

16th November 2020

Dear Walker

**Pandemic Puppies: Exploring puppy buying during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic (UK)**

As you may have heard in the general media, many sources including the Kennel Club ‘Find a Puppy’ statistics suggest that unusually high numbers of the public sought to, or have, purchased a puppy since the COVID-19 pandemic started in the UK. This ‘**Pandemic Puppy**’ phenomenon raises major welfare concerns for dogs, including impulse puppy purchase by owners unsuited to providing an appropriate lifestyle for a dog post-lockdown, along with lack of opportunities for appropriate socialisation and veterinary care under lockdown. In addition, it is likely that huge demand for puppies will have led to increased levels of puppy farming and illegal importation.

The **Royal Veterinary College** is being generously funded by the **BVA Animal Welfare Foundation** to undertake a study to understand how and why owners went about purchasing a puppy during this unprecedented period, and what plans they have to protect the welfare of their dog including preventative healthcare and socialisation. We will compare the motivations and behaviours of 2020 ‘**Pandemic Puppy**’ owners with owners of puppies purchased during 2019. Our results will be used to understand any new welfare challenges facing puppies bought during the pandemic to improve the lives of these dogs.

We are keen to include the knowledge and experiences of large numbers of owners of puppies of any breed. As Breed Health Coordinator for the Boxer we would be extremely grateful if you can support this welfare study by **sharing our online survey** to UK-based owners who acquired a puppy during 2019 or 2020. The survey will be open until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

The survey link is: <https://rvc.uk.com/pandemic-puppy-survey>

This study has received ethical approval from the RVC Social Science Research Ethical Review Board (SR2020-0259). If you have any further questions regarding our study, please contact the Primary Investigator Dr Rowena Packer on [rpacker@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:rpacker@rvc.ac.uk).

Yours sincerely

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