

## BACKGROUND

- The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic led to a worldwide increase in puppy buying, the so-called 'Pandemic Puppy' phenomenon.
- RVC Pandemic Puppies study aims to characterise and understand this phenomenon in the UK.
- Information from UK owners who purchased puppies during the 2020 phase of the pandemic was compared to owners who purchased puppies pre-pandemic during 2019.

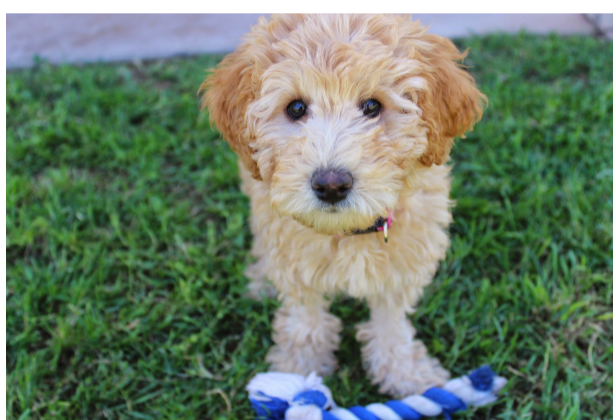
'Pandemic Puppy' phenomenon: worldwide increase in puppy buying since COVID-19

## KEY FINDINGS

**Only 1 in 3 Pandemic Puppies attended training classes, compared to 2 in 3 pre-pandemic puppies**

Number of puppies in study

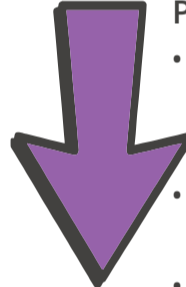
**5,517**



Three times as many Pandemic Puppies did not experience a visitor to their home during their critical period for socialisation compared to 2019 puppies

Compared to 2019 owners, Pandemic Puppies were **more likely to:**

- Be sold with a Pet Passport, often meaning they were imported which can be a 'red flag' for poor welfare breeders and dealers (7.1% in 2020 versus 4.1% in 2019)
- Be a 'Designer Crossbreed' (e.g. Cockapoo, Labradoodle, Cavapoo) (26.1% in 2020 versus 18.8% in 2019)



Compared to 2019 owners, Pandemic Puppies were **less likely to:**

- Have had a veterinary health check prior to purchase (87.4% in 2020 versus 91.3% in 2019)
- Have experienced visitors to their home (81.8% in 2020 versus 94.5% in 2019)
- Be Kennel Club registered (46.2% in 2020 versus 58.2% in 2019)

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PANDEMIC PUPPY OWNERS



If you have any concerns about your dog's health or behaviour, contact your vet who can examine your dog, take a thorough history and suggest further investigations or treatments as necessary.



Contrary to the popular saying, you can teach an old dog new tricks. If your dog missed out on puppy training classes, it is not too late. Even if you are an experienced dog owner, canine behaviour science is a rapidly evolving field, and you (and your dog) could benefit from the latest information on dog training. To find trainers using the most up-to-date science-based techniques in your area visit the [ABTC](#) to find an Animal Training Instructor and/or visit [Battersea](#) for online training classes and practical advice.



If you have more serious concerns about your dog's behaviour, discuss with your vet about a referral to an **ABTC Accredited Animal, Clinical Animal or Veterinary Behaviourist**

For more information visit <https://www.rvc.ac.uk/vetcompass/research-projects-and-opportunities/projects/rvc-pandemic-puppies-survey>

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Brand, C. L., O'Neill, D. G., Belshaw, Z., Pegram, C. L., Stevens, K. and Packer, R. M. A. (2022) Pandemic Puppies: Demographic characteristics, health and early life experiences of puppies acquired during the 2020 phase of the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK. *Animals*, 12(5), 629