

# Berry

GUIDE  
DOGS



**Pupdate 4**

**A new chapter**

**Starting training school**

**SPONSOR  
A PUPPY**





## Hello, I'm Kat, a trainer at Guide Dogs. I'm pleased to say Berry has made it to training school!

I've been a guide dog trainer for 13 years, it's so rewarding watching your dog develop from when they first arrive, to when they are introduced to their new owner. Knowing your hard work will change the life of someone living with sight loss is an incredible feeling.

### Finding her feet

Berry is super affectionate and so eager to learn, although if she had it her

way, she would play and eat all day long! She makes me laugh when I collect her each morning, as her little face peers out over her pen and her tail wags at a million miles an hour.

In the first few weeks, we did lots of bonding exercises such as playing and going on free runs. I then introduced Berry to the different areas of the training school, letting her get used to her new surroundings. When it's time to relax Berry has a comfy duvet bed in the office, which she snuggles up on with her chew toy.

We have a paddock on site where I take Berry to let off steam, there are lots of toys in there and Berry will play with every single one! Berry has also made a puppy pal who she loves to play with, a yellow Labrador called Miller.



I've noticed that although Berry loves playing with other dogs, she isn't overly distracted by them, which is a great trait to have as it means they won't be a distraction during training sessions.

### Introducing the harness

I'm pleased to say Berry is now wearing her training harness. I introduced it very slowly with lots of positive interactions and she wasn't fazed by it at all. I've begun taking Berry to residential areas whilst in harness, so

that she can get used to wearing it out and about.

I'm teaching Berry the 'touch' command, in which she will touch my hand with her nose. She is very good at this and gives me a lovely little nudge.

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This will be a valuable skill to her future owner as they will be able to locate Berry easily.

### Looking to the future

Berry is a typical Labrador and so she is driven by food! I am encouraging her to have food manners, teaching her to take treats gently and not to be distracted by food scraps or smells.

Over the next few months I will be teaching Berry to recognise obstacles in our path, including

stopping at kerbs. We use specially built platforms to introduce our dogs to this skill, asking them to place their two front paws on the platform and stop when they approach it. We then ask them to perform the same action at kerbs and stairs, so that they can signal them to their handler. I'm very excited to see Berry master these more complex skills.

Thank you for sponsoring Berry. Look out for your next Pupdate in June.

## 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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