

Generation Pup Newsletter November 2021



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**We've recruited
5,313 puppies!**

Hello and thank you!

The past year has been intense and busy for everyone, so we are more grateful than ever for your continued support and participation. Thank you for the time and effort you have put into **completing surveys, sending in samples, and sharing your dog's daily lives with us.** Generation Pup's success is due to wonderful owners taking part and also due to those who help to spread the word about the study, encouraging other puppy owners to take part. **You are all an important part of the team, and we thank you.**

As we have over 5,000 puppies recruited to Generation Pup now, we receive a lot of data thanks to all our wonderful participating owners. For this reason, we now have a data officer in the team. Adam holds a master's degree in physics and previously worked in energy. He supports Generation Pup by using his coding skills to extract, validate and analyse data. **Welcome aboard Adam!**



**Adam, Data Officer,
with his dog Buzz.**

Project updates

Consent refresh

Recently we started to update owner's consent preferences for the Generation Pup study. Thank you so much to those who have taken the time to complete this. For those who are yet to update their consent preferences, we would be very grateful if you could log into your Generation Pup dashboard and complete this so that we can update our records as soon as possible.

Key things to note

- We are continuing to send out vet cards regularly (at age 12-16 weeks, and then annually). Our work with the University of Cambridge researching canine weight is still ongoing, so if you can return your dog's Body Condition Score vet card to us that would be a massive help.
- 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.

Itchy Dog Survey

We are still running our Itchy Dog Survey. 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 (an 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 Generation Pup dogs aged 12 months and over are invited to complete this survey. [Click here for the survey.](#)

Project publicity



Face to face again...

Last month, members of the Generation Pup team attended two veterinary events, annual meetings run by professional veterinary bodies – the British Veterinary Receptionist Association (BVRA) and the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA). The meetings were a great opportunity for the team to speak to hundreds of staff working on the frontline of veterinary clinics, who are best placed to explain Generation Pup to new puppy owners, and how they can sign up.

Do you know any puppy owners?

Do you know any puppy owners? Are you involved with a veterinary practice, breeder, doggy day-care, groomers, dog training school, pet shop or any other community of dog lovers? You could sign up to be a Generation Pup Champion.

We would really appreciate you spreading the word to all of your dog loving friends and contacts. You can do this by sharing our social media posts, requesting flyers or posters from us and even sharing this newsletter with them.



Award certificates

Have you checked how many 'Contribution to Animal Welfare Science' certificates your dog has been awarded recently?

To date, we have issued **24,831 certificates** to dogs whose data has been included in our research publications and presentations at conferences, with more to be issued soon! The dogs on this study are changing what we know about canine welfare and helping improve the lives of every dog of the future.

Published results

How do Generation Pup dog owners approach training their dogs?

Dog training methods are often believed to impact on dog welfare and behaviour, however, little research has been carried out into this area. We were keen to learn how owners of pups enrolled in Generation Pup train their dogs and factors linked with the choice of training methods. We reported what training methods were used when dogs were 9-months-old.

We found that very few owners used punishment-based methods alone. In fact, at registration 99.7% of 2154 owners intended to use some rewards in training (e.g., using treats, toys, praise) and 84.1% intended to use a mixture of reward-based and aversive training (examples of aversive training include sound or spray to interrupt unwanted behaviour, physical reprimands or words indicating something is wrong). The most common aversive method used was using words like “ah-ah”, “shush”, “no” to indicate something is wrong. At 9-months 99.7% of owners reported using some rewards and 74.2% used a combination of reward-based and aversive training. Most (80%) of 161 owners for whom data were available at both time points, continued using the same approach.



Our findings appeared in the Applied Animal Behaviour Science Journal and can be [read online here](#).

Our study suggests that although very few dog owners rely only on aversive training methods, further work is needed to publicise the best practice about dog training to encourage using only reward-based training methods.

Encouraging owners to attend puppy classes could be a way forward. As always, we are very grateful for your input and hope to issue ‘Contribution to Animal Welfare Science Certificates’ before the end of the year.

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!

