



East Anglia Dog rescue

With social media platforms being the one-stop-shop for everything, it has never been easier to apply for a rescue dog. Over the last year alone, we, as rescues have seen a huge rise in people applying for a rescue dog which is simply amazing.

But we also see people fall foul of what rescue is and should be too.

In this article, we are going to look at how you go about looking for the right rescue dog, factors in which should be considered, how the application process works from a rescue perspective, go over some beliefs and questions which a lot of people think may affect them when applying for a rescue dog and we will discuss points which you need to be aware of.



Factors to Consider When Looking for a Rescue Dog

I see it time and time again when a picture of a dog is posted up on social media with their story to tell and guess what...people fall in love with that picture and the story that goes along with it. They want that dog, they want to give that dog a happy ending.

But...! So often, people do not take into consideration the needs of that dog.

Sounds crazy right but hear me out. We get so many applications for dogs which states that the dog is not good with other animals and the majority of these applicants will have animals. The needs of that dog have not been considered at all. People have seen the picture, read the story and fell in love.

It happens all the time.

So when considering a rescue dog for your household, it is worth sitting down as a household and discussing the needs of your household. I.E

- How much exercise realistically can you give a dog
- How long will the dog be left alone for maximum and how often
- What do you want from your dog? A running partner? A lapdog? A dog that can go to work with you or around friends & families?
- Are you able to take on a dog which needs grooming every 4 - 8 weeks?
- Are you able to take on a dog that needs daily grooming?
- Do you have any experience with particular breeds?

These may sound like odd questions but what this does is, it shows us as a rescue, what dogs in our care would fit in with your household and your household needs. I personally would not take on a dog that needs grooming nor would I take on a white dog that is going to need bathing on a weekly basis. That is my personal preference and if i 'fell in love' with a dog that needs regular bathing and grooming, those needs are likely not going to be met, which is totally unfair to that dog.

When looking at dogs and their profiles, ask yourself if you can provide what is being said about that dog, and answer honestly.

If a dog's profile states that the dog must be muzzled when out in public, are you going to do that? If you are realistically, not going to be able to muzzle that dog when going out, then that dog is simply not for your household.

Be honest with yourself as to what you can provide. Don't go for a high energy dog that needs a lot of exercise, when realistically your household needs are more suited to a lapdog. From the perspective of a rescue, it is about fitting the right dog to you, and you to the right dog. Think of it, like matchmaking.



How Does an Application Process Work?

Each rescue is going to be different in terms of their process. For some rescues, there will be a strict 6ft fencing and nothing else, for other rescues, it's a case of, what is right for the dog. As a rescue we have had a medium breed that could jump a 7 ft fence and many other dogs that couldn't nor would they jump a 5 ft fence. For us, it is about each dog as an individual and what their needs are.

In general, you would fill in an application form through the rescue's website and the rescue will contact you.

If the rescue doesn't feel like they have any dogs in that would fit with your household then you may not be contacted at all. And this is where some people can get frustrated and it isn't intentional from the rescues point of view. Many rescues are run by volunteers and do not get paid. Their time is often split between urgent cases where emergency dogs need medical care, sorting through applications and moving forward with placing the dogs they have, into homes.

Sometimes applications are kept for when the rescue does get a dog that would fit that household to a Tee, it can depend on what the application is also looking for.

Homechecks are then carried out and this isn't to look at 'how clean is your house' but more about seeing if it is safe for the dog. Can the dog escape in any way? Are there any obvious dangers?

Sometimes things will be picked up on and the household will be asked to have these things sorted prior to going forward and the dog coming to them. Once sorted, these things will likely be checked on again. Sometimes its a simple thing such as fixing a hole in the fence or moving some furniture away from the fence which would make it easy for the dog to jump up on and escape over the fence.

Once everything regarding your homecheck has been sorted you will be offered to meet the dog, though sometimes a meet can happen prior to the homecheck.

If you have a dog, it is best that a dog meet and greet is done between the dogs to ensure that they get along, prior to the rescue dog coming into your home.

For some rescue dogs you may be required to do several meet and greets and have the rescue dog over for sleepovers. This is usually done when a dog struggles with change, trust and needs a slower introduction into their potentially new household.

If the homecheck has been done and passed, you have met the rescue dog and done a meet and greet with a household dog (if you have one) then from there, its a case of sorting out when your rescue dog is to come home.

