

Overview

This standard is about planning and implementing programmes to address undesirable behaviour in dogs. The emphasis of the canine behaviourist is one of facilitating behavioural change within the canine/human relationship in the dogs' normal environment and advising and instructing the owner/handler in behaviour modification techniques and canine communication and psychology.

Users of this standard will need to confirm that the training practices they recommended reflect current information, relevant training techniques, organisational policies and procedures. They will work within the limits of their authority, accreditation, qualification and expertise of training, and have a developed knowledge and experience of rehabilitating dogs with behavioural problems, supported by suitable canine-specific studies, which are humane and evidence-based. They should have extensive experience in dog training and dog handling, encompassing various breeds and types within all age ranges. They should also have experience of communicating with and training owners/handlers.

Canine behaviourists will need to be aware of their own limitations and confirm that they meet the relevant legal responsibilities for providing a duty of care under the current animal health and welfare legislation.

This standard is suitable for suitably trained and/or accredited and qualified canine behaviourists, who have the relevant practical experience in dealing with canine species, supported by training and education in canine-related behaviours and practical dog-training techniques

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. comply with the relevant animal health and welfare and dog specific legislation, local policies and associated codes of practice relating to dogs
2. assess and make provision for the health and welfare needs of the dog
3. manage and control a relevant location for the consultation and behaviour change and training programme
4. carry out a risk assessment and maintain the safety and welfare of the dog and all those involved in or affected by you work, and be continually aware of any factors outside your control
5. obtain and interpret the relevant information about the dog and possible causes of the undesirable behaviour using a range of sources
6. continually assess and evaluate the relationship between the dog and owner/handler within the normal environment, including household or environmental dynamics, for its suitability to undertake behaviour modification (e.g. presence of other animals, other people)
7. assess the dog's physical condition and emotional state, with consideration to the life stages of the dog (i.e. puppy, juvenile, adult, senior), before and during the consultation process, recognising signs of stress, anxiety, fears, phobias, aversions, aggression, pain, conflict and avoidance, and respond appropriately
8. handle and interact with the dog in a suitable way that allows assessment, temperament testing and behaviour modification to be carried out safely and effectively, and avoids creating behaviour that may give rise to welfare concerns
9. plan a structured programme of behaviour change and training, applying the principles of learning theory to dogs and humans
10. select the most relevant behaviour change and training methods and resources, for the particular dog, owner/handler and the desired outcome, with due consideration of current scientific evidence, previous experience, humane practices and legislation
11. discuss and agree the programme to address undesirable behavior with the owner/handler and obtain informed consent prior to implementing the behaviour change and training programme, ensuring the owner/handler understands the

- importance of their role in achieving and maintaining the desired behaviour once it is reached
12. implement the behaviour change and training programme in accordance with the relevant health and safety legislation, risk assessment requirements, codes of practice and any other policies or procedures relevant to the programme or location
 13. demonstrate to the owner/handler how to implement the programme of behaviour change and training, including the safe use of specific equipment where appropriate, to ensure the health, welfare and safety of the dog is maintained
 14. recognise the particular learning styles of the dog and modify the programme accordingly, having due regard for breed specific traits and motivational drives
 15. support the owner/handler to achieve and maintain the desired outcome
 16. recognise, understand and act upon indications of stress in the owner/handler, including noting relevant non-verbal communication
 17. monitor the effect of the behaviour change and training programme on the dog's health and welfare and recognise any detrimental effects
 18. demonstrate to the owner/handler how to provide support and feedback to the dog to develop an effective relationship and continually monitor the interaction between the dog and owner/handler
 19. monitor the dog and owner/handler's progress towards achievement of the behaviour change and training programme and adjust as necessary
 20. recognise when the desired outcome of the behaviour change and training programme is not achievable and take appropriate action
 21. recognise your own limitations and refer the dog to an appropriate professional when necessary e.g. alternative canine behaviourist, veterinary surgeon
 22. communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing, with others involved in the behaviour change and training programme and produce reports where required
 23. confirm that records are maintained and stored in accordance with relevant legislation and organisational policy
 24. maintain professional and ethical conduct and work within the limits of your authority, expertise, training, competence,

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- experience and the relevant legislation
25. maintain professional competence by undertaking regular Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and work within the requirements of the relevant professional organisation

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. your responsibilities under the relevant animal health and welfare and dog-specific legislation, local policies and codes of practice, and the legal limitations of the current Veterinary Surgeons Act with regard to diagnosis and treatment of disease or injury
2. how the welfare needs of the dogs you engage with may be assessed and addressed prior to and during behaviour modification
3. how to obtain and interpret information about the dog and assess any factors that may affect behaviour including possible medical causes for the undesirable behaviour and the importance of seeking a veterinary diagnosis
4. what to consider when assessing the suitability of the dog to undertake a programme of behaviour change and training programme to address undesirable behaviour
5. the importance of assessing the owner/handler capability to achieve and maintain the desired behaviour in their dog
6. the psychopharmacological theories and the mode of interaction of the major classes of drugs used in clinical animal behaviour that may have been administered to the dog, e.g. by a veterinary surgeon or other professional
7. the role of nutrition and pheromones on dog behaviour
8. how dogs learn and the physical, psychological and environmental factors that affect learning, including the dog's lifestyle with the owner/handler within their normal environment
9. the principles, techniques and methods used in behaviour change and training programme and what to consider when selecting the most appropriate technique and method of training for a particular dog, behaviour or desired outcome
10. how to plan and implement a structured programme of behaviour change and training to achieve objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Targeted (SMART)
11. the importance of discussing the behaviour change and training programme with the owner/handler and gaining their understanding and agreement to fulfil their obligation to adhere to the programme
12. the correct use and potential misuse of available training equipment, the physiological and psychological effects on the dog

