



## *Animal Welfare Policy*

Second Nature Behaviour work to inspire and nurture the relationship between people and the animals under their care. We are passionate about ensuring the emotional well-being of animals by promoting the human-animal bond and providing evidence-based behavioural support to the highest welfare and clinical standards.

Second Nature Behaviour is committed to the ethical treatment of animals. In all our work, we promote and follow up to date evidence-based practices to ensure the animals we have responsibility for, experience good welfare and enjoy a good quality of life.

The Animal Welfare Act 2006, which applies to England and Wales<sup>1</sup>, places a duty of care upon owners and carers, and therefore Second Nature Behaviour, to ensure they take reasonable steps to meet the welfare needs of their animals to the extent required by good practice. In particular, they must provide for the Five Welfare Needs listed in the Act:

- their need for a suitable environment;
- their need for suitable diet;
- their need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns;
- any need they have to be housed with, or apart from, other animals;
- and their need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

Second Nature Behaviour also use the five domains model<sup>2</sup> in its approach. The model recognises that to experience good welfare and a good quality of life, the avoidance of harm or minimisation of suffering is not enough; there must also be opportunities to experience positive states by providing good conditions, opportunities and experiences. All of our staff, sub-contractors, volunteers and mentees work according to the stringent ethics of the FAB Clinicians Code of Conduct<sup>3</sup> and supports the Ethical Statements released by ASAB<sup>4</sup>.

Second Nature Behaviour supports all of the animal welfare policies of the RSPCA<sup>5</sup>. In particular, Second Nature Behaviour is opposed to the use of any aversive training method, to train and control animals and believes that reward-based methods should be used instead. Aversive training techniques are based on the principle of applying an unpleasant stimulus to stop or prevent unwanted behaviour. These kinds of training techniques can include electric shock collars, anti-bark collars, choke chains, prong collars and physical force or coercion, e.g. hitting or forcing into a position. Such techniques can cause pain or fear and may compromise welfare. They can also worsen or cause other behaviour problems.

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<sup>1</sup> There is separate, but similar legislation that covers Scotland (the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006) and also Northern Ireland (the Welfare of Animals Act 2011).

<sup>2</sup> DJ Mellor\* and NJ Beausoleil. Extending the 'Five Domains' model for animal welfare assessment to incorporate positive welfare states. *Animal Welfare* 2015, 24: 241-253

<sup>3</sup> [www.fabclinicians.org/code-of-conduct](http://www.fabclinicians.org/code-of-conduct)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.asab.org/ethics>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.rspca.org.uk/whatwedo/howwework/policies>

Second Nature Behaviour do not endorse the use of physical punitive correction. Our animal welfare and protection policy is that any health or welfare issues found to be of concern will be reported to the local government authority and RSPCA inspector, or local Police where appropriate. We also reserve the right to notify the appropriate authorities if our advice is repeatedly ignored by our clients or referring staff and we believe there is a risk of harm to members of the public, veterinary practice, or of clients' households. We reflect RCVS guidance and procedures<sup>6</sup> for our clinical animal behaviourists and trainers: the RCVS state that in circumstances where there is no client consent for disclosure and a veterinary professional considers that animal welfare or the public interest is compromised, the veterinary professional may report relevant client information to the appropriate authorities. This may include situations where<sup>7</sup>:

- an animal shows signs of abuse or neglect
- a dangerous dog poses a risk to safety
- child or domestic abuse is suspected
- where there is evidence a breeder has had litters without possessing a licence to breed, or has breached the licence conditions
- where the information is likely to help in the prevention, detection or prosecution of a crime
- there is some other significant threat to public health or safety or to the health or safety of an individual.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-surgeons/supporting-guidance/client-confidentiality>

<sup>7</sup> <https://thelinksgroup.org.uk/veterinary-team-guidance>