



CODE OF CONDUCT

For Canine related Commercial Businesses

SURREY, HAMPSHIRE & BERKSHIRE BORDERS

Persons when applying are deemed to have agreed to the following minimum code of practise, which may be amended from time to time by the Steering Committee.

Purpose

This Code does not replace organisations individual codes that have already been developed. It does, however provide the general public with an objective measurement that can be used to help them choose an appropriate canine service provider to meet their needs.

It sets out the key principles and standards which its Members are expected to follow and uphold.

The Code is intended to reflect the best practice that already exists in its Members organisations.

All members have agreed to accept and abide by this code and to supply the organisation with a signed statement to that effect.

Scope and Objectives

Individuals have professional obligations to their clients, the animals they are helping, to one another, to students, the animal requiring the service, to colleagues in other disciplines (e.g. Veterinary Surgeons) and to society.

In order that they may discharge their obligations to their clients, they must be able to meet the expense of the professional requirements which are necessary for safeguarding and promoting the rights of both the client and the animal. The primary objective of this code is to express the values and principles which are essential to those working with animals, regardless of professional sector.

Core Values

- **Animal Welfare**

The handling of dogs can be, under some circumstances, a dangerous occupation. Members have a duty to ensure that the general public is not put at risk as a result of their activities. Members should be adequately insured in case of an accident.

Members must safeguard and promote the welfare of others, especially the client and the animal. The welfare of clients and their pets shall be paramount and shall not be made secondary to commercial consideration.

Treatment of dogs being trained, handled or cared for by members must always be in line with accepted standards of good practice. Treatment must be humane and consistent with breed, type and temperament of the dog. It is impossible to lay down strict rules concerning equipment or methods of training, much will depend on circumstances. What may be acceptable in controlling an aggressive adult dog would be totally unacceptable in the training of a puppy.

- **Professional relationships**

Members shall maintain professional relationships with their clients. They shall not exploit such relationships for improper personal, professional or financial gain, nor seek inappropriately to impose their own values on clients.

- **Competence**

Members shall conduct themselves in such a way as not to undermine public confidence in their profession or the Organisation and shall not practise when physically or psychologically unfit to do so.

- **Confidentiality**

Consent to disclose information must be obtained from the client before sharing related information with third parties. Any disclosure of information must be made only with the clients written permission unless there are overriding legal, safety or ethical considerations to be taken into account.

- **Integrity**

Members shall practice with integrity and shall recognise their responsibility to clients, clients' pets and society in general. Their actions or advice should not knowingly cause psychological or physical distress or damage to any of these.

Members shall not seek to attract business unfairly or unprofessionally or conduct their practice in any way which would discredit the reputation of the Organisation.

- **Legality**

- Work within the legal framework of the County where the service is being provided and have all the correct insurance in place to suit their business needs. A copy of their insurance should be readily available, keeping in compliance with the law in the workplace.
- Members will be expected to act at all times within the law. Any member breaking the law should not expect to receive any support from the Organisation.

- **Spot Checks**

By signing and agreeing to this Code of Conduct you hereby give your permission for members of the D.O.G Local Steering Committee to visit your premises at any time to trial your services without prior notification.

- **Transparency**

Ensuring that they do not act out of prejudice against any person or group, on any grounds including origin, ethnicity, class, sex, status, sexual orientation, age or disability

Be honest, transparent and accurate about their qualifications, competence, experience, achievements and affiliations

- **Continued Professional Development**

In order to maintain, develop and enhance member's skills, they must undertake appropriate CPD on a regular basis and provide written evidence of such to the steering committee. This must be recorded by the individual. Individuals are also encouraged to reflect on their own professional practice.

- **Commercial Obligations**

Members advertising must not:

- Mislead or deceive users of their service
- Be sensational or make unrealistic, or unsubstantiated performance claims
- Create unjustifiable expectations about the length or type of treatment or unrealistic prospects for success
- Make claims of superiority or ridicule colleagues or members of other organisations or professions.

Members must not sell or recommend a product, service or another individual service provider without being first satisfied that this would benefit the animal under their care and that they are suitably qualified to make such a recommendation

The recommending member must disclose to the client if the member may gain a commercial benefit by making such a recommendation. Members must not allow such an interest to influence their choice of provision, service, care or treatment to the detriment of the animal or service user.

Members charges, service and terms and conditions of the service that the member provides, must be clear and precise.

Principles

Individuals and organisations have a duty to:

- Ensure that the main requirements of the Code are readily available to clients
- To work in the best interests of the animal and the person responsible for the animals care. Avoid any individual behaviour which might unreasonably violate professional boundaries, unreasonably damage professional relationships or cause harm to the animal or client.
- Use professional knowledge, research and experience to contribute to the discipline of behaviour and training. Encourage other Members to recognise and maintain similar standards. Contribute to the education and training of colleagues and students by sharing knowledge and experience
- Take on work only within the members existing capabilities or when a programme to attain the required skills has been achieved
- Encourage clients to seek other forms of treatment if behaviour modification or training is not the most appropriate means of treating the condition or problem
- Maintain and extend competence in order to provide a quality service that is accountable. Appraise new methods and techniques in order to extend experience.
- Provide honest and reliable written (where appropriate) opinions, maintaining objectivity in judgements
- Take appropriate action if health or any other factor is likely to interfere with judgement or performance of duty
- Make it clear when making statements whether you do so as a private individual or as a representative of a particular organisation or group

Conflict of Interest

Individuals must be alert to the possibility of any conflict of interest which may affect their ability to exercise discretion or bias their judgement

Informed Consent

Individuals will not act without the informed consent of their client, unless required by law to protect the animal, the person or another from the risk of harm.

Record Keeping

This must comply with the Data Protection Act.

D.O.G Local Advertising/Complaints Procedure

Members must ensure that their name and membership number appears in all advertising. The logo may not be used except in conjunction with the member's full details.

The 'Ethics Committee', a subcommittee of the Steering Committee, meets at the discretion of the Chairman. Its purpose is to assess any revision of the above code and to investigate complaints of unprofessional conduct. These will be put before the Steering Committee who will decide on any revisions or if disciplinary action is to be taken against a member.

This code may be altered by the committee of the Organisation provided that the proposed alteration is notified to all members and their comments requested and duly considered by the committee.