



South West region: puppy raising update March 2025

Hi all, Leah Rogers here, and I am the Puppy Raising Operations Manager for the South West.

Puppy Raising Operations Manager message

As we are now well into 2025, we have had a chance to reflect on how 2024 went and the success that we had in the year.

In our region we qualified 88 partnerships through our teams in Exeter, Southampton, Bristol and Cardiff.

We had 223 pups enter training and placed 245 pups onto our puppy schemes. We also had 20 dogs go into our breeding programme.

We are very proud of all the hard work that our volunteers and Puppy Development Advisors (PDAs) put into supporting our pups to become life-changers, whether that's in training or through the breeding programme. Congratulations to you all on making 2024 such a successful year!

Looking forward now to 2025, we are going to focus a little more on foundation behaviours or positional cues (e.g. sit, stand etc), and letting everyone know how this will better support our guide dog pups on their journey into training.

Foundation behaviours or positional cues are the basis of all our training and there are many ways to achieve this, like teaching the puppy to wait before they go through the doorway, pause before they negotiate the stairs, or just a simple sit/wait on the lead. One way we can help you with this is to reintroduce these foundation behaviours or positional cues in your puppy classes and socials; this will support your learning through Kallidus and enable you to practice in a safe environment with support from your PDAs so look out for more information about this in the coming months. Our PDAs look forward to supporting you with all of this going forward.



News

Our new scheme in Cornwall has started to see a lot of interest from new puppy raisers, which is great news. Over the coming months, Jenny Hardy (PDA) will be looking at doing lots of dog handling assessments to get these new volunteers up and running so they can welcome their puppies.

We have had a lot of interest in the other schemes too, especially after the media coverage on the BBC after Christmas. Our team are busy working through these applications and hopefully we will be joined by some new volunteers soon, I am sure you will give them a warm welcome.

Some of you may remember that before Christmas I was attending some puppy classes with the PDAs to meet you all. I didn't quite get round to everyone, but I am still planning on attending those classes that I haven't yet been to so that I can hopefully meet all of you at some point. Your PDA will let you know when I plan to attend - it will be good to meet you all if you can make it on that day for a coffee and a chat!

Thank you for all you are doing, and I look forward to seeing you all soon,

Leah Rogers

Puppy Raising Operations Manager - South West

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