



## Barking Mad Dog Rescue Fostering Information

[www.barkingmaddogrescue.co.uk](http://www.barkingmaddogrescue.co.uk)

Fostering a rescue dog is a very rewarding thing to do. To open your home and life to a dog in need, you may well be saving a life by freeing up a shelter space to allow another dog to be saved, whilst it too awaits its turn at rehoming.

Fostering though, is not just about the emotional feel good factor. A foster placement allows for a dog to become more adoptable through training, socialisation and adaptation to move out in the world as a good canine citizen. Every effort is made to match a dog to the fosterer's experience and support is always available from our experienced team.

Fostering is not an opportunity to 'try before you adopt' but nevertheless so many foster carers do end up adopting their fostered dogs.

### PUPPIES

Whilst we are lucky in having such caring people running our shelters, there still aren't enough hands nor funds to go round to get all the pups started on their life journey by fully exposing them to life in a home. It can also be quite a shock, even for the friendliest of shelter pups, to leave all that safe and familiar to land on what can only be like another planet. It is undoubtedly easier for a puppy to come to a home with another resident dog to gain comfort from. If there is none, younger pups tend to adjust much faster as the only dog in the home. Older pups can take a bit longer.

Puppies seeking foster homes need the same input as any puppy would whether from a breeder or shelter. Fostering a pup means toilet training, lead training and socialisation. Fosterers are asked to take their foster pups to puppy classes. Pups can be hard work but are fabulous fun.

### OLDER PUPS AND YOUNG ADULTS

Young adult dogs need the same input as young pups. Socialisation of these dogs is important and training classes a must too. Shelter dogs won't have seen the TV or experienced the washing machine or the vacuum cleaner. The occasional few may never have walked on grass. Some will have been someone's dog before but perhaps experienced ill treatment or neglect. Young adult dogs are often caught between the innocence of puppyhood and lacking the confidence of an older dog. We tend to have more young adults seeking foster homes than other age groups.

## ADULT DOGS

Small dogs have often been someone's pet and have been abandoned or captured by the dogcatchers. Some are fearful, but most adapt swiftly to a home situation again. Most have lived in homes or been a pet dog at some point. Small adult dogs are available to foster less often although we do actively seek long term foster for our oldies.

Larger adult dogs have often been street dogs and surprisingly, are hugely affectionate but need to be taught boundaries. If you had to fend for yourself on the street, then things like the kitchen bin or countertop are fair game. A dog can't be expected to know what is 'wrong' in a human's eyes unless we, their carers, teach them. Labels of 'good' and 'bad' behaviour are human labels. A dog is just behaving as a dog does given any set of circumstances, unless we let it know otherwise in ways it can understand. Training classes are a great way to socialise any rescue dog.

## SOCIALISATION

One question we ask in our application form for one of our dogs is that you commit to helping your adopted dog to become a good canine citizen. What does this mean?

Firstly, we ask that you find a good training class in your area. Joining a class is a great way to get you and your dog off to a good start. (For those lucky enough to live close enough, Paul Connolly, at [www.wolfsspeak.co.uk](http://www.wolfsspeak.co.uk), offers a block of 12 starter classes free to any of our dogs and adopters and fosterers to get them off to a positive start.

From one person to the next, the idea of what is acceptable behaviour in a dog can vary wildly. However, we need to have a broad definition of what a socialised dog looks like in more general terms. We all want our dogs to be able to be comfortable in most situations from having the Hoover or TV running at home, to being able to walk him through the park, enjoying himself, whilst meeting other dogs. We need our dog to be able to ignore the rowdy boys playing football on the grass beside him when on his foray through the park. We want visitors to our home to be able to come in and for our dog to be comfortable with that, neither throwing himself at them in wild greeting nor snapping and growling at them in fear. Having a dog who is comfortable with his home environment as a safe place and being a fun companion whilst out is very achievable for our dogs offered for adoption. For some shelter dogs, it may take longer. For most, if measured exposure takes place at a pace the dog is comfortable with whilst ending each session on success, the world will become you and your foster dog's oyster.

## RESPONSIBILITIES AND COSTS

### Responsibilities:

- To commit to your foster dog through training, love and consistency
- To attend training classes
- To socialise your foster dog
- To liaise with BMDR if support is needed
- To provide updates and photos to allow the dog to be promoted for adoption
- To continue with all the above for as long as it takes for your foster dog to be adopted

### Costs:

As a foster carer, we ask you to insure your foster dog. Fosterers are also responsible for food costs, worming/flea treatments and local training classes. The charity, BMDR, will meet vet bills including neutering of pups providing this has been discussed *prior* to the dog attending the vet *except in case of emergency*. Moreover, if you wish to adopt the dog yourself (and many of us do) we ask you to donate the standard costs of the dog's preparation for and travel to the UK.

We are truly indebted to our team of foster carers for offering dogs a chance to move from Romania into a halfway house. We would love you to join that team.

Paul Connolly, Wolfspeak:

[www.wolfspeak.co.uk](http://www.wolfspeak.co.uk)

Rescue dogs require patience, understanding and a determinedly calm, balanced and controlled approach, without over-compensating for the dog's previous history. The rescue dog with problems does not need our sympathy, nor does it require an unhealthy overload of unbalanced affection, pity or constant reassurance. The rescue dog does not feel sorry for itself over past experiences it lives in the moment and asks only that we share that moment, with empathy, understanding and a will to go forward and become the perfect "pack leader".