



## Meet Our Clients | Case Study

### Lucy Watts MBE and Molly

**Lucy Watts is a Health & Disability Activist, Consultant, Speaker, Writer, Blogger and Peer Mentor. She lives life to the full despite having a life-limiting condition, that causes complex medical needs. Lucy is a passionate ambassador for many organisations, including the International Children's Palliative Care Network and Together for Short Lives. She is the proud owner of Dog A.I.D. trained Assistance Dog, Molly. In this short piece, Lucy speaks of the difference Molly has made to her life ...**



Molly has transformed my life. Molly was bought as an 8 week old puppy to be a pet and then was trained by me with help from Dog A.I.D., so slightly different to how many AD charities work, but I enjoyed the process.

Molly came into my life at a time when I had nothing: no life, no purpose, no enjoyment, nothing. She came in and suddenly I had a reason to push myself really hard with physio and everything to sit up in my wheelchair more, which enabled me to walk and train her, take her to puppy classes, and to get out every day. The other thing was, without Molly, when I went out, I was invisible. Talked over, ignored, stared at from a distant, at best - it was like I didn't exist. Then, with Molly, suddenly everyone spoke to me. I had people acknowledge my existence and better still, strike up conversations with me, get to know me, me get to know them - I felt like part of society again, something I'd not felt since I became disabled and quickly bed bound aged 14. Then, when she was taken on by Dog A.I.D, our relationship took on another level, not only was she my pet but she'd become my Assistance Dog, my helper, my carer. When she qualified in September 2016, it was like the world opened up.

Everywhere I go, she comes, making me less dependent on human carers. When I drop something or need help, rather than apologising over and over for needing help, Molly does it with a smile, an ever-wagging tail and to Molly, it's a fun game, so in effect, the more help I require, the better the game. It turns everything on its head. Like the more help I require, the better it is for Molly, rather than it being a negative thing, it's a very positive thing.

Everyone talks to me when I am out now, I feel part of society, everyone asking about my beautiful and amazing dog. I can even go into somewhere without having someone with me 24/7, as Molly can help me if I need it, such as picking up something if I drop it, taking my coat and my hat, scarf and gloves off when I arrive, and jacket off if I got hot, she can pass items to other people if need be, and she will do whatever I need her to do.

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It's been life-changing, more than anyone could ever appreciate. Molly not only gave me a new life and made me a part of society again, but I gained the confidence that enabled me to do my voluntary work and thus I owe her my MBE, too.



For all her life-changing work, Molly was made Crufts Friends for Life Champion in 2014, voted by the public, and then was awarded the "animal OBE", only the fourth dog to do so at the time, in 2016, for devotion to me and to her duty as my Assistance Dog.

Molly is incredible. I truly don't believe I'd be here today without her, and she was the only reason I kept going when my mum was diagnosed with a brain tumour, had a brain haemorrhage and a stroke and then developed epilepsy. I couldn't let her down and I don't exaggerate when I say that was the only reason I kept going. I owe her my life, my quality of life, my enjoyment and my achievements.

Molly also alerts me 3-4 hours before I become systemically ill with sepsis from an infection, giving us vital time to get to London for treatment, which has saved my life numerous times; I've fought sepsis 12 times and overcome dozens more severe systemic infections that Molly caught on the cusp before developing sepsis and thus prevented a fight for my life with the dreaded sepsis.

A life-changing, life-saving dog. She's amazing. And I love that she has character. Assistance Dogs have to be natural problem solvers, and she will use this to her advantage at times.

She goes everywhere with a smile, she loves making people laugh, and always knows just what is needed. In fact, she's often a mirror of me - I don't realise I am having a bad day mentally until I realise Molly is acting differently.

She's just amazing. My life-saver and life-transformer.



**Lucy Watts was awarded an M.B.E. in 2016 New Years Honours for services to young people with disabilities, aged 22 years old. Lucy suffers from a life-shortening presentation of Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome with multiple organ failure, numerous complications and many secondary conditions**

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

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