

Scotland and Northern Ireland region: puppy raising update August 2024

Welcome everyone to Scotland and Northern Ireland's August puppy raising update.

Team update

Gillian Flynn

Many of you may be aware by now but our wonderful Manager Gillian Flynn has now retired from her role as Canine Assisted Service Operations Manager for puppy raising for Scotland and Northern Ireland. Gillian was hugely valued in her many roles within Guide Dogs and will be greatly missed. Gill brought a wealth of knowledge to the puppy raising department from her 40-year career at Guide Dogs. Gill directly managed the Puppy Development Supervisors (PDSs) and supported all the Puppy Development Advisors (PDAs) across Scotland and Northern Ireland. Gill was always kind and approachable. She was a keen listener and an avid advocate for our volunteers and guide dog puppies. We wish Gill all the best in her retirement.

Janet Champion



From one goodbye to two hellos, we would like to introduce Janet Champion and Vanessa Scott two current canine assisted service operation managers for Puppy Raising who will be stepping into the role. Both Managers come with a wealth of Knowledge and experience. We will Spotlight Janet Champion today and Vanessa in our next newsletter.

Hi, my name is Janet Champion. I'm one of the CAS Operations Managers for puppy raising. For the past

three years, I've had the privilege of working with the puppy raising staff and volunteers in the North East Region and am very excited to be one of the managers who will be working with the Scotland and Northern Ireland department moving forwards.

A little bit about me, I live in North Yorkshire with my husband and two adult sons, my German Shepherd, Monty, and my Cocker Spaniel, Dottie. I have worked for Guide Dogs for, very nearly 30 years (where did that time go?). I joined Guide Dogs as an apprentice Guide Dogs Mobility Instructor (now known as a Guide Dog Mobility Specialist) at the former Middlesbrough site and worked the majority of my career in the training department, initially as a GDMI and in various supervisory and management roles.

When the opportunity came to join puppy raising in 2021, I jumped at the chance, and I love it. I have learned so much about puppy development over the past three years and have been blown away by the commitment and generosity of our volunteers and the hard work, flexibility and solution focused approach of staff and volunteers alike. You are all amazing and we couldn't train guide dog partnerships without you. Thank you.

My virtual door is always open so don't hesitate to contact me if you have a question or comment (not related to your puppy) that you think I can help with. You can email me at janet.champion@guidedogs.org.uk.

Emma Steele



Our PDA for Northern Ireland Emma Steele is now off on maternity leave. We welcome her cover, PDA Gillian Salmon from the North East team. We're very grateful for the cross-regional support. Gillian has been over to Northern Ireland and met with all the puppies and puppy raisers on scheme. Gillian will work with PDS Fiona Fraser to ensure that all puppy raisers continue to get full support. Thank you to all of our puppy raisers for your patience and for



being so welcoming as we transition to this maternity support arrangement.

Health and safety reminder: off-lead exercise

Not that we're wishing summer away but a gentle reminder about off-lead health and safety. Our weather has been very changeable of late, so please be mindful of the ground surface and environment and remember to wear appropriate footwear. If you have any concerns with off-lead exercise with your puppy please contact your PDA for support. Our policy for puppies off-lead is 1:1 ratio guide dog puppy to handler and no more than two guide dog puppies off-lead together with one handler each. Any further questions please ask your PDA.

Coming soon: puppy raiser induction day

We will be running induction days again in Forfar. They have been delayed over summer due to staff holidays and now some Kennel Cough on site. Our next puppy raiser induction day is scheduled for **Thursday 7 November**. Your PDA will send out an email reminder nearer the time to ask if you would like to attend.

Media stars

- A huge thank you to our many puppy raisers, PDAs and guide dog owners who have been working hard to promote Guide Dogs and puppy raising. We had some recent TV coverage on UTV Northern Ireland called 'dogs with jobs' which aired on 15 August and was filmed just before PDA Emma Steele went on maternity leave.
- STV will shortly be filming a puppy class, and interviewing PDAs and guide dog owners in Edinburgh and Forfar. This will be on STV news across Scotland (date not confirmed).
- You will "spot" us popping up in the news as our fundraising team has secured a training day in November at 101 Dalmatians stage show at the Kings Theatre in Glasgow. Some guide dogs and puppies will be meeting the cast, including the Dalmatians puppets. Our puppy raisers and guide dog puppies will have access to the theatre to train while



the cast do dress rehearsals. This is a wonderful collaboration with fundraising which will hopefully get some great press coverage for puppy raising and Guide Dogs. Our Community Fundraising Relationship Manager, Sandi Johnson, is looking for extra help with bucket collections. Please remember all events or talks you attend with your puppy must be approved by your PDA. You are free to attend any event without your pup and we would love your support. Email Sandi to help with bucket collections: sandi.johnson@guidedogs.org.uk.

We're always on the lookout for a media worthy story from volunteers. If you have a story that we can share or an idea for promoting puppy raising - please let us know! Keeping Guide Dogs in the news is a big job and it helps us to raise awareness of who we are, what we do, and of course attract support. The public love real stories that they can relate to and of course adorable puppy pictures too. Please let your PDA know if you have an idea no matter how small. Thank you.

Puppy class plus one

We're excited to be growing all schemes across Scotland. As always, we're asking you - our volunteers for help with spreading the word.

If you have a friend or family member who has said "I would love to do that, but I couldn't give the puppy back" - then invite them to along to a puppy class. We're offering your friends and family the opportunity to join you at a puppy class or even for a coffee afterwards. If this sounds like something you'd like to tell your friends and family about, please let your PDA know when you plan to bring someone with you so they can plan their time to have a chat at the end of the puppy class.

Fiona Fraser

Puppy Development Supervisor - Scotland and Northern Ireland

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