







## Responsible Dog Ownership

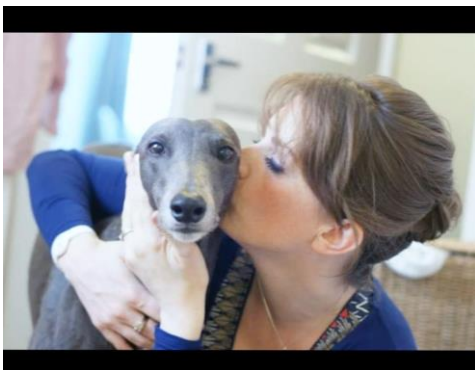


Adopting a greyhound is a fun and rewarding experience. However, bringing a pet into your life does come with plenty of responsibility! You have a duty not only to keep your own dog safe and well, but also to ensure that they do not present a risk or a nuisance to society in general. There are several UK laws to be mindful of, as well as dog owner etiquette! Some of the below may sound a little daunting, but it is not intended to be so. Regardless of whether you adopt a greyhound or another breed, this applies to all those who own a dog. Being a responsible owner makes for a more enjoyable experience for everyone!

This section is long and may seem 'dry' and boring, but we cannot emphasise enough the importance of understanding the law, and how it allows you to protect yourself, your dog (and others) from harm.

### Laws to be aware of

#### Caring for your dog



As the guardian of your new dog, you must provide your dog appropriate care based upon the Five Freedoms. If you do not provide a suitable environment, a suitable diet, appropriate veterinary care, and the freedom to express normal behaviour, you could be prosecuted under the Animal Welfare Act (2006).

Failing to meet the welfare needs of your new dog (or engaging in animal cruelty) could result in your dog being removed, a prison term of up to 6 months, a fine of up to £20,000, or a ban from

keeping animals in the future.

Out of control dogs under section 3 of the Dangerous Dogs Act (1991) it is an offence to allow your dog to be "dangerously out of control" in either a public or private place. If your dog injures a person, they could be seized and destroyed. However, your dog does not have to have bitten a person, or even have acted aggressively in order to be in breach of this law.



If your dog causes someone to feel worried that he may injure them, he may be considered by a court to have been out of control.

In addition, your dog may be considered out of control if he attacks another animal, particularly if the owner of the other animal feels they could be injured by your dog if they intervene.



**Your dog is only considered to be “under control” if they are either on-lead, or under another form of control such as a totally reliable recall.** Allowing your dog to chase, frighten or harass people and other dogs whilst off the lead could lead to prosecution and a fine, even if you know your dog has friendly intentions. We would always advise keeping your dog on-lead in public, unless you are sure that they will always return on cue.

## Dogs and livestock

It is illegal for your dog to chase or injure livestock. (Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953). In addition, it is illegal for your dog to be off-lead at certain times of year and in certain areas in order to protect livestock. You could face a fine and have to pay compensation costs if you break this law. In addition, farmers are legally allowed to shoot dogs which are chasing or presenting a threat to their livestock. We would always advise keeping your dog on-lead in areas where you are likely to encounter livestock. This includes deer at, for example, Bushy Park or Richmond Park



## Identification

By law, since April 2016, all dogs over the age of 8 weeks must be microchipped. All racing greyhounds are required to be microchipped. Once you sign the adoption papers, the chip details will be transferred into your name, but you must remember to update your details with the chip company if you move house, or change your phone number. By law, (The Control of Dogs Order 1992) dogs must also wear an ID tag when out in public – this must have your name, address & postcode on it, but we would also advise providing your phone number. You could face a fine if your dog is picked up straying without ID. If you do move, change your phone number or address details, please notify the microchip company yourself (and make sure we remain on record as 2<sup>nd</sup> party) and please notify us at WGW as a matter of courtesy by email to: [carol@hershamhounds.org.uk](mailto:carol@hershamhounds.org.uk)



## Dog fouling

**Poo...not a pleasant subject, but as a dog owner you have a legal duty to clean up after your dog when he poops!** (Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996).

In many areas, you are legally required to clean up after your dog, and could face a fine if you do not do so. Forgetting to bring poo bags is not considered a valid excuse, so having a supply of poo bags in your pocket or bag or a bag dispenser clipped to your dogs lead is a good idea! Even in areas where you are not legally

required to pick up your **dog's poo, it is the responsible thing to do.** Dog poo can contain harmful bacteria and parasites, which can harm people or other animals.

Please dispose of full poo bags responsibly in the appropriate bins or take home with you. Do not leave on paths or elsewhere.

## Damage

You could be held legally responsible if your dog damages property, another animal or a person. We would always advise having third party insurance coverage for your dog, which will protect you financially should this happen. Always check, especially after high winds, that your fencing is still safe and secure. Always check gates too.

## Off-lead etiquette

As discussed above, letting your dog off-lead in public comes with a number of risks. Whilst it is possible to teach a reliable recall to many greyhounds, some will always struggle due to their breed traits and previous experience. Even if they have a reliable recall, many greyhounds will find it impossible to resist the chance to chase after a rabbit!



Remember that greyhounds are extremely fast and agile, and can cover a large distance in a short period of time. If your dog does run off, it may be very difficult to find or catch them again. Whilst they are focused on the chase, they will not be paying attention to anything else – this means there is a very real risk that they will injure themselves, run across a road etc.

**They have not encountered 'obstacles' whilst racing, and so are unlikely to**

spot a barbed wire fence, water etc.

We would always advise keeping your dog on-lead unless you are completely sure that they have a reliable recall, and that you are in a safe area (ideally an enclosed field). – But even then, please remember other less sociable dogs can unexpectedly join you. Never over-run your hound -their racing days are done.

