



## **SO, YOU THINK A PHOENIX FB RESCUE DOG IS RIGHT FOR YOU??**

*If you are considering taking on a rescue dog, whether it be to foster or adopt, then this is a very important and useful document to read through; and be honest in the way you view the conclusions that you reach. Make sure that the whole household discusses these and takes all the points on board.*

Bringing a rescue dog into your life is not only beneficial for you but also for the rescue dog.

The companionship and trust received by both carer and dog is a joyful experience, a special relationship that could change both your lives, but it is important to consider if fostering a dog is right for you.

Take an honest look at your life-style; will you have enough time for a new dog? Can you commit to giving a rescue dog a second chance? Have you researched the breed? Many dogs sadly end up in rescue due to a mismatch between the dog and the owner.

Consider what age dog would suit you; a younger more energetic dog or an older, quieter dog? Do you have the time to rehabilitate a dog with behavioural issues? Would you consider a dog with medical needs?

If you already own a dog is he/she dog friendly? Will he/she adjust to a new dog joining his family? Is he well mannered? Have you even put this to the test with other dogs?

If you have children, have they been taught how to respect a dog and will they participate in the caring of the dog?

If all goes well and you decide to adopt your dog will your finances allow you to meet the needs of the dog? Can you afford the adoption fee? Can you afford insurance? If not, how will you cope with a medical emergency?

These are all things that need to be considered when you are contemplating a new dog joining your life – it is a commitment that will last for the life of the dog.

*These are just some of the questions you need to ask yourself before thinking about taking in a rescue dog. Being prepared will lessen the chances of the dog being returned to the rescue, which could cause him, and you, more upset and stress.*



## **Why do Dogs Come into Rescue with Phoenix FB Rescue?**

### **Ex-breeding dogs:**

Fostering or adopting an ex breeding dog will take time and patience.

An ex-breeding dog will need a steady home environment that can give them the time they need to adjust, as training will quite often need to be taken back to basics.

Many may have never been inside a home or a car, gone for walks or even worn a collar. Most ex-breeding dogs are not house-trained and may not even have had their own name; some have just been numbers.

Some of the issues that we often see in an ex-breeding dog are anxiety, fear-aggression, lack of training, health issues - these often stem from having little or no interaction with the outside world.

An ex-breeding dog may often happily live with another needier dog, quite happy to sit back and allow the other resident dog to receive the majority of the attention. Many ex-breeding dogs find it hard to adjust to the sudden attention and are happier to sit back and observe.

Some ex-breeding dogs respond extremely well to the transition from the life they lived into their new home, others may take longer and they will require time and patience; they will need to be allowed to progress at speed comfortable to them.

An ex-breeding dog is not a 'ready-made' pet; but the satisfaction of being a part of the journey that an ex-breeding dog will take to adjust to becoming a loving family pet is immeasurable.

### **Allergies and Skin Conditions:**

There are two primary categories of allergies seen in pets today, food allergies and environmental allergies.

As with humans, dogs can also suffer from seasonal allergies; environmental allergens and pollens can make for a very uncomfortable spring and summer for many dogs. Grass, plants, reeds, dust, air fresheners, carpet powders – these are only a few of the things that can cause a reaction.

Demodex is a microscopic external skin mite that can cause skin disease and can often be quite severe if not treated early on. The parasite is also present in low numbers on healthy animals, whether a pet shows symptoms depends primarily on their immune status. An outbreak of demodex will leave the skin with bald patches, and will be red, itchy and extremely sore.

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### Health Issues more frequently seen in the Bull-breeds:

The French Bulldog is one of the brachycephalic breeds; this refers to the flat and wide skull shape, and although this gives the French Bulldog the characteristic flattened face and short nose, this can also bring its own share of skin, eye and breathing problems. The folds of skin over the front of the face can develop bacteria and yeast if not kept clean.

