

Introducing your Dogs

Owner information sheet





As with introducing many pets, how you do the introduction can be key to the success of the relationship, and good preparation will help set up for the best possible outcome. Remember that even if your current animal has lived with a dog or cat before, each animal and therefore relationship is unique, so it is important to follow these steps carefully.

Consider your current dog's needs and preferences, and what they would (or wouldn't!) like in a canine companion. If you have any prior pets, let our team know beforehand so they can use this to influence the matching process.

PREPARING YOUR DOGS TO MEET

In the vast majority of circumstances, we will set up a meet and greet at one of our centres so everyone can see how both dogs react to each other. This may also lead to a further meet and greet, and will include tailored advice depending on the interaction between the dogs.

Once you know you'll be able to proceed with the adoption, we advise you to get everything ready for the arrival of your new dog before they arrive. This includes purchasing any items and making sure there are plenty of options for your dogs in your home.

Be mindful for the first few days to reduce the risk of potential conflict, such as we recommend temporarily removing high value toys from the shared space of the dogs and if you catch your existing dog grazing from the others' food bowl, moving their food bowl further away to avoid them fighting over resources.

On the adoption day, we recommend you exercise your existing dog prior to bringing your new arrival home. We also advise you that where possible, your existing dog doesn't join you when you collect your new dog on the adoption day.

INTRODUCING YOUR DOGS

It's important that when you do arrive home with your new dog to reintroduce your dogs outside the property on neutral territory. Even if your dog is typically friendly to new dogs, it may react differently to a new dog entering its space.

We suggest taking the dogs for a short walk together, both being kept on a lead. If you're adopting a puppy that cannot go on walks yet, we recommend still going outside for them to meet your existing dog, even if you don't go for a walk.

In the early days, be mindful that each dog has its space - from each other, and to receive 1 on 1 time with people. This will help reduce the need for competition and will reduce the risk of conflict. The same can be said of their food, so make sure to always feed your dogs their meals separately.

Please make sure you do not leave your dogs unsupervised until they have formed a solid relationship. If you see tension or aggression from either dog, separate them immediately and contact the Adoption and foster team or a clinical Animal Behaviourist through the Animal Behaviour and Training Council for advice.



ONGOING ADVICE

We hope that your dogs form a good relationship. However, please bear in mind that like with humans, being together 24/7 can put a strain on the relationship. There may be situations, such as vet visits when your dog must be able to cope separately.

To do this, we recommend making sure they get regular 1 on 1 human time. You can do this by walking either dog separately on a regular basis or by taking them one at a time out whilst the other stays at home alone.

If any issues develop between your dogs, we would advise contacting a Clinical Animal Behaviourist through the Animal Behaviour and Training Council who will be to advise further.

