
Overview

This standard covers planning and implementing training programmes for dogs and handlers. The emphasis is on training the handler to train the dog rather than training the dog directly and requires experience both with dog training and the training of people.

The standard includes designing and developing training programmes for people and dogs by setting objectives and targets. It also includes evaluating how the training programme is implemented and monitoring the progress of the handler and the dog.

Users of this standard will need to ensure that training practices reflect up-to-date information, relevant training techniques, 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 training dogs, supported by suitable canine-specific studies, which are humane and evidence-based. They should also have experience of communicating with and training people.

The dog-training instructor may be working within a group environment and as such will require skills to include managing groups of people along with dogs. They will be an experienced dog trainer and will have an in-depth understanding of people-training skills, learning theories and a wide range of communication skills.

Meeting the legal responsibilities for duty of care under relevant animal health and welfare and health and safety legislation is of paramount importance.

This standard is suitable for appropriately trained and experienced instructors with responsibility for planning and implementing training programmes for dogs and handlers.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. comply with relevant animal health and welfare legislation, national legislation, local policies and codes of practice relating to dogs at all times
2. continually assess and make provision for the health and welfare needs of the dog
3. agree and confirm the purpose and intended outcomes of the training with all parties concerned and manage the expectations for dog and handler
4. assess the suitability of the dog concerned to undertake the training, based on **information** from a range of appropriate **sources**
5. assess the **capabilities and potential** of the **handler** to undertake and maintain the training having due regard to the dog's physical condition and emotional state
6. assess the dog's physical condition and emotional state, with consideration to the life stage of the dog (i.e. puppy, juvenile, adult, senior), before and during training, recognising signs of stress, anxiety, fears, phobias, aversions, aggression, pain, conflict and avoidance, and respond appropriately
7. assess the training needs of the dog and handler and plan a structured programme of training that is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and targeted (**SMART**), applying the principles of learning theory to dogs and humans and ensure activities are planned thoroughly for individual or groups of handlers and that review and further development is built into the plan
8. select the most appropriate training methods and **resources**, for the particular dog, handler and the desired training outcome, with due consideration of current scientific evidence, previous experience, humane practices and legislation
9. discuss the training programme with the handler and gain their understanding and agreement to fulfil their obligation to adhere to a structured training programme
10. choose a suitable location to carry out the training, undertake **dynamic risk assessment** throughout the training, maintain the safety and welfare of all persons and dogs present at all times and be continually aware of any factors outside of your control
11. implement training in accordance with relevant health and safety legislation, risk assessment requirements, codes of practice and any other policies and procedures relevant to the training or location
12. handle and interact with the dog humanely and safely and in a manner that allows training to be carried out safely and effectively and avoids creating behaviour that may give rise to welfare concerns
13. ensure that resources are used safely and effectively to achieve training

- goals and safeguard the welfare of the dog
14. encourage and support the development of the dog and motivate the dog to achieve the desired training outcome
 15. recognise different learning styles of the dog and modify training accordingly, having due regard for breed specific traits and motivational drives
 16. encourage handlers to learn and develop their skills giving them clear and direct guidance and feedback on their performance throughout the training
 17. encourage and support the handler using motivational techniques and recognising different learning styles
 18. recognise, understand and act upon indications of stress in the handler, including the relevance of non-verbal communication
 19. demonstrate training techniques with dogs belonging to yourself or others
 20. manage delivery and communicate effectively with an individual and individuals within groups of various sizes
 21. be prepared to work with individuals outside the group to ensure that performance is maintained within the group
 22. monitor the effect of the training on the dog's health and welfare and recognise if the training programme or a particular task is likely to be detrimental in the short or long term
 23. monitor the dog and handler's progress towards achievement of the training programme, develop performance through effective coaching and adjust training methods or desired outcomes where required
 24. encourage the handler to provide appropriate support and feedback to the dog to develop an effective relationship and continually monitor the interaction between dog and handler
 25. recognise when the training outcome is not achievable for the dog or handler and take appropriate action
 26. recognise your own limitations and **refer** to an appropriate professional when necessary e.g. senior trainer, canine behaviourist, veterinary surgeon
 27. communicate effectively both verbally and in writing with others involved in the training programme
 28. ensure appropriate records are maintained and stored as required
 29. maintain professional and ethical conduct and work within the limits of your own authority, expertise, training, competence, experience and the relevant legislation
 30. 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 relevant animal health and welfare legislation, and other dog-specific legislation, local policies and codes of practice, and the legal limitations of the **Veterinary Surgeons Act (1966)** with regard to diagnosis and treatment of disease or injury
2. how the welfare needs of dogs you engage with may be assessed and addressed prior to and during training
3. the purpose for which the dog is being trained and the desired outcome of the training
4. how to obtain and interpret information about the dog and handler and any factors that may affect the design of a training programme
5. what to consider when assessing the suitability of the dog to undertake the training including needs, talents, abilities, interests and confidence
6. the importance of assessing the capabilities and potential of the handler
7. the importance of observing and assessing canine behaviour and condition before and during training activities and taking appropriate action as necessary
8. the **functional anatomy and physiology** of dogs and how to assess the potential short- and long-term effects of the training on the health and welfare of the dog, both physiological and psychological
9. how dogs learn and the physical, psychological and environmental factors that affect learning, including the dog's lifestyle with the handler within their normal environment
10. how people learn and the physical, psychological and environmental factors that affect learning
11. the principles and techniques used in the training of dogs and handlers, and the skills relevant to the desired goals or training to be achieved
12. how to plan and implement a structured programme of training to achieve objectives which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and targeted (SMART)
13. the different methods used to train dogs and what to consider when selecting the most appropriate method of training for a particular dog or a desired training outcome e.g. current scientific evidence, previous experience, humane practices, legislation
14. the correct use and potential misuse of available training equipment, the physiological and psychological effect on the dog and its health and welfare and the importance of educating the handler in good practice
15. 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
16. the use of positive and negative reinforcement and positive and negative punishment and the effects of these approaches on dog behaviour, health and welfare
 17. your responsibilities under relevant health and safety legislation, codes of practice and any other policies or procedures relevant to the training or location and the importance of carrying out risk assessments prior to and during training sessions
 18. how to implement health and safety measures to ensure a safe training system is in place and followed during training, including measures required to prevent injury to other persons not involved in the training session
 19. how to recognise, evaluate and address behaviours throughout the training including stress, anxiety, fears, phobias, aversions, aggression, pain, conflict and avoidance
 20. how to effectively manage and care for a group of people with dogs within a training environment
 21. how to ensure that the welfare of the dog is maintained throughout and that your behaviour or that of others does not cause adverse reactions, fear or distress
 22. how to teach, motivate and support the owner or handler to achieve and maintain the desired outcome
 23. non-verbal communication and the indicators of stress in people and how to respond appropriately
 24. the importance of continually monitoring and evaluating progress with the training and the effect on the dog and handler, and reviewing and revising the training programme
 25. the factors that may effect the progress and success of training and how training can be modified to improve its outcomes for the handler and the dog
 26. how to recognise when training outcomes may indicate that the handler and/or the dog is not suited for the activity for which they are being trained or not best suited to work together
 27. the importance of maintaining communication with others involved in the training programme
 28. 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
 29. the importance and relevance of maintaining accurate training records, safe

