
Overview

This standard covers the provision of dog-walking services. It includes the agreement of services with the customer, selection and use of handling equipment, interaction with the dog, safe and responsible dog walking and the maintenance of records.

You will be expected to work in accordance with relevant national legislation and local policies relating to dogs and the exercising of dogs. You will be expected to develop and maintain a suitable level of skills, knowledge and experience to deliver a professional service.

This standard is for those providing dog-walking services, as well as those providing exercise as part of other pet care services including home-boarding, pet/home sitting, and day boarding.

Users of the standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up-to-date information and policies, and that they are working within the limits of their authority, expertise, training, competence and experience.

This standard is for anyone who provides dog-walking services.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

- P1 maintain your own professional conduct and ethics and work within the limits of your own authority, expertise, training, competence and experience
- P2 comply with relevant animal health and welfare and other national legislation, local policies and codes of practice regarding the walking of dogs at all times
- P3 carry out all work in accordance with relevant environmental and health and safety legislation, risk assessment requirements, codes of practice and business policies
- P4 find out and record sufficient **information about the animal** prior to undertaking dog-walking services
- P5 agree the service to be provided and the exercise requirements of the dog with the customer
- P6 ensure informed consent to carry out dog-walking services is obtained from the customer and recorded
- P7 assess the dog's suitability against the customer's requirements in advance and on the day of the walk
- P8 assess the **suitability of dogs to be walked together**, if walking more than one dog
- P9 prepare the dog appropriately for the planned walk
- P10 select and prepare the resources necessary for the planned walk
- P11 **transport the dog safely** and in an appropriate manner in accordance with relevant legislation
- P12 if relevant, follow the handling and training programme provided and use the appropriate methods and resources
- P13 approach all interactions with the dog in a manner that promotes safety, enjoyment and the interests of others and avoids behaviour giving rise to welfare concerns
- P14 handle the dog correctly throughout the walk in a way that does not compromise the dog's health and welfare
- P15 monitor the mental and physical condition of the dog during the walk and take appropriate action
- P16 report if the dog's behaviour indicates that the exercise may be unsuitable
- P17 complete relevant paperwork and records

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 your professional and ethical responsibilities and the limits of your own authority, expertise, training, competence and experience
- K2 your responsibilities under relevant animal health and welfare and other National legislation, local policies and codes of practice regarding the walking of dogs
- K3 your responsibilities under relevant environmental and health and safety legislation, codes of practice and business policies
- K4 the importance of carrying out a risk assessment as a lone worker and recognising own limitations
- K5 your legal and professional liability when providing a dog-walking service and the importance of appropriate insurance cover
- K6 the need for and importance of disclosure checks
- K7 the information that should be obtained from the customer prior to agreeing to provide dog-walking services
- K8 the importance of agreeing and recording the details of the service you will be providing, and the cost, with the customer
- K9 how to assess the suitability of the dog for the planned walk
- K10 how to assess the suitability of dogs to be walked together if walking more than one dog
- K11 how to assess the suitability of the environment for the planned walk including **access to land**
- K12 the range of equipment available for the handling and exercise of dogs and how to fit and use it correctly
- K13 how to prepare dogs for exercise and how this will differ according to the dog, the environment and the planned walk
- K14 correct ways of handling the dog concerned for the safety of the dog, self and others
- K15 how to ensure that the dog's welfare is maintained throughout and that your behaviour does not cause adverse reactions
- K16 how to transport dogs safely and securely to and from the place of exercise
- K17 how exercise will impact on animal welfare
- K18 the importance of clearing up and disposing of dog waste, legislation relating to this and methods of doing so
- K19 signs that indicate the mental condition and physical behaviour for the

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- breed of dog
- K20 the importance of assessing animal behaviour and the condition of the animal before, during and after exercise, and suitable action to take
- K21 how to administer first aid to dogs
- K22 when it is appropriate to seek veterinary attention
- K23 the signs that indicate that the exercise may be unsuitable for the animal concerned
- K24 why it is important to regularly review and discuss progress with the customer
- K25 methods of maintaining hygiene and bio-security and the reasons why these are important
- K26 the importance of maintaining the safety and security of the property if collecting a dog from a customer's premises
- K27 appropriate records to be kept, the importance of confidentiality and the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998)

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Scope/range

Information about the animal could include:

- 1 breed
- 2 handling and exercise requirements
- 3 training requirements and the appropriate method to be used
- 4 health status
- 5 current vaccination status
- 6 who the current veterinary surgeon is and relevant veterinary history
- 7 existing treatment and medication, including prophylaxis
- 8 gender and sexual status
- 9 identification of animal, e.g. microchip
- 10 interaction with other dogs
- 11 interaction with people
- 12 transportation requirements
- 13 emergency arrangements
- 14 any special requirements or restrictions

Suitability of dogs to be walked together:

- 15 size
- 16 breed
- 17 temperament
- 18 behaviour
- 19 exercise requirements

Access to land:

- 20 National and local access rights and responsibilities
- 21 access by permission or payment
- 22 land management practices including: grazing, forestry, harvesting, spraying
- 23 amenity green space management
- 24 sensitive times for wildlife and livestock
- 25 impact on other users e.g. walkers, horse riders, cyclists
- 26 farming and other economic activity occurring on the land

Transport dogs safely and securely:

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- 27 method
- 28 restraint
- 29 separation if transporting multiple dogs
- 30 hygiene and bio-security
- 31 ventilation and heat control

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Glossary

Current animal welfare legislation:

- England and Wales, Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Scotland, Animal Health and Welfare Act 2006
- Northern Ireland, Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

Current legislation regarding access to land:

- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (England and Wales)
- Highways Act 1980 (England and Wales)
- Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005 (England and Wales)
- Land Reform Act 2003 (Scotland)

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