

Alfie

**GUIDE
DOGS**



Pupdate 4

Alfie prepares for a new owner

Mastering advanced skills

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Hello, it's Beth here, Alfie's trainer. I'm excited to update you on how he has been progressing.

I hit the jackpot by having Alfie as my first trainee guide dog as he's made it such an enjoyable experience for me. He's enthusiastic to learn new skills and will do anything for a tasty treat.

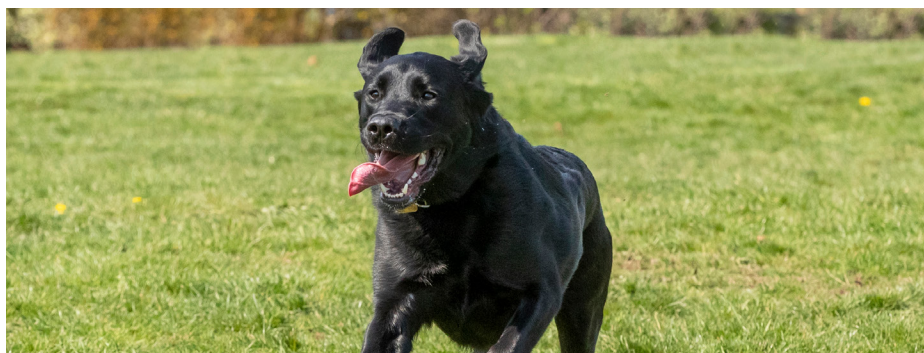
Alfie has an affectionate nature and rolls onto his back for a tummy scratch. He is

at his happiest when he is playing with toys, especially soft, fluffy ones.

Moving vehicles

I've now introduced Alfie to each of the skills he needs to become a qualified guide dog. Soon we will be matching Alfie to someone living with sight loss, to see if they could make the perfect partnership. During the final weeks of training, we will continue to practice his skills and focus on preparing Alfie for life with his new owner.

I've been teaching Alfie to be aware of moving vehicles and to stop if one approaches; an invaluable skill to his future owner as he will signal to them when a road is not safe to cross. We introduced this by driving



a car slowly towards Alfie, asking him to stop when he sees it approaching.

I've also been introducing Alfie to real-life situations, behaving as a visually impaired person might behave whilst being guided. For example, I encourage him to go in the wrong direction or into the path of obstacles. This teaches him to take the lead and make decisions on behalf of his handler.

A true test

We recently carried out a blind fold walk which was a true test of Alfie's skills. As his handler, I give off subtle body language that gives him an indication of what to do next.

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Guide Dogs is working to give people with sight loss the confidence and skills they need to live the life they choose.

However, when I was blindfolded, Alfie needed to make decisions unaided. I'm pleased to say he guided me safely and made good decisions himself.

The perfect match?

Alfie is a very reliable and adaptable dog and so he could suit a variety of different lifestyles and someone who has very little sight remaining. Whoever ends up with Alfie will be extremely

lucky as he's an incredible companion as well as a guide.

Thank you so much for sponsoring Alfie. Look out for your next Pupdate in October!



The matching process

Every person and dog is unique, so matching a guide dog to an owner is a complex and carefully managed process. Our trainers take into account a person's needs including lifestyle, walking speed and height.

Once a match has been made, our trainers spend several weeks training the guide dog owner and dog together, learning their common routes and making sure their partnership is a success.



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