



## Meet Our Clients | Case Study

### Talya Hambling and Coby

**It's another day for 19-year old Talya Hambling, as she heads off to university where she is studying veterinary nursing. Only no day can be described as normal for Talya, because she has a range of medical conditions including Ehlers Danlos Syndrome (EDS) that effects connective tissues and Postural tachycardia syndrome (PoTS) which cause an abnormal increase in heart rate. She feels sick and dizzy most of the time and many of her joints have a tendency to dislocate easily. She is frequently in chronic pain and suffers from blackouts and funny turns that involve hot flashes, shakes, loss of vision and heart palpitations.**



Talya's health issues have affected her life hugely from a very young age, when she had to give up various sports that she loved, and she has developed coping mechanisms to get her through daily life. However, a year ago things took a turn for the better when Talya got Coby a 9-week old Goldendoodle . . . as Talya explains.



I got Coby with the idea that he might be able to become my Assistance Dog, however I have to confess I had no idea of how to go about this! After a disastrous trial at a puppy class, where they were sadly using punishment and negative reinforcement, I looked to train Coby on my own. After a few months I decided I needed more help, so sought out a force free trainer and went to all her classes. We continued to work together and after a few months I came across Dog A.I.D. when I was doing further research about Assistance Dogs. What is different about Dog A.I.D. is that they work with a person and their pet, helping them train together.

I applied to join the Dog A.I.D. programme and fortunately my trainer agreed to sign up too as there were no other trainers in the local area at the time. We qualified in just under 6 months and Coby is now my fully-fledged Assistance Dog! He brings me my medication multiple times a day, as well as in emergency situations. He can find my phone, fetch a bottle of water for me and pick up almost any item I drop so my dizziness isn't exacerbated by leaning down.

Coby pulls off my socks, performs deep pressure therapy for both pain relief and joint relocation, as well as being about to find my mum both at home and outside. If I start to shake, he will paw my leg continuously to alert me as this generally indicates I am going to blackout or have a funny turn. I am currently teaching him how to help me stand up from the ground by bracing so I can lean against him. This is the beauty of being in a position to continue training Coby, especially as my health needs change.

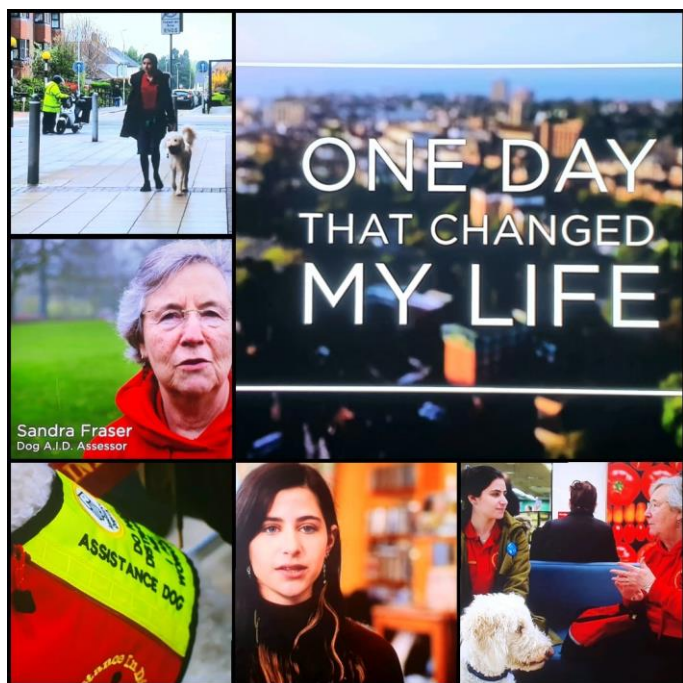


The difference I have felt since having Coby in my life is incredible. I am so much more confident going out alone now and no longer feel the need to rely on others just to leave the house. I am far happier, less anxious and truly feel I have regained my independence because Coby is there to not only calm me down but to help me physically as well. It's been a while since I have done something in my life that I can say I'm truly proud of, but training Coby has done just that.



Only one week after qualifying, I took my first leap of independence and two days in a row travelled one hour each way by train to meet friends. Previously doing this would have made me very anxious and more often than not I would have cancelled. Yet with Coby by my side I didn't panic and walked calmly through unfamiliar streets, which makes me excited about all the new adventures that await me that I previously wouldn't have had the confidence to experience.

I am immensely grateful to Dog A.I.D. and the work they do to enable people like myself to regain their independence - I owe my new lease of life to this Charity. I'm so lucky to be part of a wonderful community of clients and trainers who all support each other through the highs and lows of the training process, the rewards of which are invaluable.



**Talya and Coby recently featured on the BBC 1 series "One Day That Changed My Life" ...**

**By helping us to transform lives, you are helping many more people throughout the UK just like Talya**

...

**Please consider supporting our work today in whatever way you can ...**

**Thank You**

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