The soft tissue in the nose and throat, including the soft pallet, are all crammed into a small space and the lack of nasal bones can cause the nostrils to become very narrow. The result of this is obstruction of the airflow through the upper airways (known as BOAS – Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome) which can cause severe breathing problems; this usually requires surgery to the soft palate and sometimes the removal of the tonsils too.

Cherry Eye is also common in the brachycephalic breeds due to the tight eyelids; the third eyelid will roll out exposing the gland underneath.

Due to the French Bulldog being a short-backed brachycephalic breed it is not uncommon for them to suffer with bone disorders and spinal problems, which may include intervertebral disc problems, such as hemi-vertebrae where the discs may fuse, or sometimes even spina bifida.

### Dog or Human Fear/Aggression:

Many dogs suffer from dog fear/aggression or human fear/aggression and this can be for many reasons; lack of socialisation in the early stages of life contributes to this immensely.

Bad breeding, such as where a dog that is aggressive has been bred from, may result in the puppies carrying the genetic make-up of their aggressive parents.

A dog may have been attacked by another dog resulting in a fear of dogs or he may have been abused by a human.

Time and patience will be needed for the dog to regain its confidence in humans/dogs.

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### Anxiety and Fear Related Issues:

Many dogs that come into rescue suffer with anxieties; unfortunately it is not always possible to know the full history of rescue dogs which leaves us unable to know why these anxieties exist. We take the time to observe and assess the dog in his foster home to try and understand the cause and extent of these anxieties.

Like humans, dogs have anxieties and fears which cause stress and physical reactions, meaning that they may engage in repetitive or displacement behaviours to relieve the stress that is building up.

### Change of Circumstances:

A dog that has lived its whole life with one family, a loving and loyal family, may suddenly find himself taken away from all he knows and loves and placed into a new home with new people and new rules. This can be a very frightening and confusing time for him; he will not understand what has happened to his family and will need a lot of love and support.

Many know the terrible feeling of losing a dog that has been loved for many years through to old age. When a dog comes into rescue following the loss of an owner this is extremely sad and dogs, just as humans, grieve and they may pine for their owner, and may become withdrawn. In this situation the healing process will take time, patience and understanding.

It may be that a new baby joins the family and the once 'centre of attention' Frenchie, that may have been given no boundaries, now shows unacceptable behaviour and cannot be trusted around the child. This can be a classic reason for surrendering a dog.

### Boundaries are Important for a Dog!

Between the ages of 6 – 18 months a dog enters puberty and, rather like a teenager, he will often show unruly behaviour and rebel against authority. The surge of hormones during this time can leave him feeling confused, hyper-active and disturbed. Sadly, a large proportion of dogs that come into rescue do so within this age bracket, as this can be a difficult time for the carer.

- During this time you will need to calmly reaffirm the boundaries previously set in place, consistently following this through the rebellion period.
- Positive Reinforcement is effective and the rebellious stage will pass quickly, especially if you as the carer ensure that the bond you have with your dog remains a positive one.

Setting boundaries for your dog will teach him what he can and cannot do, and establishing clear boundaries can help solve unwanted behavioural problems with your dog, giving him a clear understanding of what is acceptable and what is not.

A dog that has no boundaries will not understand what is required of him and when the rules suddenly change it will leave him feeling anxious and confused.



Continuously reinforcing these boundaries will help your dog feel more confident and trusting in you as his carer.

### **Benefits of Fostering or Adopting a Rescue Dog**

There can be a multitude of reasons as to why a dog suddenly finds himself in rescue and many people believe that if a dog is in rescue he must have something wrong with him. This is simply not true of all rescue dogs as many are relinquished through 'no fault of their own' and are generally loving and gentle.

Fostering or adopting a rescue dog may require more effort and patience from you as the carer; however, the love and gratification you will receive in return is immeasurable.

You will be witness to an incredible transformation of the dog when brought into a loving home. Rescue dogs come with their own amazing personalities which may just need a little help to shine through, and although they are French Bulldogs they still come in all different shapes and sizes.

With an increase in 'back-yard breeding' and illegally imported puppies into the UK, opening your home to a rescue dog will decrease the need to supply.

