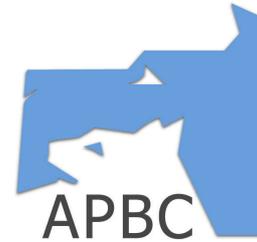


Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors

Promoting the Best in Pet Behaviour



Code of Conduct

This Code sets out certain minimum standards for conduct with which Members of the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors are required to comply.

Any disciplinary function of the APBC Committee shall be guided by the Code of Conduct, but mention or lack of mention in the Code of Conduct of a particular act or omission shall not be taken as conclusive on any question of professional conduct.

Full and Provisional Members must comply with all aspects of the Code; Student and Academic Members must comply with such aspects that apply to their level of study and research. Definitions of membership levels can be found here.

1. General

A Pet Behaviour Counsellor (PBC) has expertise in dealing with the behaviour of individual animals which has resulted in one or more of the following: a decrease in the quality of life of the animal or its owner, or other animals or people; threat or potential threat to human or animal safety; nuisance or perceived nuisance to members of the public.

Pet Behaviour Counsellors have completed training to an approved level commensurate with their membership so that they have an understanding of the principles applicable to all relevant vertebrate species.

In all their work Pet Behaviour Counsellors shall conduct themselves in a manner that does not bring into disrepute the discipline and the profession of animal behaviour. They shall value integrity, impartiality and respect for persons and evidence and shall seek to establish the highest ethical standards in their work. Taking account of their obligations under the law, they shall hold the interest and welfare of those in receipt of their services to be paramount at all times, and ensure that the interests of participants in any research are safeguarded. They must familiarize themselves and comply with all relevant legislation, including that regarding animal welfare and the provision of psychological services, and the codes of practice of the appropriate professional bodies, such as the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and the British Psychological Society.

2. Competence

Pet Behaviour Counsellors shall endeavour to maintain and develop their professional competence, to recognize and work within its limits, and to identify and ameliorate factors which restrict it.

Specifically they shall:

2.1 refrain from laying claim, directly or indirectly, to qualifications or affiliations they do not possess, from claiming competence in any particular area of applied animal behaviour in which they have not established their competence, and from claiming characteristics or capabilities for themselves or others which they do not possess;

2.2 recognize the boundaries of their own competence and not attempt to practise any form of applied animal behaviour for which they do not have an appropriate preparation or, where applicable, specialist qualification;

2.3 take all reasonable steps to ensure that their qualifications, capabilities or views are not misrepresented by others, and to correct any such misrepresentations;

2.4 where the services they judge to be appropriate are outside their personal competence, give every reasonable assistance towards obtaining those services from others who are appropriately qualified to provide them;

2.5 receive cases on referral from a veterinary surgeon or otherwise take all reasonable steps to rule out or identify medical conditions that may be contributing to undesirable behaviour (members can see further guidelines regarding veterinary referral [here](#));

2.6 take all reasonable steps to ensure that diagnosis and treatment of medical disorders in an animal that may be associated with a problem behaviour are carried out by a veterinary surgeon or other person designated as appropriate by relevant legislation;

2.7 take all reasonable steps to ensure that those working under their direct supervision comply with each of the foregoing, in particular that they recognize the limits of their competence and do not attempt to practise beyond them.

3. Obtaining consent

Pet Behaviour Counsellors shall normally carry out investigations or interventions only with the valid consent of participants, having taken all reasonable steps to ensure that they have adequately understood the nature of the investigation or intervention and its anticipated consequences.

Specifically they shall:

3.1 refrain from making exaggerated, sensational and unjustifiable claims for the effectiveness of their methods and products, from advertising services or products in a way likely to encourage unrealistic expectations about the effectiveness of the services or products offered, or from misleading those to whom services are offered about the nature and likely consequences of any interventions to be undertaken;

3.2 take all reasonable steps to ensure that the consent of those to whom interventions are offered obtained is valid.

3.3 recognize and uphold the rights of recipients of services to withdraw consent to interventions or other professional procedures after they have commenced and terminate or recommend alternative services when there is evidence that those in receipt of their services are deriving no benefit from them.

4. Confidentiality

Pet Behaviour Counsellors shall maintain adequate records, but they shall take all reasonable steps to preserve the confidentiality of information acquired through their professional practice and to protect the privacy of individuals or organizations about whom information is collected or held. In general, and subject to the requirements of law, they shall take care to prevent the identity of individuals or organizations being revealed, deliberately or inadvertently, without their expressed permission.

