



WELCOME TO POST ADOPTION WELFARE STUDY (PAWS)

Information for Adopters

Thank you for rehoming your dog from Dogs Trust. As well as being committed to providing lifelong behavioural support for all the dogs we rehome, we are also running a ground-breaking research project called the Post Adoption Welfare Study (PAWS) to gather information which will help us to improve rehoming processes and the welfare of rehomed dogs.

What's involved?

When you adopted your dog, you signed paperwork giving permission for us to contact you by email regarding the Post Adoption Welfare Study. This automatically registered you onto the study triggering an e-mail asking you to log in to your personalised Dashboard, which is accessible via your [Dogs Trust My Account](#). From there, you can complete surveys to help us learn more about the health, behaviour and lifestyle of your dog.

Your data

When you signed the 'Post Adoption Support and Research' informed consent form, you gave permission for the research team to store the data that you provide and use it for analysis for research purposes. All the information that you provide about yourself and your dog during the Post Adoption Welfare Study will be treated in the strictest confidence. Any sensitive information, including names and email addresses will be stored in an encrypted form, and no individual dogs or owners will be identifiable from research outputs. If you have any questions about the safety of your information, then please contact the Post Adoption Welfare Study team on postadoptionproject@dogstrust.org.uk.

You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time. To do this please email postadoptionproject@dogstrust.org.uk with your name and Dogs Trust supporter number.

Surveys

To start with, we will ask you to complete a set of three short Registration surveys; these must be completed in order to continue taking part in the study. We will then send you surveys approximately three weeks, ten weeks, six months and twelve months after taking your new dog home, and thereafter no more frequently than twice a year. Completion of these surveys is entirely voluntary.

You are welcome to leave any questions blank that you would prefer not to answer or to select the 'prefer not to answer' option, and you can always 'save and come back later' if you are short of time.

It is important to remember that you should not wait for our survey to report a behaviour problem, but should contact the dedicated post adoption support team by phone (0300 303 3738) or e-mail (postadoptionsupport@dogstrust.org.uk) as soon as possible if you would like to speak to someone about your dog's behaviour.

We will be asking you about various aspects of your dog's life, behaviour and experiences, so that we can look for common trends or themes which occur. So please be honest in your answers – with your help, you will become part of the Post Adoption Welfare Study community and contribute to the development of an exciting new dog science initiative!

Permissions

In the first registration survey, 'About Me', we will ask if you might be interested in helping us to promote the study through the media. We would be very grateful if you would be willing to be contacted about you and your dog potentially becoming 'media stars'. We understand that this is not for everyone, so this is entirely optional, and you will be contacted with further information if we would like you to help with this aspect.

Finally, we will ask if you might be interested in taking part in further studies linked to the Post Adoption Welfare Study. This might be, for example, studies where we ask you to film aspects of your dog's behaviour, or have a researcher call you to ask additional questions. If you have time and are interested in helping us further, then please let us know in the consent form: we are very grateful for any help that you can give us to make the Post Adoption Welfare Study a success.

Benefits for you and your dog

Adopting a dog from a rehoming centre is a wonderful thing and we hope you and your new companion have a brilliant life together. As well as making a valuable contribution to canine science, the study will also give you an opportunity to reflect and really get to know your dog, support Dogs Trust and help improve future dog welfare.

How results will be presented

Please note that all data will be pseudonymised and individual dogs and their owners will NEVER be identifiable in any results. The findings of the Post Adoption Welfare Study will be reported in open-access peer-reviewed scientific journals, as oral and poster communications at scientific meetings, in magazines aimed at dog owners and through newsletters that will be circulated to supporters of Dogs Trust. Once available, they will also be viewable via links on your Dashboard.

Who are the researchers involved in this study?

The Post Adoption Welfare Study is run by researchers at Dogs Trust. Dr Emma Buckland leads the project and can be contacted directly via the details at the end of this document. Emma holds a PhD in canine behaviour and has worked on various dog welfare projects involving surveys.

The other key members of the PAWS research team can be found on our webpage <https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/help-advice/research/research-papers/post-adoption-research-project>. The team have a wealth of experience and knowledge that will help ensure that the PAWS asks, and answers, all the right questions so that this research project is as successful as it can possibly be!

Who funds this study?

Dogs Trust generously fund the Post Adoption Welfare Study, and the study has been approved by Dogs Trust's independent Ethics and Research Board.



Can we help with your dog's health or behaviour?

If you would like to speak to someone about your dog's health or behaviour, please get in touch on the dedicated post adoption support telephone number (0300 303 3738) or e-mail address (postadoptionsupport@dogstrust.org.uk) and a member of our behaviour team will help you. Remember that Dogs Trust offers free behaviour advice for the life of your adopted dog, so don't hesitate to get in touch as soon as possible.

You may indicate that you have a problem with your dog's behaviour or health through your answers to our surveys, but the researchers running PAWS are not trained behaviourists or health professionals. We are also unable to read and respond to individual answers in these surveys. As part of protecting your data, your answers are always kept anonymous and will not be shared with other teams at Dogs Trust. As a result we will not be able to help with health or behaviour concerns mentioned in your survey responses. Please instead contact the Post Adoption Support team above.

How can you contact us?

If you have a question or query about the research project, or need to update your details with us, please get in touch with the Post Adoption Welfare Study team by telephone on 020 7837 0006 or by e-mail at postadoptionproject@dogstrust.org.uk. More detailed queries can be directed to Emma or Rachel using the contact details below:

Dr Emma Buckland (Lead Investigator)
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Dr Rachel Casey (Director)
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Privacy Statement

For over 50 years, we've promised to never put down a healthy dog. We keep our promises, and that includes treating your personal details with care. We will keep the information you provide us with safe and will only use it for research purposes, pseudonymising data (removing personal data and assigning a reference number) prior to analysis and publication. We also promise to only ever share your pseudonymised information with researchers who we authorise to access data we hold. We won't contact you for any other purpose, unless you already receive communications from us. You can opt out of these or change your preferences at any time by contacting the post-adoption research telephone number on 020 7837 0006 or the post-adoption e-mail address on postadoptionproject@dogstrust.org.uk. For more information on this visit our privacy section, dogstrust.org.uk/privacy

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