As a fosterer there is a wonderful feeling of knowing you have helped and prepared that particular dog to become a successfully Adopted dog, enabling him to stay in his Forever Home – may be you will even become that Forever Home.

*It is a wonderful feeling to know you have helped to change, or even saved a life.*



### Training & Guidance of your Rescue Dog:

#### And why Phoenix FBR only promote Positive Reinforcement Training Methods

Positive Reinforcement Training, also known as Reward-Based Training, uses praise and/or treats to reward your dog for doing something you want him to do; the reward makes him more likely to repeat that desired behaviour. Positive Reinforcement is one of your most powerful tools for shaping or changing your dog's behaviour.

Negative reinforcement training uses 'punishment' based training, this can take the form of a strong 'NO' or in extreme circumstances an aversive stimulus, such as a tightened prong collar around the dog's neck.

Using harsh punishment techniques to change behaviour is frequently counterproductive.

Training a dog using such techniques carries a number of risks:

- Increasing the dog's fear or anxiety
- A decrease of the dog's trust in his carer
- Inducing a new undesired behaviour or aggressive response
- Cause confusion to which behaviour is required of him
- Can cause physical injury

#### Training methods considered detrimental to a dog's well-being:

Under no circumstances does Phoenix FBR advocate any of the following training methods:

- Shouting at the dog
- Hitting the dog
- Forceful or harsh handling
- Water sprays & shake bottles
- Intimidation

The theory that dogs display a dominant behaviour towards humans has now been disproved; they view us not as other dogs or wolves but as human members of their social circle. We are not 'pack' members who need to continually assert our place as 'alphas'

We are kind and understanding leaders who are here to guide our dogs and show them how to lead a happy and healthy life.

*We hope that you find these Guidelines useful in your decision-making process.*



## **FOSTERING GUIDELINES**

### **Bringing the dog home ....**

If you already have a dog(s) it is important that you introduce your dog(s) to the foster dog on neutral territory, not in your home if possible. Walk them together before taking them into the home. If this is not possible, put your dog(s) outside in the garden or block them off in the home so that they do not overwhelm the foster dog when it first enters. We suggest that you let them greet through a baby gate if indoor introduction is your only option.

Discourage the foster dog from getting on the furniture and on your bed. You may enjoy it, but the new adopter may not. Your role is to assist the dog in becoming more adoptable. In addition, this provides a clear signal to the foster dog and to your own dog(s) that the foster dog has a lower status in the pack, meaning human as well as canine. This is reassuring to your own dog(s) and also to the foster dog who is trying to figure how where he/she fits in. It can help to avoid any possible guarding issues.

### **Don't take any unnecessary risks ...**

Crating the foster dog at night or when leaving the home is a good idea. It will give your dogs a break and also protect your home from accidents and/or destructiveness. At night, the crate can be moved into your bedroom if you prefer. The foster dog should never be out of your sight for the first week. If you can't watch it — crate it! **REMEMBER:** your dogs were there first. It doesn't hurt a foster-dog to crate it when necessary to give your own dogs a break and many dogs find the crate reassuring too.

Be very cautious when taking the dog away from your property. Until the dog has bonded with you it is very likely to bolt at the first opportunity. Some dogs back up when frightened or startled and can slip out of their collars. Check the foster dog's collar and if this seems a possibility let us know; we will provide a more secure collar. If the dog does happen to break free try to approach it as calmly and nonchalantly as possible; rushing up to it will only make it run away. The foster dog must be kept on a lead **at all times**.

**PLEASE LET US KNOW IMMEDIATELY IF YOU LOSE POSSESSION OF THE DOG AND INFORM THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES TOO.**

Be cautious when exposing the foster dog to children that are not in your household and to strangers. Get to know it a little first. In most cases, we do not know the dog's history and so we cannot predict how it will react in some situations. Be aware that if the dog bites, even if through fear, it may have to be euthanised. Don't put your foster dog in a situation that could cost him his life.

