

Owner-reported behaviours of concern regarding dogs recently adopted from UK rehoming centres

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Undesirable behaviours are often the primary reason for relinquishment of dogs¹ and for unsuccessful adoptions². It is therefore important to identify unwanted behaviours early post-adoption to provide owners with expert advice and support. Here, we outline a new project for the provision of behaviour-related post-adoption support for owners adopting dogs across 20 UK Dogs Trust rehoming centres (approximately 1000 dogs per month on average). Owner-reported behaviour issues were identified during standardised telephone interviews conducted at approximately 2-5 days and 14-18 days after adoption. Owners were asked about the presence/absence of specific behaviours in their dogs and to report any other behaviours of concern. Owners were given the opportunity to be referred for advice from behaviour specialists within Dogs Trust.

These data will be used to identify owner-reported behavioural issues in newly adopted dogs. Future analyses will include risk factor analysis on the occurrence of specific behaviour issues in the home, and the effect, if any, of post-adoption support on the rate of dogs being returned to centres. Importantly, the project will be used to inform strategies for supporting owners of rehomed dogs, with the aim of increasing the success of adoptions.

¹Diesel G, Brodbelt D, Pfeiffer DU 2000 Characteristics of relinquished dogs and their owners at 14 rehoming centers in the United Kingdom. *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science* 13 (1): 15-30.

²Wells DL and Hepper PG 2000 Prevalence of behaviour problems reported by owners of dogs purchased from an animal rescue shelter. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science* 69 (1): 55-65.