

Generation Pup

Summer Newsletter



July 2021

We've recruited
5,072
puppies!

Thank you!

Generation Pup was launched five years ago, and recently we have celebrated recruiting **5,000 puppies!** Our success to date would not have been possible without the incredible dedication of all the owners of Generation Pup dogs.

The Generation Pup Team would like to say a huge thank you for the time and effort you put in to being part of the study.

Your willingness to share your dog's experiences with us means this project and our research is possible. Also, we would like to say a massive thank you to anyone who has promoted the study and spread the word to other puppy owners.



Want to be a Generation Pup champion?

Over the last year it has been more challenging to get our recruitment flyers to puppy owners (due to COVID restrictions impacting vet practices and training classes), so we have struggled to recruit as many new puppies as in previous years. We are looking for (voluntary) Champions to spread the word and encourage puppy owners to sign up. We can provide free leaflets and posters for you to distribute in your local community or text for newsletters, blogs, or social media that you are involved in. To say thank you, we will send you an "Champions Certificate of Thanks". Please get in touch to help.



Sunny
(1000th pup)

Celebrating our milestone pups

Some of you may remember our 1000th, 2000th, 3000th and 4000th recruits. We thought it would be nice to update you on how these gorgeous dogs are getting on now and introduce our 5000th pup!

“Sunny is now 3 years old but still as puppy like as ever! He expects lap cuddles every day (even though he's 7 stone in weight!) and is the most loving Old English Sheepdog we've ever owned!” – **Heather (Sunny's owner)**

“Elfrieda has grown into an intelligent and sporty girl who loves both Agility and Parkour. She recently became a brilliant big sister to Sybil, who is also a Generation Pup!” – **Bridgette (Elfrieda's owner)**



Elfrieda
(2000th pup)



Dax
(3000th pup)

“Dax has kept his beautiful nature and loves his cuddles. He is like most GSDs - like velcro, stuck to me all the time!” – **Irene (Dax's owner)**

“George is now 19-months-old; she is a pampered princess who loves her walks and especially looking for squirrels. As a family we can all say she has brought so much joy and fun to all our lives. George is soon to be a big sister and we are excited that we will soon be bringing home another Labradoodle puppy called Teddy.” – **Mandy (George's owner)**



George
(4000th pup)

And finally... introducing Jack (5000th pup)



“Jack is a cross breed; he is 1/8 Springer, 3/8 Cocker, 3/8 Staffy and 1/8 Jack Russell so half terrier, half spaniel. Jack is settling in really well. He loves exploring our garden and playing with footballs. We have started taking him for walks and he thinks everyone wants to make friends with him. Walks are a little slow!” – **Ruth (Jack's owner)**

Project updates

Your surveys

While social distancing restrictions are starting to ease, we are very much aware that 'normal life' has not yet returned. As we mentioned in our Autumn newsletter, we ask that you answer any surveys based on your current situation. We will note the date of survey completion when analysing survey data in the future. There is a 'free text box' at the end of every survey in which you can add further details about your current situation if you wish. Another useful place to add extra information is the 'My Diary' feature, which can be found on your dashboard.



Key things to note

- Since our last newsletter we are continuing to send out sampling packs with the help of a logistics company. The biological samples you collect from your dogs are truly precious. So far, we have received over 10,000 samples. Sampling packs are sent to owners of 12 to 16-week-old puppies (if consent for this aspect has been provided). For older dogs - we will let you know when to expect your dog's next sampling pack. Please look out for our emails as in many cases we ask you to reply and let us know if you are happy to take the samples. This is to help us reduce our costs as the kits are expensive to send out.
- We are continuing to send out vet cards regularly (at age 12-16 weeks, and then annually)
- We are still able to access our returned post but are also happy to receive electronic versions documents. If you wish to send a completed veterinary record consent form, please let us know and we will send you details on how to do this via a secure method.

Proud of your pup?

Would you like your Generation Pupper to be the next Dog of the Month? If you would like to enter, please email us a photo and a short description of your pooch! Alternatively, contact us via Facebook messenger if you have liked our Facebook page! Check our social media platforms at the start of each month to see the monthly winner!

Follow us: facebook.com/generationpup and instagram.com/generation_pup

Project publicity



Frankie

Generation Pup in print

The British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) kindly published a two-page article all about Generation Pup in their May edition of “Companion”. This magazine is sent to all members of this veterinary association. The aim of the article was to inform the veterinary community about the study and incorporated aspects such as the study methods, our recently published papers and how veterinary practices can help with puppy recruitment.

All things Leonberger

We were also contacted by the Leonberger Club of Great Britain and asked to produce an article for their newsletter. Alongside highlighting the aims of the Generation Pup study and how owners can get involved, we were also lucky enough to introduce two beautiful Leonbergers, Frankie and Nellie, who are both currently enrolled in the study.