Specifically they shall:

4.1 endeavour to communicate information obtained through practice in ways which do not permit the identification of individuals or organizations;

4.2 convey personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional work to others only with the expressed permission of those who would be identified, (subject always to the best interests of recipients of services and subject to the requirements of law and agreed working practices) except that when working in a team or with collaborators they shall endeavour to make clear to recipients of services or participants in research the extent to which personally identifiable information may be shared between colleagues or others within a group receiving the services;

4.3 in exceptional circumstances, where there is sufficient evidence to raise serious concern about the safety or interests of recipients of services, or about others who may be threatened by the recipient's behaviour, may take such steps as are judged necessary to inform appropriate third parties without prior consent after first consulting an experienced and disinterested colleague, except that where such information has been obtained from a member of another profession, the rules of that profession for such disclosure shall apply;

4.4 take all reasonable steps to ensure that records over which they have control remain personally identifiable only as long as is necessary in the interests of those to whom they refer, and to render anonymous any records under their control that no longer need to be personally identifiable for the above purposes;

4.5 only make audio, video, or photographic recordings of recipients of services with the expressed agreement of those being recorded both to the recording being made and to the subsequent conditions of access to it;

4.6 take all reasonable steps to safeguard the security of any records they make, including those held on computer;

4.7 take all reasonable steps to ensure that colleagues, staff, trainees and students with whom they work understand and respect the need for confidentiality regarding any information obtained.

5. Personal conduct

Pet Behaviour Counsellors shall conduct themselves in their professional activities in a way that does not damage the interest of the recipients of their services and does not inappropriately undermine public confidence in their ability or that of other animal behaviourists and members of other professions to carry out their professional duties.

Specifically they shall:

5.1 refrain from improper conduct in their work as animal behaviourists that would be likely to be detrimental to the interests of recipients of their services or participants in their research;

5.2 neither attempt to secure or to accept from those receiving their service any significant financial or material benefit beyond that which has been contractually agreed, nor to secure directly from them any such benefit for services which are already rewarded by salary;

5.3 not exploit any relationship of influence or trust which exists between colleagues, those under their tuition, or those in receipt of their services to further the gratification of their personal desires;

5.4 not allow their professional responsibilities or standards of practice to be diminished by considerations of religion, sex, race, age, nationality, party politics, social standing, class, self-interest or other extraneous factors;

5.5 refrain from practice when their physical or psychological condition, as a result of for example alcohol, drugs, illness or personal stress, is such that abilities or professional judgement are seriously impaired;

5.6 value and have respect for all relevant evidence and the limits of such evidence when giving behavioural advice or expressing a professional opinion;

5.7 value and have respect for scientific evidence and the limits of such evidence when making public statements that provide information about animal behaviour and animal welfare;

5.8 refrain from claiming credit for the research and intellectual property of others and give due credit to the contributions of others in collaborative work;

5.9 take steps to maintain adequate standards of safety in the use of all procedures and equipment used in professional practice;

5.10 bring allegations of misconduct by a professional colleague to the attention of those charged with the responsibility to investigate them, doing so without malice and with no breaches of confidentiality other than those necessary to the proper investigatory processes and when the subject of allegations themselves, they shall take all reasonable steps to assist those charged with responsibility to investigate them.

6. Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure

The APBC Committee has a procedure for dealing with complaints and issues relating to conduct to enable the investigation of allegations of misconduct against a Member. All investigations are conducted in private and all Members must assist with the investigation. Details of how to make a complaint about the conduct of an APBC Member can be found [here](#).

7. Liability

The Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors shall not be liable to Members for any claims, losses, damages or other expenses (either direct, special or consequential) arising as a result of any dispute between a Member and their client or a third party in relation to any professional advice or treatment given. Pet Behaviour Counsellors shall hold professional indemnity insurance at an adequate level and sufficient to meet any liabilities which might arise as a result of their professional practice. Membership and renewal of membership shall be dependent upon the production of proof of such insurance, and shall be deemed to have been withdrawn if such insurance lapses.

8. Descriptions

8.1 Only current Full Members of the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors may use the term “Member of the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors”. Only Full Members are entitled to use the APBC logo, which is trademarked with the Intellectual Property Office. If anyone who is not a current Member were to use the term or logo the Association would seek an injunction or to take other legal measures to restrain the person concerned from wrongly representing themselves.

8.2 Whereas all Members can state the nature of their affiliation with the APBC in speech or the body of text only Full Members may do so on letterheads, footnotes and any publicity material.

8.3 Only the following specific form of words may be used by Provisional Members to describe themselves: “I am (or “name is”) a provisional member of the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors (APBC), which means having gained the relevant academic qualifications I am (or “name is”) gaining the practical experience necessary for full membership” in the body of text. Using descriptions of provisional membership other than this could result in membership being suspended or withdrawn.

8.4 Only the following specific form of words may be used by Student Members to describe themselves: “I am (or “name is”) a student member of the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors (APBC), and I am (or “name is”) studying (name of course) at (name of academic institution)” in the body of text. Using descriptions of student membership other than this could result in membership being suspended or withdrawn.