

Bouncing back - a dog's tail

A head-banging dog was so disturbed vets thought he had a brain tumour

Monday 26 March 2012

When Bouncer came into RSPCA care he was in a bad way but thanks to the devotion of staff and two very special fosterers he is now an amazing success story.

Bouncer arrived at RSPCA Southridge Animal Centre early in 2009, having been kept outdoors all the time in a very small garden.

The bulldog-cross was in a filthy state, pitifully thin and with obvious behavioural problems. He would repeatedly bang his head on the kennel walls and was aggressive towards other dogs. It was so bad that a vet suspected he had a brain tumour, but all tests showed Bouncer was physically well.

Despite everyone's best efforts, the stress of being in kennels made his symptoms worse —so the best solution was to find him a foster home. Up stepped Karen Perks and Dave Prewer from Hertfordshire (pictured), to take on the challenge of fostering Bouncer.



"The staff at Southridge were wonderful," said Karen. "They did everything they could to care for him, but he was a sorry sight, miserable and very wobbly.

"I thought, 'I could never see myself getting attached to this dog'. If I'm honest, there wasn't too much that was appealing about him."

The first night in Bouncer's foster home, the couple made his bed in the kitchen and set up a little CCTV camera they had for watching wildlife. Through the night they saw him bang and scrape his head on the kitchen door, so took turns to go downstairs and gently coax him back into his bed.

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The couple first experienced Bouncer's reaction to other dogs when they drove past a dog, and 10 minutes later he was still barking, snarling and bashing his head on the back windscreen. They realised Bouncer's aggression issues had to be tackled immediately, so they started attending fortnightly training classes at Southridge.

"We say training – we stood at the edge of the car park while Bouncer barked at any dog in sight," says Karen. "Dima, our trainer, and the rest of the class, had the patience of saints. When we got home, we'd all pass out for a few hours, emotionally and physically exhausted!"



Gradually all the hard work began to pay off. Bouncer finally began to interact happily with other dogs and play off the lead and without a muzzle in the garden. He even started attending agility classes every week.

Throughout the process Karen and Dave fell in love with Bouncer and eventually decided to adopt him.

"Taking on a rescue dog, who through someone else's neglect or ignorance comes with issues, is no easy journey," said Karen.

"Bouncer is now a blissfully happy, wonky, wobbly, hilarious character and we love every day we have with him. We just can't imagine life without him.

"The RSPCA is truly incredible in not giving up on these animals, and the Southridge team are an inspiration. It's amazing what a little love and a lot of patience can do!" she added.

The couple documented Bouncer's rehabilitation. The difference is amazing and testament to our volunteer fosterers.

You can see Bouncer's journey here:

http://www.rspca.org.uk/allaboutanimals/pets/rehoming/successes/stories/-/article/EM rehoming success Bouncer)

Ends -

Notes for editors:

For interviews or photos of Bouncer, please contact the RSPCA press office on 0300 123 0244

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