



CHANTRY VETS

A Passion for Pets and their People



ALVERTHORPE · WAKEFIELD · OUTWOOD · OSSETT · MIDDLETON · NORMANTON · CASTLEFORD · PONTEFRACT · HEMSWORTH · FEATHERSTONE

Puppy Socialisation

To prevent dogs from being nervous when outdoors or on walks, puppies should be regularly socialised from a young age. All puppies should be gradually exposed to a range of situations, sounds and other animals which they may come into contact with when outside. It is a good idea to allow your puppy to gain experiences with a variety of transport methods and to be safely walked around traffic. It is essential that your puppy can show good manners when on countryside walks and can behave safely around livestock and horses.

Experiences should be built up slowly. It is easy to overwhelm a young dog and cause a fear response which may develop into a phobia and negative behavioural tendencies. Start off small and often, if your dog is fearful of car journeys, put them in a stationary car for two minutes and reward them for staying calm. After a few attempts you can then progress to turning on the engine (but not actually travelling anywhere). Then progress by building up the time in the vehicle until a five minute car journey is actually possible. The time spent on journeys can then be increased and positive rewards such as travelling to a nice field or park will also assist during this time. Reward calm and positive behaviour throughout.

First experiences should be positive, so ensure your puppy comes into contact with friendly dogs for playful interactions, this could be at puppy classes or with friends or neighbours well socialised dogs.

Ensure any strangers approaching your puppy are gentle and encouraging.

Make sure your puppy learns from an early age that he/she must wait on the lead calmly before being allowed to be let off to interact with other dogs. When your pup is staying calm, give praise for engaging in positive and friendly interactions. If at any point your puppy begins to bark simply say 'let go' and cease the interaction. Do not punish your dog for barking or pull him/her back when on the lead, this will only cause him/her to become more aroused or fearful.

When your pup is engaging with another dog, try to behave in a happy and excited manner. If you are fearful of how your dog may react, try not to express this as this may cause your puppy to behave in an anxious manner also.

Dogs which have not experienced a well rounded socialisation programme as a puppy, may show alarm or fear at certain points on a walk. This may be where they are anticipating seeing another dog due to a bad experience or where territory guarding is an issue. If this occurs remain calm and try to counter-condition your dog by remaining calm and rewarding him/her when they seem more settled. Try to follow the points above with regards to seeming happy and excited when approaching other dogs. Begin with exposing your dog to calm and quiet surroundings and gradually build up the levels of stimuli your dog is exposed to.