



# Cooper

**Cooper has qualified  
as a buddy dog!**

**Pupdate 6**

# Cooper and Kaiden

**Hello, it's Barrie here, Kaiden's dad. Cooper has become the most wonderful companion for my son, Kaiden, since qualifying as his buddy dog**

Since Cooper has lived with us, the transformation for the whole family has been amazing.

Kaiden has a hereditary visual impairment; he's had it since birth and it affects his range of vision.

Objects far away need to be four times larger or brought four times closer for Kaiden to see the equivalent to his peers.

Kaiden never complains, but as he's grown older, we've become more worried as he is beginning to want more independence. At school he sits near the front of the class and has equipment to help him see what is on the whiteboard, but he is less confident in new places. He enjoys playing for a local football team, but they've just started playing on bigger football pitches and he struggles with seeing the ball when it's at the other end of the pitch.



## Finding out about Guide Dogs

Our local council put us in contact with Guide Dogs initially, and we benefitted from their Tech for All initiative which enabled Kaiden to get a free Apple iPad to help develop his learning and life skills outside of school. It was through regular contact with Guide Dogs that I learnt about the buddy dog scheme.

We attended an Experience Session through Guide Dogs where we met a couple of dogs to see how we were around them. We actually met Cooper on this visit and fell in love with him straight away, but we had to wait for the matching process to be completed before we knew which dog would be the best match for Kaiden.

## Bringing Cooper home

When we were told Cooper was the best match for Kaiden we were delighted! He came and stayed with us for a four-week trial so that Jo, Cooper's Guide Dogs Canine Assisted Partnerships Specialist, could check we were happy with everything and of course that Cooper was happy and settled too! From the start, Cooper has made himself at home. Initially he was a little nervous and on the first night, he came up to our bedroom at 4am to check where we were and slept beside our bed.

He now chooses to stay downstairs at night and greets us excitedly in the morning! He has retained so many skills from his training, including great recall and waiting for the "OK" cue before mealtimes.

## The change in Kaiden

Unfortunately, Kaiden broke his foot a week after Cooper arrived, but he was still determined to get out and about with Cooper. He was wearing a boot for a while to protect his foot, but that didn't stop him going on walks and playing games. Kaiden and his brother take Cooper out in the garden every morning before school to play, and in the evenings, they either join us on walks or cosy up with Cooper in the lounge. Cooper has definitely brought the whole family together.

Kaiden has adopted a new sense of responsibility towards Cooper, and he does everything he can to look after him. He feeds him every morning and evening and Cooper gives him a reason to get out of the house. As a family we are looking forward to doing so much more now we have Cooper; we have some holidays booked in the UK and we are excited to take him out on the beach and to new places.

**Having Cooper has changed our lives. Thank you so much to all of you for bringing him to our family.**





Find out how Cooper has settled into life with Kaiden and his family. Scan the QR code with your smartphone or go to:  
**[guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-cooper](https://guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-cooper)**







**“ Cooper has definitely brought the whole family together. ”**

Barrie, Kaiden's dad

## Behind them every step of the way

A guide dog puppy's training journey could not have been possible without our fantastic volunteer puppy raisers. They do an incredible job of building the best foundation for our puppies before they head off to Guide Dogs Training School. One of the best parts of puppy raising is knowing that when the pup moves to training school, they will hopefully go on to change the life of someone with sight loss.

**To find out what a day in the life of a Puppy Raiser is like, listen to Kirsty and Phil's experience at [guidedogs.org.uk/puppyraiser](https://guidedogs.org.uk/puppyraiser)**



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