

Overview

This standard is about observing, assessing and responding to the behaviour of dogs.

The standard involves understanding the normal behaviour of the type of dog that you are working with and observing its current behaviour. You will need to be aware of how factors, including your own interaction with the dog, may affect its behaviour and know how to respond to observed behaviours. All activities should be carried out in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Users of this standard will need to be suitably trained and confirm that they work within the limits of their authority, accreditation, qualification, expertise and experience supported by suitable canine-specific studies, which are humane and evidence-based.

This standard is suitable for those who work professionally with dogs

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. carry out your work in accordance with relevant environmental and health and safety legislation, risk assessment requirements, associated codes of practice and organisational policies
2. comply with the relevant animal health and welfare and animal related legislation, local policies and associated codes of practice relating to dogs
3. maintain the safety and welfare of dogs and all those involved in or affected by the work
4. observe the behaviour of the dog you are working with, taking into account the range of factors that may affect its behaviour
5. handle and interact with the animal in a way that avoids creating behaviour that may give rise to welfare concerns and that allows observation and assessment to be carried out
6. maintain animal welfare and adapt your own behaviour, and that of those involved in or affected by your work, if necessary, to avoid creating undesirable behaviour
7. recognise and respond to observed behaviours in the dog you are working with
8. identify and record changes in the physical condition or behaviour of the dog that may indicate health and welfare or other problems and make recommendations where necessary
9. recognise your own limitations and refer to an appropriate professional when necessary e.g. canine behaviourist or veterinary surgeon
10. maintain communication with colleagues and all those involved in, or affected by, your work
11. confirm that records are maintained and stored as required by the relevant legislation and organisational policy
12. work professionally and ethically and within the limits of your authority, expertise, training, competence and experience

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. your responsibilities under the relevant environmental and health and safety legislation, risk assessment requirements, associated codes of practice and organisational policies
2. your responsibilities under the relevant animal health and welfare legislation, dog-specific legislation, local policies and associated codes of practice, and the legal limitations of the current Veterinary Surgeons Act, with regard to diagnosis and treatment of disease or injury
3. how the welfare needs of the dogs you engage with may be assessed and addressed
4. how to systematically observe, assess and respond to the behaviour of the dogs you work with and the importance of doing this
5. the functional anatomy and physiology of dogs and the relationship between these and behaviour
6. the importance of maintaining an understanding of current research into evolutionary history and changes associated with the role and purpose of dogs in society
7. the natural and normal behaviour patterns of dogs, including social behavior, dominance hierarchies and how dogs communicate with humans, other dogs and other species
8. the different forms of aggression displayed by dogs and how to recognise these and respond to them
9. the behavioural, emotional and physical development stages of dogs and the importance of critical periods of learning
10. the effect of previous experiences on dog behavior and the cause and effect of latent learned behaviour, i.e. the effects of nature versus nurture
11. the breed-specific behaviours and traits and their potential effect on behaviours that could be presented
12. the effects of reproductive status and sexual stimuli on dog behaviour
13. the importance of care, management and husbandry of dogs in their normal environment and the effect these can have on behaviour
14. how to recognise behavioural and emotional states in dogs, including stress, anxiety, fears, phobias, aversions, frustration, aggression, pain, conflict, avoidance, dominance, appeasement, play and relaxation

15. the importance and pack dynamics within a household and how to move humans up the ranking where required, in a positive way and without producing fear and/or distress in the dog
16. how your actions, or those of others involved in or affected by your work, may affect the behaviour of the dog
17. how behaviour may be influenced by the dog's immediate environment or husbandry and the best way to take account of such factors
18. the early signs of a change in behaviour associated with ill health, as well as indicators of injury or pain, discomfort, disease and distress
19. 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
20. the records that need to be kept in relation to assessing the behaviour of dogs and the safe handling and storage of data, the importance of confidentiality and the requirements of current data protection legislation
21. the importance of appropriate insurance cover, including professional indemnity

Scope/range

Factors that may affect the behaviour of the dog:

- evolution and domestication history
- breed-typical behaviour
- parentage
- temperament
- development stage (puppy, juvenile, adult, senior)
- reproductive status
- hormonal status
- motivational needs (including hunger, thirst, threat avoidance, and need for social contact)
- communication patterns
- emotional and mental states
- perceptual abilities
- social organisation and social behaviour
- previous experiences and responses learnt from these
- fear, frustration, aggression, stress, pain
- ill health, injury, discomfort, disease and distress
- environment and external stimuli experienced
- human interaction
- interaction with other dogs
- husbandry and management patterns

Glossary

Dogs – All domesticated dogs including working dogs

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

Functional anatomy and physiology to include:

- Skeletal
- Vertebral
- Nervous and endocrine systems

Links to other NOS

LANCTB2 - Handle and control dogs
LANCTB3 - Plan and implement training programmes for dogs
LANCTB4 - Plan and implement training programmes for dogs and handlers
LANCTB5 - Plan and implement programmes to address undesirable behaviour in dogs

Observe, assess and respond to the behaviour of dogs

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