

Alfie

**GUIDE
DOGS**



Pupdate 3

The next chapter

Starting training school

**SPONSOR
A PUPPY**





Alfie is a sweet boy and a true gentleman! He's so willing to take on new tasks and is exceptionally calm. Everyone here has completely fallen in love with him, and I'm rather smitten myself!

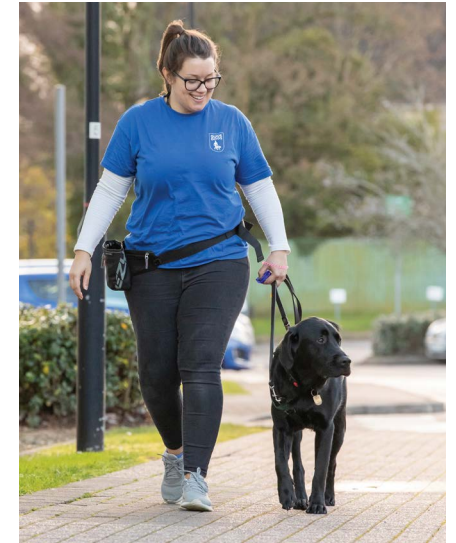
Hello, I'm Beth, a trainer at Guide Dogs. I'm pleased to say Alfie has started training school in Cardiff!

I'm a new trainer at Guide Dogs and I'm so excited to be part of Alfie's journey to become a guide dog. I'll take him through his guiding training and will be part of the matching process to find him the perfect owner. I love seeing my dogs learning and it's so rewarding getting to witness that moment when it all clicks and they master a skill.

Playful pup

Alfie has taken to Training School like a duck to water. During evenings and weekends he stays with his boarder, Mark, who takes him on lots of walks through the Welsh countryside. Alfie is more interested in people than other dogs, which is a very valuable trait, as he will need to remain focused on his future owner when guiding.

Alfie loves relaxing with his toys, especially squeaky soft toys! He has a monkey toy that now has no arms or legs, but Alfie adores it



nonetheless. I've spent time teaching him the 'drop' command, so that he lets go of a toy in his mouth. I have to use very tasty treats to encourage him as, to Alfie, nothing is better than his toys!

Developing new skills

Alfie has taken everything in his stride and is beautiful to walk on the lead, never rushing or pulling. Every day we have a morning training session, followed by a relaxing lunch, and finishing the day with an afternoon training session.

I'm teaching Alfie to have food manners by dropping treats on the floor and rewarding him for ignoring them. This will be a valuable skill for his future as a guide dog, as he will come across food scraps and smells whilst guiding his owner and will need to ignore them at all times.

(Continued overleaf)



I've begun teaching Alfie to recognize changes in ground height. We use platforms to introduce our dogs to this skill, asking them to stop on the platform to get a reward. We then ask them to perform the same action in a real life situation, such as when they approach kerbs or stairs, so that they can signal them to their handler.

Looking to the future

I have begun introducing Alfie to his training harness. I'm teaching

him to put his head through the harness, ensuring he gets lots of praise when he does. Taking this process a step at a time will ensure he builds a strong positive association with the harness before he begins working in it. I can't wait to see him proudly wearing it soon!

Thank you for sponsoring Alfie. I'm looking forward to seeing him develop his skills. Look out for your next Pupdate in June.

Training – Puppy to qualified guide dog

It takes around 20 months of training to transform a newborn pup into a qualified guide dog.

The pups learn basic commands and are introduced to new surroundings with their Puppy Walker.

They then venture on to Guide Dogs Training School, where they learn

the foundation tasks required of a guide dog. The final stages of training focus on their partnership with a new owner, where they learn specific skills tailored to their owner's specific needs.



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