If you do decide to let your dog off-lead in public, please make sure you know your dog thoroughly and how it behaves around other breeds first. There are some points to keep in mind as a responsible dog owner:

Do not allow your off-lead dog to approach other dogs that are being walked on-lead. Being approached by an off-lead dog whilst on-lead themselves is something which even sociable dogs find uncomfortable.



It is considered very rude and inconsiderate to inflict your dog on others, even if your dog has friendly intentions! The other dog may be on-lead because they are not comfortable interacting with others and are fearful, defensive or aggressive towards them.

Alternatively, they may be old, frail, suffering from a health issue, or recovering from an operation. Being approached by your dog will be an extremely unpleasant experience for these dogs, and is likely to cause a huge setback for them in terms of any training around other dogs. They may feel the need to defend themselves, and injure your dog in the process. It is your responsibility to stop your dog from harassing others. Remember that if your dog is harassing or giving unwanted attention to others off-lead, you could be in breach of the law – by walking their dog on-lead, the other owner is already taking steps to keep the dog under control. If you know your dog is likely to approach other dogs whilst off-lead, always call them back and put the lead on when you spot an on-lead dog.



- Do not allow your dog to approach unfamiliar people when off-lead. Not everyone likes dogs (as hard as that is to believe!) and many people are scared of them. If your dog is very boisterous or excitable when meeting people, he could accidentally knock over or hurt someone. Remember that even if your dog is not acting aggressively, you may still be in breach of the law if they injure someone, or even cause someone to fear that they may be injured.
- There are some areas where it is not appropriate for any dog to be off-lead, even if they have a reliable recall. We would never advise walking a dog off-lead beside a road, in a car park, or in a town centre for example.

## Safety at home

### At the front door



Although greyhounds are not by nature an aggressive breed, they could like any dog, become territorial of their own home or be very stressed about unknown visitors. According to Royal Mail, around 47 postal workers are bitten by dogs every week. Around 82% of these incidents happen at the front door, or in the garden. Many people-friendly dogs will react negatively towards the postman and other delivery workers or towards unfamiliar people at the door in general. The Dangerous Dogs Act (1991) applies to private property as well as public areas, meaning you could still be prosecuted if your dog injures or frightens a person inside your own home.

Therefore:

- Never leave your dog unsupervised in the front garden.
- Always place your dog securely in another room or behind a suitable dog gate before opening the front door to a delivery driver/unfamiliar visitor. Do not force visitors on them.



- Ensure that your back garden is secure, and that your dog is not able to escape.
- If your dog is uncomfortable around visitors, let them go into a separate room whilst you have people in your home. **Don't force a dog to be around visitors if he is uncomfortable.**

## Preventing escape



If your dog escapes from your home they could become lost, injured or even killed. Greyhounds can be a very popular target for dog thieves, so are at risk of being stolen whilst unsupervised in public.

In addition, remember that if your dog frightens or injures a person, another dog or another animal due to having escaped, you could be at risk of prosecution.

Top tips for preventing escape:

- Make sure your garden is totally secure and fenced appropriately for your individual dog. Greyhounds can jump extremely high if there's something very interesting on the other side of your fencing with some being able to clear a **6ft fence** easily! They can also find and escape through any small gaps in the perimeter, so take time to check that your garden is fully dog-proofed before bringing your new dog home.
- It can sometimes be a sensible idea to keep your new dog on-lead in the garden to start with; until you are sure that they have no plans to escape and that any neighbourhood cats have been given the chance to leave!
- Make sure your dog is secured behind a door or gate before opening your front door. Greyhounds are very quick, and can be adept at slipping past your legs!

## Out and about

### At the shops

Never leave your dog tied up outside a shop. Unattended dogs are regularly stolen from outside shops, and anyone that steals your dog is unlikely to have anything good planned for them. There is also a risk that your dog may react defensively if approached by an unfamiliar person. They could also be startled by a noise or traffic or potentially break their necks, if they unexpectedly panic.



### In the car

It is illegal for your dog to travel unrestrained inside a vehicle, due to the potential for them to distract the driver. In addition, your dog will be at risk of serious injury during a car accident if not properly secured. We would advise using either a properly fitted car harness to secure your dog in the back seat, fitting a dog guard

to secure your dog in the boot, or using a very large crate or cage secured inside the car with sufficient air conditioning and sun protection on a hot day.



- Never leave your dog unattended in any vehicle. Never leave your dog alone in a car on a warm day. Many people still believe that it's ok to leave a dog in a car on a warm day if the windows are left open or they're parked in the shade, but the truth is, it's still a very dangerous situation for the dog.

Enjoy being a dog owner and remember your dog's objective will always be to please you. However, remember that they are not human and they don't always understand. They will sometimes behave in ways you don't want them to. Ignore the negatives, and reward all the positives.



## Helpful Information

Kennel Manager contact info: 01932251894 or [carol@hershamhounds.org.uk](mailto:carol@hershamhounds.org.uk)

**Other handy guides that can be found on the Wimbledon Greyhound Welfare website include:**

- [Responsible Dog Ownership](#)
- [Bringing Your New Dog Home](#)
- [The First Night at Home](#)
- [Greyhounds and Children](#)
- [Greyhounds and Muzzles](#)
- [Toilet Training](#)
- [Greyhounds as Pets](#)
- [Issues Around Food Resources](#)
- [Sighthounds and Stairs](#)
- [Spending Time Alone](#)

*Acknowledgements: Wimbledon Greyhound Welfare would like to thank to both Kent Greyhound Rescue and Forever Hounds Trust for granting/allowing us to adapt their information for the purposes of this leaflet.*

