

Press release - Puppy Raising 2023

With the start of the New Year comes the first days of new beginnings, new adventures and new experiences. This year, why not do something really special? When we say volunteering for Guide Dogs is life changing, we're not just talking about the people we'll support. You'll gain new skills; build confidence you never knew you had and have amazing experiences that you genuinely couldn't find anywhere else.

There are around 2 million people living with sight loss in the UK. Guide Dogs, a UK-wide charity with a community team based in Exeter, supports people with a visual impairment to maintain their independence and live the life they choose. There are lots of different services on offer, ranging from volunteer-led services such as My Sighted Guide through to the support for children and young people, access to technology, and the iconic guide dog service.

This year, we are urgently appealing for new volunteers to sign up as Puppy Raisers. This means looking after future guide dogs for the first year of their lives, socialising them and giving them a loving home. It's a hugely rewarding role with lots of support and training on offer, plus you will meet lots of new people in your area who are also raising pups.

Many of you may think saying goodbye to your pup would be too difficult, but our volunteers say nothing beats the rewarding feeling of knowing you have played a huge part in changing someone's life. Terry describes the moment he first said goodbye to the first dog he fostered:

"We were really attached to the first dog we fostered, Carli. However, we get to see her with her owner and that makes it all worthwhile. We went to our local centre and Carli came to greet us but immediately returned to her owner's side as if to say 'I've got a job to do'. Carli has given her owner the opportunity to go to university and live a full life."

Sometimes, the first step can feel daunting, but if you're volunteering with Guide Dogs, our welcoming and supportive family of both staff and volunteers are walking alongside you throughout.

Start volunteering at: www.guidedogs.org.uk/how-you-can-help/volunteering-for-guide-dogs