



Guide
Dogs

Sponsor
a Puppy



Cooper

Training
commences

Pupdate 4

Cooper

has started training school



“ Hello, it’s Sophie here and I am Cooper’s new trainer. ”

I have been a Guide Dog Trainer since 2015. I think the nicest thing about the job is that all dogs have different temperaments and learn in different ways, so no two days are ever the same. The most rewarding thing is when you see the dogs with their owner doing the job on their own.

Cooper’s transition from Puppy Raiser Margaret was very smooth. He settled easily with his fosterer, who he stays with in the evenings and weekends. To help Cooper settle in the office environment he gets lots of time with other dogs in training so he can associate the office with a positive experience.

New school routine

Cooper is dropped off by his fosterer in the office. Once he arrives with his lunchbox, I give him a frozen Kong to let him settle. These interactive food games help provide Cooper with environmental enrichment. We have a training session in the morning, and at lunchtime Cooper has playtime with his friends Curly, Nala and Beckett. In the afternoon we practice new tasks, and around 4-5pm, his fosterers pick him up.

I love how well-mannered Cooper is, he has a very sociable personality. When we are on free runs in the park and there are other dogs, he doesn't know who to say hello to first! He has good self-control and will look at me first before he goes to play. All I have to say is 'Cooper come' and he disengages.

Cooper is eager to learn

Cooper picks tasks up very quickly and he is always focused when training. For now, I am focusing on training in quiet areas, so he can get used to guiding tasks before being introduced to potential distractions in larger areas. Cooper already has a nice level of self-control. I have been working on this by dropping food on the floor and making sure he doesn't go to it. It is great practice for when we are out on walks, and he sees potential things on the floor.

I've introduced Cooper to both his body piece and handle, and he now walks in full harness. I used a hand-touch to get his head through the harness, and it was a really positive experience.

(Continued overleaf)



See how Cooper has grown in his own video:

guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-cooper

As soon as I took the body piece off, he was sniffing it and wagging his tail! The signal 'touch' will be great when Cooper is on a free run with his future owner, as this will help locate Cooper's collar to put his harness back on.

Looking forward

Now that Cooper has been introduced to his harness, I will teach him to start stepping ahead to provide more tension on the handle. I will also set up an obstacle course and get Cooper to guide me around safely, so we can work on kerb work and navigating through narrow gaps. I have no doubt that he will progress well!



Thank you so much for sponsoring Cooper. Look out for his next Pupdate!

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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