



(Pictured from left to right: Go North East driver – Paul Frazer, Ashby with puppy raiser Audrey, Viva with puppy raiser Marie, Harvey with puppy raiser Paul and Esmay with puppy raiser Mark)

Oct 16, 2024 12:57 BST

## **GO NORTH EAST BACKS GUIDE DOG TRAINING WITH FREE TRAVEL FOR VOLUNTEERS**

Go North East is proud to announce a new partnership with Guide Dogs in Newcastle, offering free bus travel to volunteer puppy raisers who play a vital role in training the next generation of life-changing guide dogs.

These volunteers can now travel for free across the Go North East network by

presenting their Guide Dogs ID pass, allowing puppies to practice essential skills on public transport - a crucial step in their development to become fully trained guide dogs.

As part of this initiative, Go North East recently hosted a training session with Guide Dogs Newcastle on one of its electric Voltra buses. The puppies practiced boarding, travelling, and disembarking in a calm, controlled environment - helping to prepare them for future real-world challenges.

Rebecca Stranney, Puppy Development Advisor at Guide Dogs in Newcastle said: "A huge thank you to Go North East for providing free travel for our volunteers and hosting this training session. "Many guide dog owners rely on public transport and so providing real-world settings like this is invaluable to the puppies' development, helping to prepare them for their future roles as life-changing guide dogs for people with sight loss.

"We know that it can be tempting to approach our lovely dogs, but if you see one in training or working it's important that they aren't distracted from their very important job of keeping their owner safe, so please admire them from a distance."

Ben Maxfield, Business Director at Go North East, added: "We're proud to support Guide Dogs and their amazing volunteers. By offering free travel, we hope to help prepare guide dogs for the future, and we look forward to welcoming more puppies and volunteers on board."

Go North East is committed to accessibility, with 90% of its buses already featuring next-stop audio announcements to assist visually impaired passengers. The company aims to have this technology on its entire fleet by 2026.

This partnership showcases not only the dedication of volunteer puppy raisers but also highlights Go North East's ongoing commitment to making public transport accessible - one bus ride at a time.

Guide Dogs are urgently in need of more volunteers to help raise their life-changing dogs in those critical early months. For more information, visit [guidedogs.org.uk/volunteer](https://guidedogs.org.uk/volunteer)

**ENDS**

### **Notes 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](https://www.go-ahead.com).

**Photography by:** Gavin Forster

**Press and media contacts:**

Ben Maxfield

Business Director, Go North East [ben.maxfield@gonortheast.co.uk](mailto:ben.maxfield@gonortheast.co.uk)

Telephone: 07890 436531

---

[Go North East website](#)