

Cute puppy alert – guide dogs in training at Edinburgh Airport



The cuteness factor hit new levels at Edinburgh Airport today as 12 trainee guide dog puppies descended on the terminal for a training day.

The pups, aged between six and 15 months, arrived at the terminal with their puppy walkers to take part in a full airport walkthrough from arriving at the check-in hall, to going through security and into the departure lounge.

Part of the airport's wider 'Travelling with Additional Needs' programme, the terminal team invited the group from Guide Dogs Scotland along for the special training session which allows the puppies to gain crucial experience of a busy airport environment.

With over 520 registered guide dog owners in Scotland and many being regular air travellers, it's vital that the puppies are trained for their future role as guide dogs as they have to be ready to deal with all eventualities and get used to busy places.

Sarah Gardiner, Head of Terminal Operations at Edinburgh Airport, said: "We're very pleased to welcome the guide dog puppies and their handlers into the airport today so we can help give them valuable training for their future.

"We launched our Travelling with Additional Needs programme last April and have spent the last 12 months working hard with our Terminal and Security teams to help us better understand the complex requirements that some of our passengers may have.

“We realise that each passenger is unique and may have different requirements so that’s why we’ve been working hard to understand the complex types of barriers which can stop people from being able to fly.

“We firmly believe that everyone who wants to fly can fly and we’re committed to making sure all of our passengers have the best experience possible. We have an amazing team here at Edinburgh Airport and we’ll continue to work to ensure our services are of the highest standard.”



David Smith, puppy walking supervisor with Guide Dogs Scotland, said: “Fully qualified guide dogs are required to

face a variety of settings and situations with calmness and confidence, and early tastes of different environments will see them experienced for later life.

“It will be quite a day for the puppies, with most of them traveling by public transport such as trains, buses and trams, before experiencing the airport environment.

“We’re keen to expose the pups to the experience of going through security and all that it entails, such as being handled by different people, having their lead and collar removed and going through the scanner.

“It’s a good experience for the pups to get used to the sights, sounds and smells of the airport so it shouldn’t bother them later when they are fully trained guide dogs helping people with sight loss to lead independent lives.

“Our puppy walkers are volunteers who make an invaluable contribution to the development of guide dogs, so it’s also a nice treat for them to see behind the scenes at the airport. We’d like to thank all at Edinburgh Airport who have been very welcoming and supportive in this important educational exercise for our guide dog puppies.”

Photographs Ian Georgeson, 07921 567360