

# Couple sought for live-in 'dream job' on Scots estate



SPECTACULAR Fasnaclloch

ONE lucky couple could be in line for their "dream job" as live-in caretakers at a stunning estate.

The Fasnaclloch Estate in Appin, Argyll, is seeking a housekeeper and handyman who will live rent-free in a cottage on the grounds and tend to the property.

The couple will receive a "generous salary" and all their council tax and utility

BY **STUART MacDONALD**

The handyman will maintain the garden and assist with the fishing on Fasnaclloch Loch and River Creran, and maintaining the boats on the estate.

Mark Mitchell, from property firm Bell Ingram, which manages the estate, said: "This really is a dream job for people who want to live and work in some of the UK's most spectacular countryside."

The bills will also be covered. The position has become available after the retirement of the previous couple who lived and worked there for more than 30 years.

The housekeeper will be responsible for managing Fasnaclloch House, associated buildings and other houses on the estate, as well as assisting with the running of the holiday lets.

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## HOW TO PREPARE



OUR FAMILY Emma and Lindsay got Peggy during lockdown but will return to work

### She cries when left alone

CARE home worker Emma Henderson, 29, and chef Lindsay Miller, 34, from Stirling, have seven-month-old Malshi Peggy and are anxious about leaving her alone now they are back at work.

Emma said: "We got Peggy - a cross between a Maltese and a Schi Tzu - last October and until this week she has never been left as Lindsay has been on furlough.

"I work shifts in a care home, so have been working throughout the pandemic. "She's like our baby and follows us everywhere and is showing all the signs of having separation anxiety and attachment disorder.

"In the last few weeks, we have been preparing her by leaving her alone but we have a pet cam and she cries the whole time we are away - it's



heartbreaking. We've been taking her to puppy playgroup so she gets used to being away from us but until she does, we've been leaving her with Lindsay's mum when we're at work.

"Lockdown was the perfect time to get a dog so you could bond with them but you never think about what will happen when you have to go back to work."

## Playgroup is our choice

AA worker Lucy Passey, 41, and learning development officer Tracie Falconer, 46, from Falkirk, have two puppies - five-month-old patterdale terrier Willow and 10-week-old border collie Rowan - and are doing all they can to address separation anxiety before they go back to work.

Lucy said: "We had been planning to get a dog in a few years' time after we had been on some nice holidays but Covid has put paid to that, so we decided to become dog mums earlier than we expected.

"Fortunately, both of us are still working from home but that will probably all change next year when Tracie will have to start travelling again with her job.

"Willow is already showing signs of separation anxiety, so we are doing what we can now to tackle it. She goes to puppy playgroup so she can socialise with other dogs and get used to us not always being there.

"Once Rowan has her final set of injections, she will be joining her.

"We are hoping by getting them both into a routine, when we eventually have to leave them, either to go to work or out for dinner, they won't fret as much."



PUPPY LOVE Little Willow and Rowan

## YOUR DOG FOR LIFE POST-LOCKDOWN

# Pup psychology



### Pets bought during the pandemic have got used to having owners around all the time.. but many will suffer separation anxiety as normal routines resume

LOCKDOWN has been a great time for dogs, with more walks, strokes and treats than ever before. But those whose owners return to the workplace or socialising could find the change distressing.

The past year has meant people have been at home more than ever and with a massive surge in the number of first-time dog owners, some pooches have never been left alone for long periods of time.

With the reopening of offices, non-essential shops and the hospitality industry, our canine companions face the tough challenge of being left home alone.

Used to round-the-clock company, few dogs won't experience some form of separation anxiety when the whole household leaves in the morning.

Recent research by dog food brand Natures Menu indicates that 83 per cent of dog owners are anxious about the effect the return to work will have on their unsuspecting four-legged friends.

Dog behaviourist Ann Watt, who runs Stirling Dog Behavioural Centre, is busier than ever helping dogs who are suffering from separation anxiety.

BY **HEATHER GREENAWAY**  
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a puppy in lockdown and, until now, they have never had to leave their dog at home for an extended period of time.

"Separation anxiety and attachment disorder are becoming bigger issues than they ever were and are distressing for both the dog and the owner.

"But there are things owners can do to help their dogs and prepare them for life outside lockdown. Most dogs will get there with a little self-help but others will need to see a specialist."

Ann said it is not just puppies who are finding the return to office tough.

She said: "Older dogs can have problems too. They might have been absolutely fine before lockdown but now they can't cope with being alone and are barking in the house, scraping at the door and destroying furniture.

"These dogs need time to readjust and can be helped with the same methods used for the puppies. They are usually an easier fix.

"All dogs love being with their owners and they will all have to get used to the new normal.

"Patience is the key and most will get there and for those struggling, specialist help is out there."



RUFF TIME Dog behaviourist Anne Watt

### Top tips that can help them cope

CAN you go to the toilet or shower without them coming along? Is your dog confident enough to sit in a different room to you? Can it sleep on its own?

If the answer to these questions is no, there is a chance your dog has separation anxiety, attachment disorder or both.

● Identify the triggers - what makes the dog think you are about to leave them? Is it shutting your laptop, putting on shoes, fetching keys, switching off the TV? Whatever it is, do it repetitively and if they stand up, you sit down until they settle and realise you don't leave every time.

● Invest in boredom-busting toys - Kongs, snufflemats and Licki

mats, which you can cover in doggy peanut butter or sardines. Put these down as a distraction when you leave the room.

● Build up the time you leave dogs alone - try going into the garden and leaving them in the house and, from there, leave the house for five minutes, then 10 and build it up. If they learn you always come back, how long you're away will stop being an issue.

● Puppy playgroups - if your dog has attachment issues, look for a local puppy playgroup where your anxious dog can spend time away from you.

● Specialist help - if you think a specialist is required, seek out a qualified professional with a proven track record.

