



# MOORLANDS DOG RESCUE PRESS RELEASE

## THE RESTART DOG PROJECT

An exciting, new project which sees young offenders and rescue dogs rehabilitate each other in Stoke-on-Trent has started.

The Restart Dog Project, the first of its kind in the UK has just launched and is currently teaching the young people who reside at HMYOI Werrington the skills to rehabilitate rescue dogs who are at risk of being euthanised, or who are in very vulnerable positions. The project, led by Leek based trainer and behaviourist Rachel Trafford, will teach the boys how to train the dogs the skills needed to function in a human world which will increase the dogs' chances of finding an adoptive home. The boys will be setting the dogs up for success by shaping their behaviour in a proactive and positive manner, training the dogs alternative behaviours and reinforcing the desired behaviours that the dogs perform.

Every single day in the UK, dogs are discarded due to "anti-social behaviour" and are passed from home to home (further impacting their behaviour) or find themselves in council pounds, where they have 7 statutory days before being euthanised. Moorlands Dog Rescue have found that the majority of the dogs surrendered are adolescent dogs, because that is when the lack of training, exercise, enrichment and consistency by their owners starts to emerge in the dog's behaviour. Moorlands Dog Rescue will select dogs such as these to participate in the project, breaking the dangerous cycle for these discarded dogs. The dogs will be under the care of Moorlands Dog Rescue until they graduate from the programme and find their forever home.

Rachel Trafford, lead trainer on the project and qualified behaviourist says: "Dogs surrendered to rescues are usually easily frustrated and lack the basic life skills required to make family dogs. They have often missed out on vital development milestones, leading to their owners believing them to be difficult dogs. Previously, these dogs also may have been exposed to people who have tried to change their behaviour through confrontation, aggression and forceful techniques, which has led to a further escalation of their behaviour and eroded the dog's trust and bond with the owners. The Restart Dog Project will give these rescue dogs a much deserved second chance at a future and the opportunity to start over, by increasing their home-ability through training and an understanding of canine behaviour".

All dog lovers know that dogs are incredibly special and that the bond between humans and a dog can be incredibly therapeutic. This bond can give humans a sense of purpose and hope for the future. A carefully selected group of Young People at HMYOI Werrington who have demonstrated a willingness to make changes to their own behaviour will be learning the skills to train the dogs through positive reinforcement techniques only, encouraging them to choose positive, appropriate behaviours in a calm and positive environment.

Sonia Brooks, Governor of Werrington Young Offenders Institute says "The Restart Dog Project is a fantastic initiative in partnership with Moorlands Dog Rescue. We have introduced an education pathway where young people will spend 12 weeks re-training puppies or dogs so they can be adopted by the community. This has brought a different dynamic in engaging our young people. This is certainly an exciting time for us and we are grateful for the opportunity to work with the charity. A special thank you to the community who donated financially or by providing kennels to make this journey possible"

With the safety and welfare of the dogs as paramount importance throughout the project, both dogs and Young People will have the opportunity to “Restart” their lives and through the unique bond between humans and our best friends, they will **create a positive and hopeful future for each other.**

Notes To The Editors:

- Photographs are copywritten to PHODOGRAPHY By Will. Photo credit **MUST** be given to “PHODOGRAPHY By Will” whenever photographs are published. Photos cannot be edited or cropped in any way. Photos must only be used in physical print and online.
- People can find out more about the Restart Dog Project by visiting [www.RestartDogProject.com](http://www.RestartDogProject.com) where there is a lot more information about specifics of the project, including safety measures and precautions. People involved in the project and willing to take questions about the programme are:
- Moorlands Dog Rescue, registered charity and Leek based dog rescue ([www.moorlandsdogrescue.com](http://www.moorlandsdogrescue.com)) ([moorlandsdogrescue@gmail.com](mailto:moorlandsdogrescue@gmail.com)) Contact Sarah Turner on 07540724458.
- Rachel Trafford, lead trainer and behaviourist on the project