dog and can cause gastric upsets. Small bones are also dangerous. Please continue to feed your dog their normal diet. If treats are necessary, we recommend you feed them raw carrots.

What to do if you have a problem

If your dog does eat anything potentially harmful, **contact a Dog Health and Wellbeing Specialist via Guide Line** or the emergency line if anything happens out of office hours. If you have any other questions in the run up to Easter on how to prepare - please feel free to contact your Puppy Development Advisor via Guide Line to discuss this further.



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Coffee dates for the diary

I really look forward to the coffee sessions that we have running in our region and hearing about your puppy raising, and of course your feedback. It's always nice to hear about your puppy's development and your experience of puppy raising. I do love a good question, so please keep these coming as it's a wonderful opportunity to know what's happening and how the puppy raising team can be of further assistance.

Within our region, we're hosting several coffee sessions between February and March. We hope to have a guest speaker at these events; **a guide dog owner sharing their sight loss journey and experience of being in a guide dog partnership.**

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.

I'm also running virtual coffee sessions and was delighted to have so many attend the first session in January. Please do attend if you can, these are informal sessions and a chance to ask questions and meet other volunteers from around the region. These are held on Zoom, please click on the link below: find the date, time, and Zoom link below:

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- [Thursday 14 March, 10am-12pm - virtual coffee and catch up](#)

You'll need the access information below to join the Zoom virtual coffee and catch up:

Meeting ID: 939 3417 0584

Passcode: 920714

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 us initially as a region but now **nationally** and acting as the 'front door' for all volunteers' queries/questions and concerns.

It was such a pleasure to be able to work with the fantastic Guide Line team to launch this project which will support our entire puppy raising community and PDA's nationally. Your use of Guide Line also supports our fantastic PDA's to work with you, provide the support required, and for you to have contact with other knowledgeable teams within the organisation.

To continue using Guide Line as your first point of contact for support, between classes and visits, please use the following contact details:

- 0800 7811444; or
- information@guidedogs.org.uk

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If you'd like to share any feedback on your experience of using Guide Line, please send this to myself or Hannah Peck or to Gile Line Manager, Hannah Peck:

- anna.standing@guidedogs.org.uk
- hannah.peck@guidedogs.org.uk

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

And finally



For those who have heard me talk about Jeanie who was a puppy within the Midlands and East who went on to become a guide dog mum for Guide Dogs has recently welcomed 11 little life-changers who will soon be going onto puppy raisers to start their journey.

Jeanie was puppy raised by Sam Moyes who is also a Guide Dog Trainer within the Midlands Regional Centre in Leamington. Sam has continued to care for Jeanie in her volunteering role as a breeding dog holder. Jeanie is currently on maternity leave and therefore my office has been very empty without

her, and I am looking forward to her return once these little life-changers move onto the next stage of their own journeys.

I have included some photos of Jeanie with her pups (above and below) and her wonderful volunteer and breeding dog holder, Sam (with her consent) for you all to enjoy!



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

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