

OldeEly Portuguese Water Dogs

The following information was sent to people enquiring about PWD in 2020:

(December 2020 update)

Without knowing a little about yourself, your experience of dog ownership, why you specifically want a PWD, or where you are in the UK it will be difficult to know if a PWD is suitable, so we trust that you find the following helpful in your search for a healthy PWD.

Unfortunately, you are enquiring at rather strange times (which will become apparent below) and most breeders have been so inundated that some may simply respond to your email with 'no' or 'contact us again next year'. However, we feel that prospective owners need to know about the breed as well as understand the current situation.

Portuguese Water Dogs are fantastic dogs and we would suggest that to help with your decisions you look at our website for information on the breed: www.oldeelypwd.co.uk It is designed to help people understand the breed and in their search for a healthy puppy irrespective of who you eventually get the puppy from.

They are lovely dogs but to help we always advise that in **normal** times it can already take up to 12 months for a puppy to join your family. Many of those currently on waiting lists for 2020 approached breeders in 2019. But those that have a Portie say they are well worth the wait.

As you are probably finding out, there are only a handful of breeders in the UK and few are **Kennel Club Assured** Breeders. Added to this PWD are very rare with only around 200 pedigree puppies born each year: compare that to 35,000 Labradors and you will appreciate why they are so hard to come by.

Every year there is already incredibly high demand for very few puppies and annually we receive 100+ enquiries - for a single litter. Those wanting one of Wendy's puppies often have to wait a year. However, these are **not** normal times.

During the Covid lockdown (in the 280 days until the end of December) we have already had in excess of 1000 enquiries - that's more than 5x the number of puppies born nationally every year. It is unlikely you will get a puppy from a **reputable** or **KC Assured** breeder for quite some time. The PWD Club said they believed that the current wait may well be closer to two years. If you imagine that in 2020 good breeders already have all of 2019 enquiries plus several hundred from this year, and with one litter a year, at an average of 7 - 10 puppies in a litter - each individual breeder already has enough interest to fill their lists for many, many years! Don't do the maths as the potential wait looks frightening.

But do not give up hope. I imagine that some people will realise that a dog was only a lockdown pipe-dream; others will not have the patience; some will realise what they really want is a dog and end up getting a readily available breed; others will realise that a working breed, or a PWD in particular, is not for them. If you want a PWD then patience has always been, and will continue to be, key.

The key question to ask yourself is "Do I want a dog & it would be nice if it were a PWD" or "Do I definitely want a PWD?" Many people enquiring simply want a dog in their life and nearly everyone getting back to us in the last few months have said they have got a dog but a completely different breed because they were readily available and they didn't have to wait.

People always want to know the cost of a PWD but often don't like to ask- the going UK rate in 2019 was from £1200 - rising to £1500 from a reputable breeder who does all of the health checks. This price range often rises slightly from year to year so you may expect to pay a little more in future years. However, during Lockdown, I have heard of dog breeders doubling their charge to £3000 and some for £4000. A simple case of supply and demand or sheer profiteering? Paying more is **no** indicator of a better breeder nor does it get you a better behaved, better bred or healthier puppy. All the inflated prices do is make them unaffordable to ordinary families who may well be excellent dog owners. The current COVID demand for dogs has not only pushed up the prices but has meant people are breeding unhealthy or unregistered dogs to make a quick buck, There have been reported cases of breeders offering puppies for £1500 but then charging £3000 on collection and there have been several reported scams with puppies offered on national websites. Many of these puppies offered for £4000 turn out to be non-existent. No good breeder needs to advertise their litters on-line as demand for puppies from good breeders means their lists are always full.

Whoever you eventually get your PWD from we are always willing to offer help and advice, especially about the breed and the vital pre-breeding health tests. It is vital that you search out a reputable breeder who does all of the pre-mating health tests and breed coefficient. The sad thing is that not all breeders do all of the available health tests. It is important that breeders do everything they can to ensure a healthy breed but prospective owners also play an equally important part. So please thoroughly do your research. All too often people just email breeders and ask if they have puppies and to go on a waiting list, however, the Kennel Club says the most important thing is to ask more about them as a breeder, their dogs, welfare standards, and the health tests rather than just asking if they have a puppy available. If all potential owners were more informed and insistent on health & welfare standards then there wouldn't be dog breeders who can get away with no health testing and simply breeding for money. ***Both prospective owners and breeders need to do everything they can to ensure the healthy continuation of this wonderful and rare breed while eradicating irresponsible breeding.***

With love and consistent training, PWD can be delightful and excellent family dogs, capable of anything you ask of them such as obedience, paddle-boarding, wild swimming, agility, dance, therapy and canni-cross. But as a working breed, with their energy, willful behaviour, and high maintenance coat, they are definitely not for everyone.

Most people enquiring about PWD have never met the breed and are making their decision based upon internet research alone or possibly meeting them when out for a walk. This isn't a problem as we all have to start our PWD search somewhere. But don't be fooled by cute photos and videos: they look delightful but they can be difficult.

Before you make any decisions all prospective owners **must** take the time to meet the breed and breeder in person so you can really appreciate the size, characteristics and challenges. This is especially true if you are inexperienced dog owners (i.e. have never owned a dog as an

adult), have children or are looking for a so-called "hypoallergenic" dog. To help, we regularly have people visiting from across the county to meet PWD in the family home. This helps people find out more about PWD as well as the challenges they pose, and any allergy issues **before** they commit to having a PWD. Normally we would be happy to have you visit within a few weeks but with the current level of interest, visits are unlikely to be until 2021. If you haven't met the breed one way of doing it is to join the facebook page such as "Portuguese water dogs owners group UK" and see if anyone local to you is willing to let you join them for a walk. Whilst this is no substitute to meeting the breeder it helps you understand a little more about them from an owner. **If you just want to know more about PWD and whether they are a suitable breed for you, then please feel free to ring us up for a chat.**

For those who are genuinely committed to a PWD please note that we do not hold a waiting list - as you can imagine this would be incredibly long and we would just end up disappointing most of the people on the list. **But if you are serious please take the time to phone us. If after talking to us you remain:**

- **serious about a PWD** (*and it isn't just one of many breeds you are looking at*)
- **fully understand & are prepared to wait** (*for those currently enquiring it is likely to be 2022 or 2023*)

we will then happily send you a questionnaire.

We then use these as expressions of interest to firstly ensure people can meet the needs of a dog, then we will arrange visits and then contact people and create a list only if/when we know that our bitch is pregnant. We insist that all prospective owners complete and return the questionnaire, must have visited us before any litter and stay in contact. Visiting and then staying in contact is always an advantage for you as Wendy may be aware of other litters that become available.

However much you want a dog and before you commit to having one for its entire life, please consider **very** carefully whether you can really meet the needs of a dog: especially if you do not have the time or space for an energetic, coated working breed. If you are unsure please have a good read our website puppy, health, and temperament pages and Google the Defa leaflet "**Code of practice for the welfare of dogs**". Many breeders and rehoming charities will not home a dog if you work full time or live in a flat or home without suitable inside and outside space. Like them, we will always put the needs and welfare of the puppy above the wishes of a potential owner to have a dog. Please do not ask for a questionnaire if you can not meet the needs of a PWD.

If you do decide to get a puppy please follow all of the Kennel Club advice <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/getting-a-dog-or-puppy/>. Do your research well, and find a reputable breeder who does the tests and breed coefficient. Please have a look at our website and if we can help in any way please feel free to email or phone us for help or advice. **Our number is on our website and it is often easier and more personal to have a chat.**

Best wishes

Nicholas & Wendy Smith

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www.oldeelypwd.co.uk