Nellie

Do you live in the UK? Asking owners of Generation Pup dogs aged 12 months and over to help with the Itchy Dog survey – even if your dog is not itchy.

We now have an additional, one-off survey to share with you. The survey is based on a previously published, standardised questionnaire.

This survey will help us gather data to explore the risk factors and genetics underpinning skin atopy (allergic skin condition that causes itching and can lead to redness, loss of fur and damaged skin).

This is an important research area, due to the multiple possible causes of itchiness. It is not always easy to diagnose and treat this condition and can be stressful to dogs and affect their behaviour. It is important to compare itchy dogs with those that are not itchy, to identify differences between the two groups of dogs, so ALL owners of dogs aged 12 months and over are invited to complete this survey. [Click here](#) for the survey.

Published results

Perception of problem behaviours in dogs aged six and nine months

In November 2020, we published a study that explored owner perceptions of problem behaviours in dogs aged six and nine months. The study appeared in the Applied Animal Behaviour Science journal. Understandably, problem behaviours can be very stressful for owners, impact on dog welfare and increase a dog's risk of relinquishment and euthanasia.

At six and nine months of age, 31% and 35% of owners reported their dogs showed behaviour(s) that they found a problem. The most commonly reported problem behaviours at both ages were pulling on the lead, jumping up at people and poor recall. Not all owners described these behaviours as problematic. The risk factors for owners not reporting the behaviour as a problem included, owners of small dogs, owners that had not attended puppy classes and owners that reported training their dogs only using rewards. Owners most often sought help for these behaviours from dog trainers (72% at six months and 68% at nine months). The full paper can be read [here](#).

Award certificates

How many 'Contribution to Animal Welfare Science' certificates has your dog been awarded now?

We have now issued **22,641 certificates** to dogs whose data has been included in our research publications and conference presentations.

We hope you and your dogs are as proud to receive these certificates as we are to issue them.

The Generation Pup recipe

In January, we published a paper in the BMC Veterinary Research journal which describes the aims of the Generation Pup study and our overarching methodology. There are still many unknowns about common problems that impact on the welfare of our dogs, particularly where there are multiple contributing factors that can occur long before the problem becomes apparent.

In this paper, we outline how the Generation Pup project aims to investigate the impact of environmental and genetics factors on a range of health and behaviours outcomes (such as aggression and obesity) that occur throughout different life stages in dogs. We also explain how we hope to identify risk factors that can be changed to improve dog health and welfare. If you're interested in how we develop survey questions and use other research tools to meet these goals, you can read the full paper [here](#)!

“More attention than usual”: dog owners experiences of the first COVID-19 lockdown in the UK

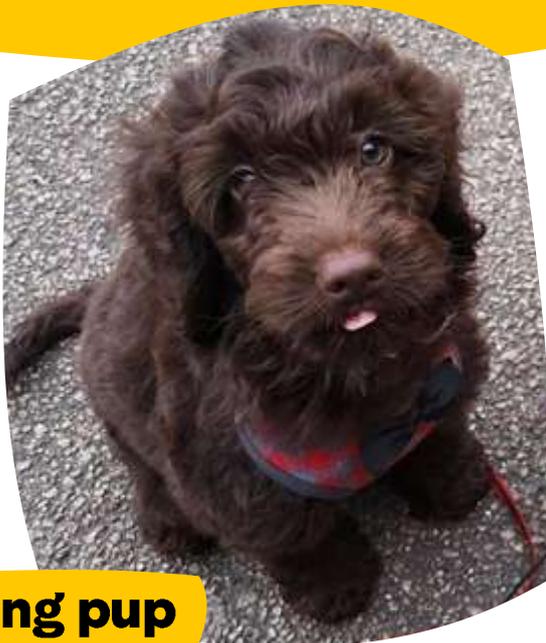
On March 23rd 2020, the UK Government introduced a set of nationwide restrictions that affected lifestyles of many dog owners. Many of us were furloughed or started to work from home and outdoor exercise was permitted only once a day.

In this study, we explored how different lockdown measures influenced experience of dog ownership during that time. To this end, we used a survey and diaries administered to the general public and diaries completed by the Generation Pup dog owners. We found that many dog owners enjoyed spending more time than usual with their dog(s) but there was often a concern that this may lead to dog(s) struggling in the future when left alone. (Very few owners gave their dog(s) “alone time” during the lockdown).