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### **Food for thought .....**

Your foster dog should always be fed in a crate or a safe place. Some dogs may have issues with food as a result of their past and might not eat well with other dogs, or maybe humans, so separation at mealtimes is advised. Please do not over feed the dog. A fat dog has a shorter lifespan and can develop multiple health problems. If the dog is food-aggressive please do not try to overcome this by removing the bowl whilst eating to accustom the dog to it; it won't work and you could get hurt. Wait until all food has gone and the dog has walked away. If necessary, distract the dog before picking up the bowl. We do not need to exert our human desire for supremacy by unnecessarily antagonising a dog that has ingrained, learned behaviour. Would you want your food to be taken away before you had finished?

### **Toileting matters ....**

Toilet the foster dog outside on a lead or in a restricted area until it has adjusted to the new surroundings and you feel comfortable that it will come into the home when called; it could become confrontational if the dog is unwilling, stressed or scared. Don't assume the foster dog is house-trained — changes in homes and families are stressful for the dog and it may "forget" or need some time to adjust to your routine. Praise the dog when it does its business outside and don't be harsh with accidents. Sometimes a foster dog will need to be taken all the way back to basics with toilet-training and patience is a must.

### **Making friends ...**

On meeting the dog, do not reach over the head to pet it as they may perceive this to be a threat. Instead, pet the dog under the chin with slow and steady movements as you approach, allowing the dog to sniff your hand first – treats may be offered. If the foster dog is shy or fearful do not make direct eye contact or stare. Again, the dog may consider this to be a threat. Do not pick up a foster dog that doesn't know you very well; this is good way to get nipped and have an enemy for life!

The best way to allow a dog to settle is to simply ignore it until it comes to you; let the dog wander about the home and garden as you observe and praise the dog when it does come to you. The dog needs to find confidence before you can interact together successfully. Just talk to the dog so it can hear your voice saying his/her name pleasantly as you go about your business.

Teach the dog basic manners – "sit", "down", "leave it," "wait" (as in 'don't bolt out of the front door'), "stay" "quiet" and how to walk on a lead. Good manners help the dog become more adoptable. This is good confidence building for the dog and will give you good one-to-one time with them.





### **Just some general reminders ...**

The dog must be returned to us if you planning a holiday or break. Pet sitters are not approved to foster and we will ensure that an appropriate fosterer is available.

Fosters must be kept clean, brushed and have their nails clipped. Grooming can be arranged if necessary but weekly brushing is essential. Let the dog adjust for at least 2-3 days before attempting to groom it.

If a veterinarian is needed, please contact us for an approved facility and/or permission. The foster-carer must be willing to take foster dog to vet appointments when needed. All vet visits and procedures must be pre-approved by a member of the Management Team.

A Confidentiality Agreement must be signed by the fosterer and they must agree to a home-visit. A Foster Agreement must be signed for each dog fostered.

Your foster dog must stay with you for at least 2 weeks before it is available for adoption so that it can be fully assessed and an Assessment Form should be completed at the beginning of this period and again after 2 weeks prior to departure. Some foster-dogs can stay much longer if they have specific needs but you will be advised of these in advance and would not be expected to take on a dog that you were not experienced to manage..

### **Not quite going to plan ...?**

If the foster dog isn't working out for any reason, contact your Regional Co-ordinator immediately. You are not a failure — the foster dog just might not be the right match for your home or you may need to speak to our Behaviourist for some support. We don't expect anyone to have all of the answers about a dog that we may know very little about and we are all here to function as a Team to help the dog in need.

Make sure you have the Emergency Contacts sheet handy, just in case

We are always here to help you, so if something isn't working or if you are struggling, **STAY CALM & ASK FOR HELP!**

### **And finally, what if you cant bear to part with the little treasure ...?**

Then don't! You will have been given Adoption Guidelines, just in case you may have thought about this, these also show the Adoption Fees. We would much prefer to let a settled dog stay put than make it move again. Chat to your Regional Coordinator to find out more, you will still be fully supported where needed.