



READING WITH OXON BORDER BRANCH

(Registered Charity No. 251482)

Are You Ready?

Becoming a dog owner is one of the most fulfilling experiences life can bring. Choosing to adopt a rescue dog is a generous and noble choice but is one that requires much consideration in order to ensure a successful relationship for both you and your four legged friend. This leaflet is designed to assist potential adopters in making an informed choice when it comes to welcoming a dog into your life.

Bringing a dog into your life is like raising a child in many aspects and requires a lot of commitment, financially and in terms of time. Very often the dogs that come into our care require additional and repeated learning opportunities in order to establish good social behaviour that is harmonious to a domestic environment. Taking on this kind of commitment takes dedication, can become challenging with the stresses and strains of modern living and on occasion be emotionally draining. Patience will be a large part of the initial transition as you get to know your new family member.

In order to be a happy and healthy dog in both mind and body regular exercise on a daily basis is essential. Dogs are diurnal animals and twice daily exercise facilitates a balanced cycle of activity and rest. Dogs are also social animals who function at their best as part of a 'pack' of family, as a result we would not consider homing a dog with potential adopters who are away from the home for more than 4 hours at a time as this can prove psychologically detrimental to the dog.

FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

On average a veterinary consultation costs in the region of £30. This does not include any medication or treatment.

Annual routine vaccinations cost approximately £40.

Standard flea and worming medication required on a four to six weekly basis are priced at roughly £12/box each.

Other financial implications to consider are;

- Insurance
- Beds
- Collars
- Training and obedience classes
- Identification tags
- Changing Petlog contact details
- Leads
- Food/treats
- RSPCA re-homing fee is currently £150
- Poo bags
- Toys
- Kennel or sitting costs

PLANNING A FAMILY

If you are thinking about starting a family or adding to an existing one it is wise to consider the amount of responsibilities you will need to juggle with a baby as well as a dog. Dogs can be quite unsettled with a new arrival and may need some preparatory work before and after the big event. This can become a very demanding task at a time when emotions run high so before deciding to bring a dog into your world it may be more of an enjoyable experience to do so after you are settled into an established and comfortable routine with your family.

DID YOU KNOW?

The RSPCA receives a call **every hour** about an abandoned dog.

In 2009 the RSPCA rehomed **17,000** dogs nationwide.

The public reported 3,500 abandoned dogs in the period January to April 2010, this figure is part of a total of **4,966** abandoned dog cases.

During 2009 the South East region recorded 2,236 calls concerning abandoned dogs. This was a fraction of the 11,574 calls received nationally.

These statistics do not include the dogs surrendered to and re-homed by, the individual branches across the country.

In the period to December 2009, the Reading branch successfully found new homes for 32 dogs and so far this year, have re-homed 16 and currently 5 are looking for new homes.

NATURAL BEHAVIOURS OF THE DOG

- Chewing
- Chasing
- Barking
- Eating their own and other animals' faeces (coprophagia)
- Digging
- Mounting (males or females)
- Scent marking (in and outdoors)
- Scavenging
- Eating its own vomit
- Lick their genitalia as well as that of other dogs (male or female)

You may wish to consider how you would manage any of the above behaviours and how it might make you feel.

A DOG MAY.....

- Bark at your best friend
- Poo on your carpet
- Relieve itself on the pavement
- Eat your favourite shoes
- Hump your leg or furniture
- Eat out of the rubbish bin or drink out of the toilet
- Steal food or laundry items (even dirty ones!)

BREED

A number of people often choose a dog based on physical appearance or legacy. It is recommended that people seeking to adopt a dog give thought to the lifestyle they lead and demands of the breed they like. For people who do not particularly enjoy exercise, a Working or Pastoral breed would not be suitable companions as they require a very high level of exercise.

Choosing a breed that you had as a childhood pet does not guarantee the same personality traits in another dog of the same breed and this can sometimes be challenging when anticipated expectations are not met.

Some breeds have a propensity to certain characteristics that are not always welcome in some households e.g. alert barking or territorial behaviour. On an ongoing basis would you be able to correct barking and confidently handle territorial behaviour towards others, even if that meant a member of your own family?

Factors to consider when choosing a dog and breed;

- Size
- Energy levels
- Male/female
- Age
- Behavioural tendencies
- The role you want it to play in your family

It is advisable to read some books and to do some internet research on the breed you are interested in before making a firm choice.

BEREAVEMENT

If you have recently lost a dog to illness or old age it is important to allow yourself the time to grieve for his/her passing. Sometimes an emotional decision is unintentionally made on the spur of the moment that is later regretted. We would like to avoid this for all parties' benefit and ask that you give yourself at least a few months before beginning the adoption process.

The RSPCA branch in Reading wants to do everything in its power to find the most suitable homes for our dogs and invite you to join us in giving some thoughts to the issues raised in this leaflet before committing to the adoption of one of our canine companions.

Our branch is always here to help and aims to provide the best support during the adoption process and into the future. If you have any questions about this document or wish to discuss any further issues please contact the Foster Care Co-ordinator on telephone number 07853 892884 or email dogs@rspca-reading.org.uk.