

## Petal's Behavioural Report

### 1. General Behaviour

Dogs have been domesticated over thousands of years, yet they retain their instinctive behaviours. These include a pack mentality, territorial instincts, the drive to hunt or protect resources, and responding to social hierarchies within the home. When living with humans, dogs often reflect their environment and the energy of their owners.

### 2. Breed-Specific Instincts

Petal is a unique crossbreed: part Great Dane, Bichon Frise, Greyhound, and Labrador. Each of these breeds contributes to their personality:

- Great Dane: Known for their gentle nature and protective instincts but can be imposing due to size and strength.
- Bichon Frise: Sociable and playful, with a tendency for separation anxiety if not well-trained.
- Greyhound: Gentle and calm indoors, but with a strong prey drive and speed.
- Labrador: Friendly and energetic, often motivated by food, and generally eager to please.

This mix makes Petal a blend of traits, potentially creating a dog that is strong, energetic, and protective, yet sociable and playful.

### 3. Data Summary

Petal is a 72-pound, 12-month-old male, not neutered, living in a semi-detached city property with a closed garden. His environment is mostly busy and noisy. He was rehomed from a charity and shares his space with a Lurcher and Jack Russell Terrier.

Health-wise, Petal has a history of a non-malignant growth removal and takes diuretics for water retention. Despite these, he is described as reasonably healthy.

Petal exhibits dominant behaviours, including preventing family members from entering the house. This is most noticeable on the stairs near the bedrooms. These behaviours occur primarily on weekdays in the evening. He is mostly walked on a leash and is described as selectively obedient.

### 4. Key Issues

- Resource Guarding/Dominance: Petal exhibits 'Alpha leader' behaviour, becoming territorial and preventing access to certain areas.
- Reaction to Household Activity: Aggressive response to family members entering the house.
- Training Challenges: Selectively obeys commands, showing gaps in training or reinforcement.

- Stress Responses: Environmentally, Petal may be overstimulated by the noise and activity of the home.

#### 4a. Causes of Behaviour

Petal's behaviour stems from several factors:

- Dominance Behaviour: Likely due to a lack of clear boundaries and consistent leadership in the home.

- Environmental Stress: A noisy, busy household may overstimulate Petal, leading to increased aggression or anxiety.

- Training Deficits: Crossbreeds require tailored training to address their unique temperament. Inconsistent approaches or reliance on punishment may exacerbate the issue.

- Health and Hormonal Factors: Petal's intact status (not neutered) might contribute to heightened dominance or territoriality.

#### 5. Recommendations

To address Petal's behavioural issues, the following steps are suggested:

##### a. Establish Leadership and Boundaries

- Use positive reinforcement to encourage desirable behaviours.

- Avoid punishment, as this may increase aggression or confusion.

- Consider professional guidance for establishing Petal's role in the household hierarchy.

##### b. Behaviour Modification

- Teach 'place' commands to direct Petal to a specific spot when family members need to pass through the stairs.

- Use baby gates to restrict access temporarily to areas like the stairs until the behaviour improves.

- Reward calm behaviour when family members enter or exit.

##### c. Training Techniques

- Invest in structured training sessions with a professional.

- Use high-value treats or toys for motivation during obedience training.

- Practice 'desensitisation' by simulating entry/exit scenarios with low stakes and gradually increasing complexity.

##### d. Environmental Management

- Create a quiet retreat for Petal, possibly in a crate, where he can relax and feel safe.

- Reduce stimuli during peak activity times by using calming aids like pheromone diffusers.

##### e. Long-Term Solutions

- Discuss with a vet the potential benefits of neutering for reducing dominance-driven behaviours.

- Use interactive toys to reduce boredom and excess energy, especially on noisy days.

## 6. Summary

Petal's territorial and dominant behaviours are influenced by environmental, genetic, and training factors. A clear strategy combining behaviour modification, consistent training, and environmental adjustments will help manage and eventually resolve these issues. With patience and professional support, Petal can develop into a well-behaved and integrated member of the household.