



Celebrating National Pet Day: A bus driver's best friend

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## A BUS DRIVER'S BEST FRIEND

As the nation gears up to celebrate National Pet Day on April 11th, bus operator Go North East, has released a delightful collection of snapshots capturing the paw-some bond between bus drivers and their dogs.

The collection titled 'A Bus Driver's Best Friend' features six drivers from depots across the region, joined by pals: Pongo, Chester, Tasha, Misty, Milo, and Ella. These bark-tastic photos are sure to put a smile on passengers' faces and a wag in their tails as we celebrate the joy of companionship on and off the road!

## **Mark and Pongo from Coxhoe**

Quote from Bus Driver Mark Gradon:

“Pongo’s just full of character, I call him my not-so-little shadow as he’s always there by my side. He’s getting on a bit now but I just love the fact he’s a puppy at heart. I’ll never forget the day I came home to find him sat down looking up at me all innocent with an empty dog food bag around his neck!”

## **Christopher and Chester from Forest Hall, Newcastle Upon Tyne**

Quote from Bus Driver Christopher Walker:

“It’s just such a pure friendship. I was ill a while back and Chester laid by my side until I was well again. I’m in no doubt having him there helped my recovery. It’s such a lift when I see that wagging tail when I get home from work. We’ve got a little ritual, he greets me, I hand him the paper that I buy every day for Amanda my wife, and he then fetches it to her. He’s my boy!”

## **Carly and Tasha from Washington**

Quote from Bus Driver Carly Benson:

“Tasha’s my best friend, she’s a very understanding dog with a gentle soul, always there when you need a cuddle. She’s 11 now and I treasure every moment we spend together. By far the best times are those spent down the beach when she becomes a puppy again bouncing across the sand.”

## **Kim and Misty from Crookgate**

Quote from Bus Driver Kim Goodwin:

“Misty just wants everyone to love her. She’s not fazed by much either, we always say she’s totally fearless. Saying that she’s the softest dog at heart, we love spending chilled time together. When I’m watching TV of a night, she’ll jump up onto the back of the sofa and wrap her paws over my shoulders and

snooze. That's her favourite spot... and mine too."

### **James and Milo from Stanley**

Quote from Bus Driver James Fawkes:

"Milo's a performer through and through. He howls to us (sings), dances, copies us when we laugh loudly, he does it all! I would be lost without him, he makes me laugh every day and truly helps me with my mental health. His favourite TV show is The Secret Life of the Zoo and just loves the gorillas."

### **Kyle and Ella from South Shields**

Quote from Bus Driver Kyle Thompson:

"We've got such an unbreakable bond, she really means the world to me. I think it's fair to say Ella's a pampered pooch, she's short-haired so gets cold quite easily so likes to have her jumper on. She can get a little nervous in new places, but it doesn't take long for her to settle down, before we know it she's running around barking with her favourite ball."

*Photography: Charlotte Graham*

## **ENDS**

### **NOTE TO EDITORS**

Go North East runs a network of bus routes across the North East region including Newcastle, Sunderland, Durham, and surrounding areas.

The Go-Ahead Group is one of the UK's leading providers of public transport, enabling more than a billion passenger journeys each year on its bus and rail services. Go-Ahead places great importance on partnership, adopting a collaborative approach with governments, local communities and strategic partners; developing and operating services that create long-term value for all.

For more information about Go-Ahead Group visit [www.go-ahead.com](http://www.go-ahead.com).

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