



SOFT-COATED WHEATEN TERRIER CLUB OF GB

Advice on choosing a puppy.

There are many online Puppy Sales websites these days. All of these need to be treated with caution. There are many good and responsible breeders out there, but there are also several who are not as careful regarding care, socialisation and health. You should always look for a reputable breeder – one who is either a member of the Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of GB and who adheres to the Club's Code of Ethics in relation to breeding and rearing of puppies; or a breeder who is a registered Kennel Club Assured Breeder and who meets, and has been assessed as reaching, the standards that The Kennel Club expect.

Questions that prospective owners should ask when first contacting a breeder.

- **When can we come and see the puppies?**
A good breeder will want to meet you and your family before committing themselves to selling you a puppy. It will also give you a chance to say 'yea' or 'nay' to them. However, breeders are unlikely to allow you to visit puppies under 2 or 3 weeks of age, as this may distress the bitch and could risk infection for the pups. Around 3-4 weeks is an ideal time for first visits as the pups are beginning to take on their individual personalities
- **Where will the pups be raised?**
Kitchen/utility rooms are best as the pups see and hear lots of household noises and people. Quiet back bedrooms may be fine for the first couple of weeks, but once the pups are on their feet, these rooms, and places like outside sheds, will mean the pups get very little socialisation, and so these are not good.
- **What health tests have been done on the bitch?**
Blood testing for normal kidney function is strongly recommended. Eye testing and hip scores are also recommended. Many reputable breeders will also check for genetic markers for Protein Losing Nephropathy (PLN). If the breeder says "No." to any of these, ask why not!!
- **Has the sire been health tested?**
He should have had similar tests to those above for the bitch. If the answer is "No." to any of these, ask why not!!
- **Will the puppies have eye and blood tests?**
If the breeder says "No.", ask why not. However, whilst blood tests should be possible, it should be noted that not everyone can undertake eye testing for puppies, as testing sessions may not be available to them when the pups are of the right age.

Questions that prospective owners should ask when they first visit the breeder.

- **When will the puppy be ready to go to its new home?**
The law says 8 weeks, and this is the ideal time. Some breeders may allow a pup to go a couple of days before this, but only in exceptional circumstances, or they may choose to keep the pup a little longer.
- **May I choose my own puppy?**
Many breeders will want to match the personality of the puppy to the family they will be living with. For example, a shy puppy is not the dog to go to a family with several young children.
- **How old is the bitch?**
It is recommended that she should be at least 2 years old for a first litter.

- **What coat type will the puppies be?**

Our breed has both the original 'Irish' coat, and a thicker so called 'heavy' or 'English' coat. The difference between these is more obvious in the puppy and juvenile dogs, but less so in the mature adult dogs.

- **Will the puppies be micro-chipped?**

By law, and since April 2016, all puppies must be micro-chipped by the age of 8 weeks.

Things to look for when you visit.

- **Is the bitch friendly?**

Some bitches will become a little protective of their pups. So, always ask first before approaching her and the pups. That said, most bitches will be happy and relaxed for you to meet their pups.

- **Do the puppies have 'toys' to play with?**

Things like toilet roll insides, and plastic bottles are just as much fun for puppies as shop bought toys. Toys of any kind help stimulate mental development.

- **Is the pen the puppies are kept in clean?**

The room should not be particularly smelly.

- **Are the puppies' eyes bright?**

If these are dull, or have matted hair around them, this could be an infection. The inside of the ears should not be red, as this could mean there is a mite or other ear problem.

- **Are the pups in an area where they see and hear household noises?**

All are an important part of early socialisation.

- **Are the puppies friendly or timid?**

There is usually one bold one, and one shy more retiring puppy in the litter, but in general they should all be curious to meet visitors, and probably untie their shoe laces and chew on their trouser legs!

Additional questions you could ask if you are curious.

- **Have the puppies been in a car for a longer time than just a trip to the vet down the road, or to have their eyes tested?**

This is not essential, but it is useful experience for the puppies. It also depends on how long the journeys were.

- **If the breeder has no children, have the pups met children of various ages?**

- **Have the pups met adults of both sexes?**

- **Is this the bitch's first litter? How many litters has she had? Does one of the previous litter(s) live near me that I could meet?**

- **Why did you decide to have a litter?**

- **Are you planning to keep a puppy?**

- **Why did you choose the sire you used? May I see a photo of him? Are there other pups sired by him? Do any live near me that I could meet? It is unlikely you will meet the sire, even when visiting a reputable breeder, as breeders will often travel to find the right dog for their bitch to be mated with.**

Questions to ask just before you pick up the puppy.

- **Will the puppy have had its first vaccination? If so what type of vaccine will be used?**

Make sure your vet uses the same, or compatible vaccine. Some breeders do not vaccinate as they prefer not to start the puppy on one course of vaccine, which then needs to be restarted with another type when the new owner takes them home, and to their own vet.

- **What food do I need to get for the puppy?**

Many breeders will provide you with an initial supply of food that the puppy has been used to. You can change to another brand AFTER the puppy has settled in, but this must be done VERY gradually and over a period time by slowly adding a little of the new food to the old, then gradually increasing the new while decreasing the old.

- **Will the puppy have a diet sheet I can follow?**

The breeder should provide you with this.

- **Will you have a record of the puppy's worming I can have?**
The breeder should provide you with this, which should also be shown to your vet on your puppy's first visit to them.
- **May I have copies of the puppy's health tests?**
The breeder should provide you with these.
- **Do you have a Sales Contract for the puppy?**
The breeder should provide you with this. The breeder should hopefully have already discussed this with you when you met.
- **Has the puppy's KC registration certificate been endorsed 'progeny not eligible for registration'?**
Ask the breeder to explain what this is and what it means. Also ask them under what conditions this might be lifted should you decide to have a litter from your bitch or use your male dog at stud. The breeder should hopefully have already discussed this with you when you met.
- **Will you have a Puppy Pack for me?**
The breeder should provide you with this information pack, which may be either a SCWT Club's Puppy Handbook or one they have put together themselves.

BEWARE!

All online puppy sales websites need to be treated with caution, even the Kennel Club's own Find A Puppy site, as it isn't just KC Assured Breeders who advertise puppies on there. There are some good breeders on these sales sites, but there are also some that are not.

Be extra cautious...

- If you cannot see the bitch for whatever reason, even if it sounds plausible. Some litters are purchased as a 'job lot' from another country and imported when they are too young to be taken from the bitch.
- If the breeder appears to know nothing about the health testing, or what kind of coat the litter, or their parents, have.
- If the breeder asks you no questions about your home, lifestyle and family, but appears only to be interested in obtaining a deposit from you.
- If the breeder has multiple breeds. *There are some very good breeders out there with more than one breed, but many with multiple breeds are not, and could be puppy farmers.*
- If the parents of the puppies, and therefore the puppies themselves, are not Kennel Club registered.
- Of any ad in a newspaper, or individual puppies advertised on the internet.
- Of a breeder who will meet you in a car park to hand over a puppy.

NEVER EVER BUY A PUPPY BECAUSE YOU FEEL SORRY FOR IT!