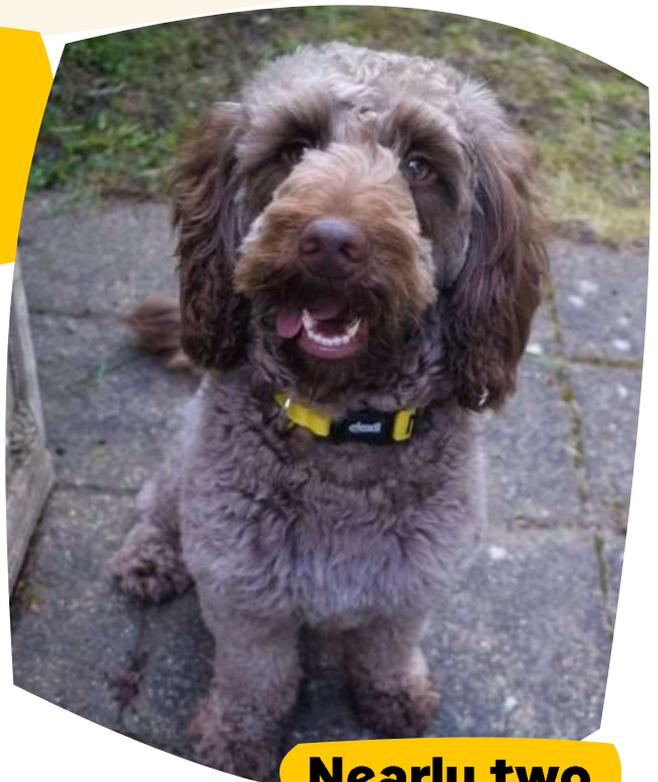
Dog walking as a part of a permitted daily exercise became a highlight for many owners, but some felt the restrictions on exercise meant that their walks were not “proper”. Additionally, some owners noticed new problematic behaviours in their dog(s). Read the full paper [here](#). Using these findings, Dogs Trust made suggestions on how to support dogs when the lockdowns and COVID-19 restrictions end. You can find some of these tips [here](#).

Pup to dog

Check out how much Logan has grown...



Young pup



Nearly two

Presenting results

Recent presentations

In addition to the published studies, we have been busy sharing and planning to share our findings at several virtual conferences. At the end of May, two members of our team presented findings at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association Clinical Abstracts virtual conference. One presentation explored dog owners' concerns and experiences related to seeking veterinary care during the COVID-19 pandemic and the other presentation was titled "The scoop on puppies that eat their own poop: Is autocoprophagia retained as puppies age?" These abstracts can now be read on our website – generationpup.ac.uk/results.

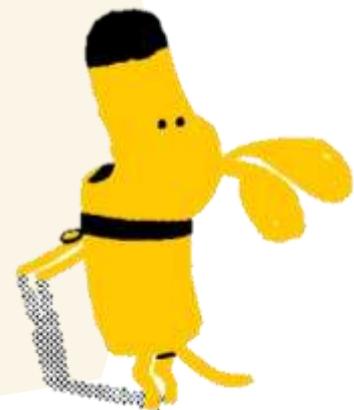
In June, we presented at the International Society of Anthrozoology (ISAZ) conference. Here, we again shared two presentations. In the first one we shared the findings of the published study which explored the impact of the first national lockdown on dog ownership, and the second was titled "Walking the dog: Frequency and duration of owner reported exercise in a cohort study of dogs."

Just a few days later, at the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) conference, we shared analysis of differences in use of post-operative 'clothing' (such as buster collars or t-shirts) and wound healing problems reported by owners after surgical neutering of dogs.

Upcoming presentations

- Later this month (July), at the Canine Science Forum (CSF), we will present the findings of a study about access to veterinary healthcare during the pandemic which used Gen Pup diaries, surveys and digital diaries for the general public and the analysis of tweets related to this subject.

These recorded presentations, posters and abstracts will be made available after the conferences on our website under the "[**Results**](#)" tab.



Puppy profiles

Nothing is more important than our Generation Puppies! So here we get to know two new recruits to the project. We asked two owners to tell us a bit about their wonderful dogs!

Lola!

Age: 14-weeks-old

Breed: Cockapoo

Lives: West London

Daily routine

I get up in the morning and come downstairs and Daddy makes my breakfast. I then go back to bed for a little bit and give Mummy cuddles.

Whilst Mummy is working, I like to play with my toys. I like to tip them all out of the box and then decide which toy I want - making lots of mess. Sometimes the postman comes to the door and I like to bark at the letters he posts.

Mummy then gives me some lunch and a bit later on takes me for a short walk and we play fetch.

When we get home, I play with my toys again and have a little nap and wait for Daddy to get home. Daddy then takes me to the big field, and I sometimes see some of my friends over there.

In the evening I like to go crazy and run round the garden. Usually in circles round the washing line or digging a nice big hole!

