

## BUYING A GERMAN SHEPHERD PUPPY

The first project is to research the breed thoroughly. Is this breed right for you and your way of life. Speak to owners, trainers and breeders. You need to understand the costs, vet fees, food, training and equipment such as indoor crates, collars and leads and bedding. Do you have the time to commit to a German Shepherd. It's not just the training and exercise involved but the German Shepherd is a very sociable dog and loves nothing more than to spend time with their family. If he will be home alone for hours and hours every day this could cause the dog some anxiety and could become destructive. The German Shepherd is a double coated breed and this does need grooming and they shed hair.

Finding a breeder and litter is next. Ensure you have a list of questions ready when contacting breeders. Avoid text messages and try to actually speak to the breeder. Some may prefer an email in the first instance as they may be holding waiting lists. Be prepared to answer questions from the breeder, a responsible breeder will want to know about you, your family, work life and so on, do not get offended, it is a big decision for both parties. Vital points to look for when looking for a litter:-

- Learn to decipher adverts and the buzz words. The price does not always reflect the experience of the breeder and the quality of the breeding. Straight backs are not linked to health and longevity. If the colour is "rare" it is probably not a recognised GSD colour and as such is not worth more money.
- Both parents are kennel club registered or registered in their country of birth. Some dogs are imported and some breeders may take their females abroad to use certain bloodlines. You also want to ensure that the litter will be kennel club registered. Please note hear that Kennel Club registration does NOT mean the parents are health tested.
- Only buy puppies from health tested parents. Ideally both hips and elbows. There are no excuses and if the breeder cannot supply the documentation the health tests can be verified on the kennel club health test finder website <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/services/public/mateselect/test/Default.aspx>. There is no limit set on health tests but the GSD League recommend the hips are below 20 (maximum 12 on one side) and the elbows are a maximum of 1. Some dogs may have their health tests done abroad so you would want mother and father to be HD A normal or A Fast Normal and ED Normal or Fast Normal

or NZ. There are other tests that some breeders do which are not mandatory but advisable such as PD, DM and Haemophilia. DNA and parentage proof while again is not mandatory, is advisable.

- Absolutely a must is to see the mother with her puppies (not many breeders own the stud dogs so you won't always be able to meet the father). Some females are sometimes very protective when they have puppies but should never be aggressive. Watch her behaviour, is she shying away, avoiding the puppies, avoiding the breeder. Is she in good physical condition (even feeding a large litter, if she is cared for properly and healthy, she will have good body and coat condition). With the current situation, some breeders may not allow visitors to the home so use technology where you can. You need to be assured that this person owns the dog, the litter and if they will not show you "live" the female and the litter then walk away.
- Next is viewing the litter. A responsible breeder will want to meet you and the whole family that will be caring for the puppy. If the breeder has other dogs, meet those too. Look how confident the dogs are and their general condition. This will give you an insight as to the breeders care and experience but also as to the size your dog will grow to.
- Depending on the age of the litter when you first view them, will dictate how interactive you can be with them but you must always be guided by the breeder. Again make sure you see the mother with the puppies, there is no excuse not to. Does she interact with them, are they healthy, playful (puppies do also sleep a lot), there shouldn't be any odours and their skin should be clean and a bluish white. The most common practice is to leave a deposit once you have viewed them, and both you and the breeder are happy. The GSD League would recommend a cheque (this has time to clear before collecting your puppy) or online banking. Make sure you receive a receipt for this. We must advise at this point also, do not panic buy and do not over pay. GSD puppies are being advertised at extortionate rates and the price is not an assurance of quality.
- Puppy identification. It is law that every puppy absolutely MUST be microchipped. Some breeders may also tattoo but this must be alongside the microchip and not instead of.
- If there is anything you are unsure of or unhappy about, then you must walk away. Do not accept any excuses for lack of health tests or not being able to see the mother with the puppies. Remember, if something seems too good to be true, then it usually is.
- No matter how much or how little experience you have with owning a German Shepherd, it is vital to choose a breeder that will give you ongoing support in the future. Your puppy needs to be

microchipped and have its kennel club paperwork. Most responsible breeders will give you the option of the puppy having its first injection. Look for breeders that provide a puppy pack which usually provides care guides, some food and 4 weeks free insurance. You could also be asked to sign a contract, this is there to protect you, the breeder and your new family member.

Buying a GSD puppy needs to be a positive and joyful experience so ensure you choose your breeder carefully and research fully to ensure you and your family enjoy finding your new family member. Now the fun begins!!!!

#### Useful resources

GSD League of GB –

[http://www.gsdleague.co.uk/gsd\\_league\\_of\\_gb\\_breeders\\_directory.html](http://www.gsdleague.co.uk/gsd_league_of_gb_breeders_directory.html)

Kennel Club - <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/>

Champ Dogs - <https://www.champdogs.co.uk/>