

South East region: puppy raising update - February 2024

Welcome to February's regional puppy raising update for the South East.

Hi Everyone,

I hope the start of the new year has gone well for everyone. Thank you to everyone that welcomed a puppy just before Christmas, I hope they were all beautifully behaved!

I am very conscious that in some of our locations we have volunteers waiting for a puppy a little longer than normal. This has been largely down to the wonderful response to our recruitment campaigns for puppy raisers to cover more areas. Whilst I recognise this does mean a longer wait, having a greater number of volunteers also means we are better able to look ahead and plan. We also have more options to place puppies and reduce the pressure on Puppy Development Advisors (PDAs) by ensuring a more balanced geographical spread.

I'd like to reassure you that we are monitoring applications and local numbers and I thank you again for your patience, if you're still waiting. As I mentioned in my last update, part of our response to the need for more puppy raisers has been to recruit new PDAs and open up new areas to volunteering. I'd therefore like to introduce you to Kelly Johnson, who is our new PDA covering North Surrey and Croydon.



“Before coming to Guide Dogs I spent the last 6.5 years working with exotic animals, the main ones being California Sealions! My passion is animal training and I spend a lot of time studying different training techniques to improve my skills. Alongside this I have also volunteered in puppy training classes learning lots about dogs! I have always wanted to work for Guide Dogs as I wanted to combine my love of animal training with working with people. So far in my role as Puppy Development Advisor I have loved meeting all of the



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staff and volunteers who put so much time and effort into the dogs. I am really looking forward to getting started in my scheme area and working with the volunteers and puppies to give them the best start to their working lives.”

Finally, last year we spoke about setting up some online learning sessions for the South East. I’m pleased to say that these are now going to start in March, and we’ll get the details of how to join out to you via your PDA soon.

Helena Gibbons
Canine Assisted Services, Operations Manager - South East

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