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- handling and storage of data, the importance of confidentiality and the requirements of current data protection legislation
30. the importance of appropriate insurance cover including professional indemnity
 31. your professional responsibilities, the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to maintain professional competence and the role of professional bodies and associations

Scope/range

Information about the dog to be considered when designing a training programme:

- life history
- physical condition and capabilities
- age and development stage
- health and medical history
- diet
- reproductive status
- hormonal stage
- current level of training
- 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 handler
- learning needs of the handler
- psychological needs of the handler
- environment (including presence of other animals or other people)
- resources

Resources:

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

Behaviours

- reflect on your own performance within the training session
- reflect on past experiences with training
- be approachable and make time for dog and handlers even when under pressure
- be prepared to make difficult decisions and have the confidence to see them through
- show reliability and resilience within difficult situations
- remain calm and confident, respond logically and decisively in difficult situations
- think clearly, manage conflict and deal with hostility and provocation in a calm and restrained manner
- respond to challenges rationally, avoiding inappropriate emotion
- maintain professional ethics when confronted with pressure from others
- manage ambiguity and deal with uncertainty and frustration when working with the dog and the handler
- stand firmly by a decision when it is right to do so
- find new ways of problem solving
- resist pressure to make quick decisions where full consideration is needed
- remain focused and in control of all situations during training
- seek client feedback and act accordingly

Glossary

Dogs - All domesticated dogs including working dogs

Handler – the person who is training the dog during the session and may or may not be the owner of the dog

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 capabilities of the dog and handler?
- Realistic - Can the outcome be achieved with the resources, knowledge and time available?

- Targeted - Does the objective target a specific area for improvement?

Dynamic risk assessment - the continuous process of identifying hazards, assessing risk, taking action to eliminate or reduce risk, monitoring and reviewing.

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

Functional anatomy and physiology to include:

- skeletal
- vertebral
- nervous and endocrine systems

Veterinary Surgeons Act (1966)

All forms of complementary therapy that involve acts or the practise of veterinary surgery must be undertaken by a veterinary surgeon, subject to any exemption in the Act. At the same time, it is incumbent on veterinary surgeons offering any complementary therapy to ensure that they are adequately trained in its application.

Behavioural treatment of animals is not restricted under the Veterinary Surgeons Act (1966) unless it constitutes the practice of veterinary surgery.

There is no specific exemption order for animal behaviourism and therefore there is no formal jurisdiction to insist upon the involvement of a veterinary surgeon before animal behaviour work is carried out. In many cases, however, animal behaviourists will work on referrals from veterinary surgeons to ensure they are not accused of making a diagnosis of disease or injury (which is restricted to veterinary surgeons).

Links to other NOS

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

LANCTB2 - Handle and control dogs

LANCTB3 - Plan and implement training programmes for dogs

LANCTB5 - Plan and implement programmes to address undesirable behaviour in dogs

LANCTB4

Plan and implement training programmes for dogs and handlers



Developed by Lantra

Version Number 1

Date Approved October 2014

Indicative Review Date October 2019

Validity Current

Status Original

Originating Organisation Lantra

Original URN LANCTB4

Relevant Occupations Veterinary paraprofessional; Dog Training and Behaviour

Suite Veterinary paraprofessional activities; Animal Care and Welfare

Keywords canine; dog; train; training; instructor; handler
