

Important steps to take when adopting a dog from abroad

As more people re-home dogs from outside the UK, **Bruce Waddell** of Willows Veterinary Group explains how to meet regulations and give dogs the best start

Although most UK-based animal rescue centres are full with dogs that need re-homing, many people are opting to adopt dogs and cats from other European countries – particularly Cyprus.

Cypriot people generally love animals but seem to have little understanding of their needs. This leads to unwanted litters of puppies and kittens, adult pets falling ill and being abandoned and working dogs being left to fend for themselves on the streets at the end of their working lives.

Cyprus is overrun with stray dogs and cats and the animal shelters that are left picking up the pieces struggle for finance, which means that many healthy animals are destroyed each day. The government of Cyprus is aware of the escalating problem of stray dogs in the country and has passed several laws to try to address the problem – the latest being in October 2014.

In parallel with the introduction of new legislation there has been a rise in charities coming to the aid of these unfortunate creatures. Often these are started by ex-pats living in the country or people visiting the country. There is usually a bilateral function to



these charities, operating from both the affected country and the UK.

Broadly the charity in the 'host' country will have taken care of any immediate veterinary care for the animal and before it is re-homed it will have been neutered, vaccinated and had flea and worm treatment. In general the charities will ask for either a contribution towards this care or ask the adopter to pay these costs.

RESPONSIBLE CHARITIES

Most of the charities have websites and social media pages detailing the animals that are available for adoption. Responsible charities will put full details of the animals on these pages – both good and bad. It is not just a case of finding them a home to get them out of a shelter. The new home has to suit the pet and vice versa. Once an enquiry is made to adopt a dog there should be a lot of questions asked by both parties to ensure that there is a good match – some charities will even arrange for home visits to be undertaken by their representatives in the UK.

Bringing in an adopted dog or cat from Cyprus is not as difficult as it sounds since the recent simplification of legislation regarding the transportation of pets in the European Union.

The animal being adopted will need to comply with the

legislation of the UK Pet Passport scheme. The charities that organise these adoptions are generally fully conversant with the scheme which dictates that the animal needs to be microchipped and have a rabies vaccination.

Dogs also require a tapeworm treatment. If these regulations are complied with there is no need for the pet to go into quarantine when it reaches the UK.

CARGO OF PETS

The majority of these adopted pets travel to the UK by air. There is legislation in place concerning the cargo of pets to ensure that they travel in comfort. Different airlines have different requirements but again the charity you deal with should be fully conversant with the requirements and either organise the flights themselves or assist you in organising the transport. Some charities will ask the adoptees

to pay for the flight while others fund it themselves but ask for donations.

As well as paying for veterinary care for the animals in their shelters many Cyprus-based charities are involved with a capture and neuter campaign for strays and also education programmes for Cypriot people in an attempt to improve the long-term situation.

So, adopting from abroad is now a relatively easy process but adopting from a photograph on a webpage is not ideal when compared to actually spending time with an animal before deciding to offer a home.

Contact the Willows Veterinary Group on 01606 723202.



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www.willowsvetgroup.co.uk

TIPS FOR SQPS

- Ideally take for a vet check soon after arrival to check parasite treatment has been done and is up to date.
- Warn that some diseases that are prevalent in Mediterranean countries, such as Leishmaniasis, can take months/years to develop and can be very difficult and costly to treat/manage.
- Ask regarding the socialisation of the rescue dog or cat as many street dogs or cats don't make great family pets unless good efforts have been made to socialise them.
- Owners should be aware that some animals do take time to adapt to the different climate and can feel the cold more.