New e-learning course to help prepare people for dog ownership

Monday 7 December, 2020

A new free e-learning course to help new puppy owners get off to the right start with their pet has been launched to coincide with an anticipated further spike in sales over the Christmas period.

The Getting a Puppy course has been developed by Our Family Dog, a not-for-profit organisation which supports first-time dog owners, in partnership with training provider Lantra. It is designed to help people make better decisions when getting a puppy. As well as covering the basics of which breed to get and where to get a puppy from, the course aims to better prepare people for what's involved in raising a puppy.

A survey of first-time dog owners commissioned by Our Family Dog found that most people struggle in the early weeks. As well as feeling happy and excited after getting a puppy, 59% of the 471 respondents reported feeling exhausted, 54% said they felt overwhelmed, and 51% said they felt anxious.

When asked what advice they would give to someone who is thinking of getting a puppy many respondents described the experience as similar to having a baby, and warned of the need to be prepared for lots of hard work. They also offered the reassuring messaging that after the initial few months, life with a puppy does get easier.

Justine Williams, founder of Our Family Dog, said:

"The reality of a puppy that wees, poos and cries constantly can take people by surprise. As well as helping people to buy a puppy safely, the aim of this e-learning course is to bridge the gap between the expectations and reality of dog ownership, so that people are better prepared for what's in store and can decide if they are ready to commit to raising a puppy."

This year has seen a huge rise in the number of people buying a puppy during the COVID pandemic, and concerns among animal welfare charities that this could result in more dogs entering rescue centres due to their owners being unprepared for the commitment of ownership.

Sean Duffy, Head of Industry Partnerships for Lantra, said:

"Following the reported increase in demand for puppies during lockdown, we're pleased to partner with Our Family Dog on this new e-learning course. Aiming to help prepare and equip soon-to-be owners, the course features essential information on how to choose and responsibly purchase the right puppy."

The development of the course has been supported by clinical animal behaviourist and dog trainer Natalie Light, to ensure that the advice reflects the latest evidence and best practice in dog behaviour and training. She said:

"The early experiences that a puppy has have a dramatic effect on the adolescent and adult dog that they will eventually become. Whilst genetics also play an important part, ensuring puppies aren't overwhelmed or placed in situations they can't cope with, along with avoiding aversive training techniques are vital to raise a confident, friendly and sociable dog. This course provides owners with the best advice available and has an empathetic and supportive approach."

Sign up for the free e-learning course at: https://ourfamilydog.org.uk/getting-a-puppy

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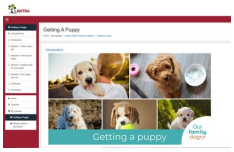
NOTES TO EDITORS

- For media enquiries, please contact Justine Williams on 07970 544605 or email justine@ourfamilydog.org.uk
- First time dog owners who had acquired their puppy within the past two years were invited to participate in an online survey in November 2020, to which 471 people responded. The results can be viewed here.
- Our Family Dog is a CIC, which was founded in 2019 to provide advice and support to first-time

Media:





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dog owners.
- Lantra, a charity, is a national training provider and awarding body.

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