Some rescues will arrange transport and will bring the dog to you or you will be asked to go and pick your new rescue dog up.



Is it True?

There are many people out there who think that rescues don't rehome to those that live in flats and that simply isn't true. Would we place an elderly dog who will need to go up and down flights of stairs several times a day just to go to the toilet, no, but we would absolutely consider a younger dog which has no issues with stiffness and their joints.

Do households need to have a garden to rescue a dog? No! Again, this would be down to the individual dog's needs, but from a rescue perspective, a dog that goes into a home without a garden is more likely going to get walked over a dog that goes into a household with a garden.

Would we place a dog that had high energy needs in a household with no garden? It would depend on how active the household is. If the household only wants to take the dog around the block and not give that dog a good run or an outlet for that dog to release that energy, then perhaps a high energy dog isn't suited. But it doesn't mean that another dog wouldn't fit.

There are some people who think that rescue dogs cannot go with children under a certain age. Now, for some rescues, this could be a set in stone rule for them, but it isn't for every rescue.

For many rescues, again, it all comes down to the individual dog. If that dog has had experience with younger children and what that experience has been like. Assessments that have been carried out on that dog would also play a part in the decision of what age of children that dog can go with, alongside the dog's history.

Is it better to get a young puppy if you have young children? This one is a yes and no answer as it is going to be down to each household. For me, a puppy goes through several stages such as chewing, mouthing, biting and needing to be toilet trained just to name a few. Let's not forget that puppies teeth are like needles. They will jump up and scratch and bite. As a parent myself, my hands are full and for my personal household, our household needs in terms of what I can realistically give, a puppy would be too much. I would much prefer a slightly older dog where I wouldn't have to go through toilet training. An older dog which is likely to have some form of training or manners in place. An older dog that is not going to nip or mouth at my children. It's not to say i wouldn't do anything with the dog myself in terms of training, but having some basics in place can stop a household from feeling overwhelmed.

Will a rescue rehome to a working household? Absolutely, if they have a dog that is able to be on their own for long periods of time without any issues. Going back to the dog's history and the dog's assessments that have been carried out.

Would we place a dog that has separation anxiety with a working household where the dog will be left alone for 6 hours at a time, the answer would be, no we wouldn't. Again, going back to each dog being an individual and having individual needs.



What to Look for From a Rescue

As with anything in the world there is the good and the...well, not so good and the same thing goes for rescues. Here are a few things which a good rescue will do:

- Lifetime RBU - RBU stands for 'rescue back up' and this means that if your circumstances change in the future, the dog must go back to the rescue. This is a safety net for the dog as if the dog ever ends up in the pound system, once scanned and the rescue are notified that their dog is with them, the rescue can then take over the care for that dog. This is a MUST!
- Homechecks - Homechecks should be carried out without the dog being brought to the home.
The reason why is, this can make things worse for that family after seeing the dog and getting to spend time with the dog, should their homecheck fail.
- During a homecheck, all household members should be present. This is to allow the homechecker to get a feel for the whole household and to ensure that everyone is on board with this decision of taking on a rescue dog.
- A rescue should offer support and help when a rescue dog is being rehomed. This may be general advice on helping the dog settle in or it may be helping you to get help for training or behavioural issues.
- Rescues should have carried out a number of assessments on their dogs to find out what they are good with and what that dog is not good with.
- Rescues should be able to provide you with good information all about the dog in their care. History is not always known, as some rescues take dogs on from the pound, but through their interactions with them or whilst the dog has been in foster care and assessments being done, they should know that dogs personality, their characteristics etc.
- All rescue dogs should have had at the minimum, a basic health check done prior to being rehomed.

This does not mean that their vaccinations should be up to date as a lot of rescues are now titre testing and checking the dogs antibodies levels to ensure that the dog does not need a vaccine top up.

But if the dogs teeth are in need of some work or their is a skin issue, allergy, lump that needs investigated, then really this should be done prior to being rehomed, as that dog and their welfare is in the hands of the rescue.

Sometimes it is asked for a potential adopter to take the dog on, on a foster to adopt basis, whilst medical work can be carried out. Once the dog has been given the all clear from the vets, then the home can go on to adopt the dog.

I hope this article has been useful to anyone thinking of adopting a rescue dog and i wish you all the best!

Leanne McWade - Partner at East Anglian Dog Rescue



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