- and its health and welfare and the importance of educating the owner/handler in good practice
13. the legal, welfare and ethical considerations of the form of training used, the implications of not training in an appropriate manner and the consequences of allowing a dog to be out of control
 14. the use of positive and negative reinforcement and the effects of these approaches on dog behaviour, health and welfare
 15. your responsibilities under the relevant health and safety legislation, associated codes of practice and any policies or procedures relevant to the programme or location
 16. the antecedents, triggers and indicators of the cycle of anxiety and stress in dogs
 17. how to ensure that the welfare of the dog is maintained throughout and that your behaviour or that of those involved in or affected by your work does not cause adverse reactions, fear or distress in the dog
 18. how to recognise, evaluate and address behavioural responses throughout behaviour change and training programme
 19. the importance of continually evaluating all available information prior to and during behaviour modification, or when a dog displays unexpected behaviour
 20. the anatomy and physiology of a dog and how training, equipment and the handling of a dog can affect the dog's behavioural responses
 21. how to support the owner/handler to achieve and maintain the desired outcome and the effect that the interactions between the owner/handler and the dog may have on the maintenance of the undesirable behaviour
 22. the reasons why the dog or owner/handler may not be progressing to achieve the desired outcome and the importance of monitoring and evaluating progress and reviewing and revising the behaviour change and training programme
 23. how to recognise when behaviour modification methods may not be appropriate for the dog, owner/handler or the purpose or role of the dog
 24. non-verbal communication and the indicators of stress in the handler and the action to take
 25. when to and when not to intervene while the owner or handler is practicing instruction
 26. how and when to use test dogs in behaviour modification and the

- value of monitoring and interpreting the reaction of the test dog while maintaining their health, safety and welfare
27. the importance of seeking advice and guidance from more experienced professionals, where to obtain professional advice and guidance and when a dog should be referred to a veterinary surgeon or other professional
 28. the importance and relevance of maintaining accurate records and reports and the importance of adhering to current data protection legislation
 29. the importance of appropriate insurance cover, including professional indemnity
 30. your professional responsibilities and the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to maintain professional competence and the role of professional bodies and associations

Scope/range

Information to be considered when carrying out an assessment of the dog:

- nature and seriousness of the reported behaviour
- life history
- physical condition and capabilities
- age and development stage
- health and medical history, including past and current medication
- diet
- reproductive status
- hormonal stage
- current level of training and any prior behaviour modification undertaken
- temperament/characteristics/traits
- breed and parentage
- motivational drivers and effects
- environment – living, working, training or learning
- legislation

Capabilities and potential of the handler:

- physical needs of the owner/handler
- learning needs of the owner/handler
- psychological needs of the owner/handler
- environment (including presence of other animals or other people)
- resources

Resources:

- personnel
- training aids/equipment
- handling aids/equipment
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Reports may be for:

- owner/handler
- veterinary surgeon
- legal or local authority
- courts
- insurance companies

LANCTB5

Plan and implement programmes to address undesirable behaviour in dogs



Behaviours

- be prepared to make difficult decisions and have the confidence to see them through.
- show reliability and resilience in difficult situations
- remain calm and confident, respond logically and decisively in difficult situations
- respond to challenges rationally, with consideration to the emotions of the dog and owner/handler
- manage ambiguity and deal with uncertainty and frustration when working with the dog and owner/handler
- manage conflicting pressure and tension during consultation and training of the owner/handler and dog
- resist pressure to make quick decisions where full consideration is needed
- remain focused and in control of all situations during the consultation and training
- stand firmly by a decision when it is right to do so
- demonstrate sound interpersonal skills
- seek client feedback and act accordingly

Glossary

Dogs - All domesticated dogs including working dogs

Sources of information could include:

- the client
- a third party (e.g. veterinary surgeon)
- observation
- records

SMART objectives:

- **Specific** - Is the objective well defined and clear? Does it state exactly what is to be achieved?
- **Measurable** - How will I know when the objective has been achieved? What will success look like?
- **Achievable** - Is the objective attainable considering the capability of the dog?
- **Realistic** - Can the outcome be achieved with the resources, knowledge and time available?
- **Targeted** - Does the objective target a specific area for

improvement?

Refer – includes formal or informal referral to professional body, individual or organisation

Test Dogs:

- aid and assist addressing undesirable behaviour in other dogs
- provocateur - to identify the trigger threshold (there should be limited use of this)
- specially trained, selected, behaviourally stable dogs

Links to other NOS

LANCTB1 - Observe, assess and respond to the behaviour of dogs
LANCTB2 - Handle and control dogs

LANCTB5

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