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In a quaint old stone cottage, located a minuscule five metres away from the A1 motorway, Sue Hamblett lives with her 12 dogs and family. These dogs range in all shapes, sizes and temperaments, but still manage to live together in a sort of chaotic harmony. Adjoining to the house are twenty four dog kennels that can hold up to fifty dogs. Sue remarks - 'Luckily, I will never get sick of the sound of dogs barking'.

Sue is the kennel manager at Alexas Animal Rescue, situated in the county of Northumberland. Relentlessly, she works twelve hours a day caring for the unwanted, abandoned or neglected dogs. Beginning as a volunteer, she obtained a passion for caring for the canines. So when a job to live on-site came up, she took it. Living surrounded by numerous dogs may go against the tranquil lifestyle many people are pursuing, but as Sue states 'I would never give it up for the world... It's my dream job and it has taken over my whole life. I would much rather be surrounded by dogs than people. ...There are so many benefits of being around a dog'.

Hundreds of studies have highlighted the ways in which dogs improve our lives. 'Dogs can help with mental health. They give you a reason to get up in the morning. They give you a reason to go outside, which helps you exercise more', explains Sue. Termed the "Lassie effect" by scientists, walking a dog offers health benefits, as it makes you significantly more likely to meet the usual recommendation of exercise per week. Furthermore, many studies show dogs can even improve your cardiovascular health. Dogs don't just fill your heart; they can actually make it stronger.

Alison Toole, who took in one of Sue's rescue dogs, says: - "she gives us so many laughs when she is busy wrecking her toys, but more than that, she helps me get out of bed on those days when I just want to pull the duvet over my head and hide. We may have given her a home, family and love, but she pays us back just as much'. In fact, according to a study conducted by BarkBox, 71% of dog owners believe that their dogs have made them a more joyful individual. Nearly 80% find it easier to awake in the morning because their dogs greet them.

'It's a privilege to own a rescue... They give you permission to let you love and look after them, and in return, you lose your sofa and bed...But the best bit is when they never flinch from your touch, they lean against you for a cuddle, and the smile and waggy tail when you walk into a room. That it is priceless. What more could anyone want.', Says Carole Green, who adopted one of Sue's rescue dogs. Many studies suggest spending time with a dog increases your levels of oxytocin, improving your mood, it is also called the "love/cuddle" hormone.

¼ of UK adults have a dog, with an estimated population of 9.9 million pet dogs. It is clear that these domesticated carnivores are man's best friend in the UK. But with the Dog Trust estimating that 130,000 dogs are coming into UK rehoming charities each year, it is apparent we need to do more for them. Hundreds of studies have highlighted the ways in which dogs improve our lives. Evidence shows canines can help boost your immune system. Furthermore, researchers have found that pets can even make you a more joyful and better individual, in addition to improving your mental health. Most pet owners will preach how interacting with a pet can improve your mood, and know of the animal's ability to make us feel at ease. With the current stressful lives we live, having someone beside you, that makes you feel happier, is not a bad thing.

Word 648