I then have my dinner and then relax on the sofa with nice cuddles until it is time for bed again.



Favourite toy

White teddy with a teething ring attached.

Best buddy

Wilf and Chester the miniature Schnauzers who live next door.

Favourite walk

The field

Cheekiest moment

Digging holes in the garden!

Need to update your personal details?

Got a new pet? Moved to a new house? Planning to change your email address? It is easy to update your information by visiting your Generation Pup dashboard or by emailing generationpup@dogtrust.org.uk

Luna!

Age: Four-months-old

Breed: Jack Russell X Toy Poodle

Lives: In the beautiful countryside of West Sussex



Daily routine

Our days often start around 6:30am, I go downstairs into the kitchen where Luna spends the night in her crate which is inside her puppy pen.

The dog crate is open so Luna can let herself out to use a puppy pad if needed. Lately she has been holding it until I let her out into the garden which is great. Soon we will take away the puppy pen and she will be able to wander about the kitchen.

For breakfast Luna enjoys dry dog food that has been soaked and mixed with either ham or chicken. She will then go searching for any toast that the children may have left!

Luna can sometimes be a little lazy when it comes to walking. The majority of the time she protests walking by standing on the spot. Recently though she has accompanied us on the school run which felt like a big achievement.

During the day Luna has access to the downstairs of the house and garden although she will take any chance she gets to explore upstairs! If the children are at school, then we get some lovely quality time together, enjoying the quiet and a cup of tea.

On the weekends we love exploring new places, castle ruins, walks along the beach etc. Thinking about where we can go as a family and being able to bring Luna with us.

If we do leave Luna at home, it's not for long and we set up a puppy camera so we can check in on her. I also set up snuffle mats, hide treats around the kitchen for her to sniff out, just different things to keep her occupied and safe. We are fortunate that she manages really well when we are out.

Luna will have the same meal again for dinner and whatever scraps the kids manage to sneak behind my back!

Favourite toy

Luna absolutely LOVES her squeaky banana, when we first bought her home, it was the same size as her!

Best buddy

Luna loves her friend Poppy, a very energetic Sprocker.

Favourite walk

Luna really enjoys the school run; she gets fussed over so much!

Cheekiest moment

Luna's cheekiest moment must be the time she stole the socks off our sons' feet! She loves socks, we found a stash of odd socks underneath her bed!

Response rates

Since the last newsletter, we have experienced intermittent problems with our email delivery system. As a result, some survey reminder emails sent from Generation Pup were filtered as spam which had a knock-on effect on our survey response rates. The affected participants have heard from us since then. We are sorry for these disruptions and hope they will not discourage you from completing future surveys. We are in the process of changing our email provider, which will resolve these issues. For now, the steps we have taken have seen our response rates returning to normal. Please add our email address to your email's safe sender list.

New feature

Photos for research purposes

You may have noticed a new photo upload section in the bottom left corner of the dashboard. Here, you can provide us with photos of your dog(s) that can be used by us for a variety of research purposes. Our first area of interest is to estimate body condition score from photos. Instructions on how to take these photos are provided on this dashboard feature. We hope that with regular uploads this will be a really useful tool for monitoring changes to your dog's body condition score over time. Please do take a look and help us with this aspect of our data collection.

Your recent survey

Have you recently been sent a survey to complete? Surveys are sent out when your dog reaches particular ages in order to collect information about your pooch at that time. We have structured the surveys into steps that can be completed over several days, so if you find a full survey too long to complete in one go, then please remember that you can come back to it at a later stage. Also, if you complete your most recent survey, you will be entered into our Owner of the Month competition where you can win a fab toy for your dog.



Team members

Hellos and goodbyes

In February we welcomed two part-time Research Assistants, Jessie and Kate, into the Generation Pup Team on short term contracts.

Jessie holds a BA in Psychology and Leadership Studies and an MSc in Applied Animal Behaviour and Animal Welfare. Jessie is interested how education can impact on animal welfare. Jessie is now moving to another Dogs Trust team but has done an amazing job helping with data analysis, participant recruitment and engagement.

Kate graduated from Bristol Veterinary School in 2008. During her final year elective, she studied Animal Behaviour and Welfare which sparked an interest in this area. Kate then has spent nine years working as a veterinary surgeon in small animal practice and was awarded a Post Graduate Certificate in Small Animal Medicine in 2019. After a break to have two children, Kate wanted a new challenge and decided to pursue a career within Research. After volunteering for Generation Pup in 2020, she is now enjoying the challenge of being a Research Assistant and is involved in all aspects of the study.



Thank you for reading!

Get in touch: generationpup@dogstrust.org.uk

www.generationpup.ac.uk