

GUIDE
DOGS



Bella

Pupdate 4

The next chapter

Bella has started training school!

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A PUPPY**





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

I've been a guide dog trainer for around four years now and I love witnessing my dogs learning and developing through their training, from when they first arrive to when they qualify. I'm so excited to be part of Bella's journey to become a guide dog.



Starting school

Bella took a little while to settle into the kennel environment, but it wasn't long before she came bounding out of her shell! She is such a confident and cheeky puppy and has a lovely willingness and enthusiasm to learn. During the first few weeks I spent time building a strong bond with Bella through lots of play, free running and grooming. Building a good relationship between dog and handler ensures our dogs settle quicker and prepares them for the new challenges that training school will bring.

Bella brought her green fluffy hippo into training school with her which she still adores. Another dog in my pack, Jerry, started training school the same time as Bella and they absolutely love playing together.



I love watching them running around and letting off steam!

Navigating obstacles

Each day I carry out two training sessions with Bella. She took to the training harness very well and is one of the brightest dogs I've ever trained! She picks up new skills so quickly, showing initiative and understanding of what is expected of her. I've been teaching her to stop when she approaches kerbs and she's already

starting to master this skill – I am very impressed!

I've also begun teaching Bella to navigate around obstacles in her path by practicing an obstacle course together. This is made up of every day challenges she may come up against whilst guiding, such as traffic cones and road signs.

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I'm encouraging her to bend around these obstacles and leave room for her handler to get past them too. She is doing so well and I'm excited to see her develop her guiding skills over the coming months.

Overcoming challenges

Bella is brilliant when travelling by bus, train and car but she really wasn't a fan of the Guide Dogs training vans.

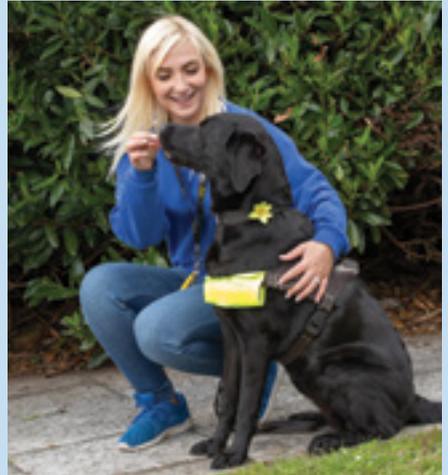
I spent lots of time making the van a positive place for her, using her favourite toys and treats. Thanks to my efforts, Bella's confidence when jumping into the van has greatly improved and I will continue to work on this area with her.

Thank you for sponsoring Bella. Look out for your next Pupdate in February to see how she is progressing.

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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