

## Overview

This standard covers assessing and defining an animal's need for complementary and natural/holistic healthcare. This includes assessing the suitability of the treatment for the animal, taking account of its condition and situation.

Complementary and natural/holistic animal healthcare requires an understanding of the animal – his or her character, physical health, emotional wellbeing and behavioural issues. It also requires an understanding of the owner or carer's desires and expectations as well as the potential impact on the animal's issue(s). An initial assessment and ongoing reviews will help a practitioner to determine the suitability and potential benefit of their therapy on the animal and ascertain how it may be best applied – either on its own or as part of a wider healthcare package.

This standard aims to ensure that therapists and other service providers fully understand the animal species they will be working with and have a good rapport with the owner or carer. It also requires service providers to comply with the policies and professional codes of practice relevant to their discipline and specifies that they base their practice on accurate and up-to-date information.

## Performance criteria

*You must be able to:*

1. assess and evaluate requests for complementary and natural/holistic healthcare for animals and respond appropriately
2. identify a suitable environment for an assessment of the animal's needs
3. explain the nature of your complementary and natural/holistic healthcare discipline, including the fee structure, to the animal's owner or carer
4. discuss with the animal's owner or carer the animal's current and past health, well-being, behavioural issues and temperament, as well as the origin of any problems, where this is known
5. obtain from the animal's owner or carer any known veterinary diagnoses for health issues, as well as information on medication, diet or other treatment or services the animal is receiving
6. assess whether the behaviour and actions of an animal's owner or carer may have impacted on the animal's condition and whether it would be appropriate to offer a discipline that would benefit both the owner and the animal
7. discuss with the animal's owner or carer their desires and expectations in respect of the treatment and its possible outcomes for their animal
8. encourage the animal's owner or carer to ask questions and raise concerns to gain an understanding of the complementary and natural/holistic healthcare discipline and its possible effects
9. assess if there are any restrictions, barriers or contraindications to the complementary and natural/holistic healthcare discipline that you consider may affect the achievement of effective results
10. use safe practices in order to minimise the risks to the animal, yourself and others when carrying out a physical assessment
11. approach and handle the animal in a manner that is likely to build their trust and confidence in the Practitioner, promote their co-operation and minimise distress when carrying out a physical assessment
12. confirm that the animal's welfare is maintained throughout when carrying out a physical assessment
13. recognise when the animal's behaviour may indicate that you should pause temporarily, cease the activity or revise your approach.
14. seek assistance if needed should there be a risk to the health,

- safety or security of yourself, the animal or others
15. consult with the respective veterinary surgeon or confirm that consent has been obtained prior to starting work with an animal, where required by legislation
  16. produce records that comply with relevant professional, legal and organisational requirements
  17. maintain standards of professional conduct and ethics and work within the limits of your own authority, expertise, training, competence and experience
  18. reflect on your own performance and plan, record and evaluate your continuing professional development
  19. maintain working relationships with colleagues, clients and other practitioners within your discipline as well as veterinary or other animal care professionals, as required
  20. comply with current legislation and associated codes of practice related to the healthcare and welfare of animals at all times
  21. work safely and take suitable measures to prevent the possible transfer of disease

## Knowledge and understanding

*You need to know and understand:*

1. the concept of animal health and well-being and the appropriateness and potential benefit of your complementary and natural/holistic healthcare discipline for each prospective animal
2. the nature of the complementary and natural/holistic healthcare discipline you provide, as well as the fee structure
3. situations or conditions where your complementary and natural/holistic healthcare discipline is ideally suited and where it should be offered with caution
4. how an animal's history, prior and present medical treatments and other care (including diet, medication and other therapies) may impact on its health and well-being and the relevance of this to your complementary and natural/holistic healthcare discipline
5. how to gather information about the animal, including the importance of obtaining any existing veterinary diagnoses, in order to assess and define the animal's needs and propose treatment delivery as appropriate
6. the appropriateness of offering your discipline in conjunction with any other treatment/therapy that the animal is receiving and the relevant considerations that must be taken into account
7. when and how to involve or consult with the respective veterinary surgeon or check that consent is given before starting to work with an animal
8. the importance of making the owner or carer feel involved and a valued part of the process, and the best way to do this
9. how the behaviour and actions of an animal's owner or carer can impact on the animal's behaviour and its emotional and physical states
10. how to choose different methods and approaches to explore the animal's, and potentially also the owner's or carer's needs
11. how to identify the most appropriate action to take, depending on your assessment of the animal's needs and your own previous experience
12. the importance of offering your complementary and natural/holistic healthcare discipline to an animal in a way and in an environment that is likely to be beneficial
13. how to assess any possible risks with your planned or alternative complementary and natural/holistic healthcare approaches for the

animal

14. how to recognise "red flag" symptoms where emergency veterinary assessment or treatment is necessary and an awareness of diseases that are notifiable
15. how to identify possible risks and hazards involved with the handling of animals and how to minimise and respond to these in the animal's best interest to protect the safety of yourself, the animal and others
16. the different factors that can affect an animal's behaviour adversely and what to do if these are observed
17. how to recognise and assess the signs of stress and alarm in the animals being handled and how to identify situations where it is not suitable or appropriate to approach or handle an animal without assistance
18. how to build trust with animals in order to carry out an assessment of their needs
19. the relevant professional, legal and organisational requirements for producing and storing records for all consultations and treatments
20. your professional and ethical responsibilities, the limits of your authority, expertise, training, competence and experience, and the need for suitable insurance
21. the role of professional organisations and associations
22. the requirements of current animal welfare legislation and the restrictions of the Veterinary Surgeons Act on diagnosing and treating animals

## Glossary

### **An animal's history includes its:**

- Life experiences
- Medical health and diagnoses
- Emotional health
- Psychological or mental health
- Behavioural problems
- Previous experience of the respective complementary holistic/natural discipline

**Red flag symptoms** – conditions requiring immediate medical attention

### **Current animal health and welfare legislation:**

- England and Wales, Animal Welfare Act
- Scotland, Animal Health and Welfare Act
- Northern Ireland, Welfare of Animals Act

### **Veterinary Surgeons Act:**

It is illegal under the Veterinary Surgeons Act for non-veterinary surgeons to practise veterinary surgery.

The Act defines Veterinary Surgery as:

- the diagnosis of diseases in, and injuries to, animals, including tests performed on animals for diagnostic purposes;
- the giving of advice based upon such diagnosis;
- the medical or surgical treatment of animals;
- and the performance of surgical operations on animals.

## Links to other NOS

LANACT2 Develop and agree plans for complementary and natural/holistic healthcare for the animal

LANACT3 Offer Reiki to animals

LANAnC10 Observe and be aware of the behaviour of animals

LANAnC15 Handle and restrain animals

LANCS68 Work within professional, legislative and regulatory requirements for animal health and welfare

LANACT1

Assess and define an animal's needs for complementary and natural/holistic healthcare



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**Relevant Occupations** Animal complementary and natural/holistic healthcare practitioner

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**Suite** Veterinary paraprofessional activities

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