Bramble

Age: 12-weeks-old

Breed: Border Collie

Lives: West Midlands

Daily routine

Her day starts by taking her humans to school, then she goes for a big run in the countryside. She comes home for breakfast and then has a morning nap. At lunchtime she has a training session with lots of treats and in the afternoon she plays in the garden or goes on outings to socialise. She has a 'mad half hour' of zoomies at teatime and then snoozes for most of the evening. She will be starting a foundation class in agility training shortly.

Favourite toy

Her favourite toy is her squeaky pig.

Best buddy

Her best buddy is our other dog Renn, a two-year-old male black and white border collie.

Favourite walk

Her favourite walk is to the woods because there is lots to explore and sniff.



Cheekiest moment

Her naughtiest moments have been eating a hole in the sofa (luckily the very old one in our work room) and finding a big bucket of wet earth and stones from a building project which she decided to play in!



Hedwig

Age: Seven-months-old

Breed: West Highland White Terrier

Lives: Glasgow



Daily routine

Hedwig greets everyone enthusiastically and goes for walkies with grandma or mummy. Usually, they go to the park where they meet lots of doggies who Hedwig loves to play with. After tiring herself out from puppy wrestling, she goes home and then makes the most of the rest of the evening between cuddles, play, tug of war or puppy brain games to find some extra treats. She usually has some chewie time before going to bed in her "room".

During the weekends her routine is more active. She spends the whole weekend with her pawparents. She will run in the garden and nearby park (even going off lead!) and sometimes go for a day trip to a big park, beach as well as quiet time snuggling up at home - especially now it is getting colder.

Favourite toy

My lovely Maltese frog to run around with and my heartbeat sheep to sleep.

Best buddy

Hedwig is very friendly with all the dogs she meets in the street, and her many human admirers - especially when she gets to go for a puppycino. Though her best buddies are her playmates at the Downhill park and her fellow Westies who join the Westie Walks around Glasgow.

Favourite walk

Every weekend walk with her pawparents is an adventure. She loves all park walks, especially where there are squirrels around, as it brings her hunter instinct out, some day Hedwig dreams of catching up with one to ask why they are always in such a hurry. Particular favourites are her frequent visits to Rouken Glen and Pollok parks, and strolling along the prom at Largs.

Cheekiest moment

Trying to hop on the sofa at night after everyone else is asleep. Hedwig knows the sofa is for cuddle time with her pawparents and watching TV but once the lights are off, the sofa is off limits - except when she decides to forget!



Response rates

To make sure everything with our surveys is ticking along like normal, we keep an eye on the number of surveys being completed at each timepoint. Recently we noticed that the earlier surveys (up to the 12-months survey) are completed by more owners than the later surveys are. We expect this to be because some participants choose to leave the study or are unable to complete the surveys for other reasons.

Please don't worry if you miss a survey - a missed survey doesn't mean you are excluded from the study or that we cannot use your previous data. In fact, we can conduct numerous analyses and learn a lot by studying responses from just one particular time-point. However, some analyses are particularly powerful when exploring dogs for whom survey answers (and biological data) are available at multiple time-points.

For this reason, we'd like to encourage you to complete all surveys (or as many as possible). As always, we are very grateful to owners for taking time to be a part of this study!

Pup to dog

Check out how much **Wally** has grown...



Young pup



Four years old

Fun stuff



More chances to win!

Every month, you have the opportunity to become our Owner of the Month, just by completing your most up to date survey. We used to give away one prize per month, but as of 1 December **we will be giving away four prizes every month.**

So, if you want a chance of winning, please remember to log into your Dashboard and complete your survey next time you get an email reminder saying your dog's latest survey is available.

Each 'Owner of the Month' wins a Dogs Trust prize!

Generation Pup Christmas card

Christmas is less than six weeks away! If you own a Generation Pup dog and would like their photo to be considered for our 2021 digital Christmas card or digital Advent Calendar (displayed on social media), then please email a photo of your dog by **30 November**. Send your photos to generationpup@dogstrust.org.uk or via social media.

Please note that we will be unable to respond to all photo entry emails. Please state in your email that we have permission to share your photo, otherwise we will not use it. We love this part of our job! Maximum of one photo per dog, no outfits or fancy dress please, and any dogs photographed outside must have a collar and tag on, thank you.

Thank you for reading!

E: GenerationPup@dogstrust.org.uk

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