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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government Consultation – Summary of Responses

Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs

May 2018

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Summary of responses to the Consultation on the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs consultation

Introduction

Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 (“the Act”), if you own or are responsible for an animal you have a legal duty to take reasonable steps to ensure its welfare needs are met. The Codes of Practice explain what you need to do to meet the standard of care the law requires.

The existing Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs reflected the science and legislation in force at that time and was made under The Animal Welfare Act 2006. A review was required to capture any changes in these areas and to ensure the standards being advised are still appropriate.

Welsh Government officials worked with Animal Welfare Network Wales to review and update the Code for consultation. The Welsh Government is grateful to the Network for their time and expert recommendations.

The Consultation

The aim of the 12 week public consultation was to give enforcement agencies, specialist interest groups and the general public the opportunity to consider and comment on the updated Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs in Wales.

We asked one question:

“This consultation seeks views on the style, layout and content of the code and the information, advice and guidance it contains. It is important that you give as much information and evidence as possible to support your opinion. This will help us improve the accuracy and quality of the code. Comments are welcome on any part of the code. “

There were 10 responses to the consultation. A list of respondents, which includes organisations and individuals, is provided at Appendix 1. Examples of the amendments and additions to the Code. Recommended by respondents are provided below, according to the section to which they apply:

Introduction

“In paragraph 3, we believe it would be helpful to emphasise that every animal is different and an individual with its own personality.

In the final paragraph, it is stated that there is a responsibility to read the Code of Practice. We would recommend that it is explicitly stated that they have a responsibility to care for their dog as described by the Code.” (RSPCA)

The Duty of Care

“It’s important that those who care for dogs are made aware that they have a legal duty to ensure their dog’s welfare needs are met under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. However, we feel there is overlap in content between the Preface, Introduction and Duty of Care sections. Therefore, we recommend that the preface section is merged into the Introduction to make clear that the information contained within the section provides and background and introduction the Code. Furthermore, we also suggest that the paragraph on breach of the provision of the Code may be better placed in the section on Duty of Care.” (Battersea Dogs Home)

“It would be useful to have clarification on proposals to raise the profile of the Code, particularly amongst those groups least likely to be aware of their duty of care.” (BVA & BSAVA)

“The draft document states: “A keeper of a dog, or the person responsible for a dog, has a legal obligation to clean up after it (use either a ‘pooper scooper’ or a plastic bag) when in a public place under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, unless exempt (see Appendix 1).” Although we agree with this message, it is our understanding that under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, local authorities must introduce Public Spaces Protection Orders in order to address dog related issues including dog fouling. Certainly responsible dog owners should pick up after their dogs, however it may be best to advise dog owners to be aware of Public Spaces Protection Orders in areas in which they walk their dogs, as these vary, and some go further than requiring dog owners to pick up.” (Kennel Club)

Section 1 – Environment

“Section 1 is predominantly focused on dogs living outside and doesn’t take into account the large numbers of dogs who live indoors or sufficiently acknowledge that providing for a dog’s welfare needs when living outdoors is very difficult. This can be addressed by providing additional wording as suggested in comments regarding 1.1. We have also suggested a statement about outside living in the summary of the Code.” (RSPCA)

Sleeping and Resting

“Sleeping and resting: It should be mentioned here that a dog should be able to rest undisturbed.” (Dogs Trust)

“It could be useful to provide additional clarification that ‘comfortable’ space for sleeping and resting should, as a minimum, include sufficient space for the dog to lie out flat. The guidance on outside space should apply to all dogs, not just those who are to be kept or left outside, and there should be a maximum/minimum temperature.” (BVA & BSAVA)

“1.2: The first bullet point should also specify that dogs need ‘clean’ bedding, to reinforce the point that it must be changed once soiled.” (Battersea Dogs Home)

“1.2 Within the four bullet points there are three different terms used to describe the dog’s bed: comfortable space, bedding and resting area. We would suggest using the word ‘bed’ as in the original version of the Code for clarity and consistency. We have also made additional revisions in bold. For example, we are unsure if most owners would know that retire meant withdraw to, and so we have replaced it with ‘go to’ which is simpler.

Dogs need:

- Their own comfortable space bed with bedding, to which they can go to, rest and sleep and which should be in a quiet place.
- Their bedding bed to be in a dry, draught free but adequately ventilated area
- Their bedding to be regularly cleaned, washed or removed and replaced.
- A resting area bed free from such things as sharp edges and splinters that can cause injury.” (RSPCA)

Outside Space

“1.3: We welcome that Section 2 states that dogs must have access to clean water. This point should also be made in 1.3 to ensure that owners are aware that any outdoor space for their dog should allow access to water.” (Battersea Dogs Home)

“For clarity and to accurately represent the purpose of the section, we would suggest changing the subtitle of ‘Outside space’ to ‘Keeping your dog outside’. We would expect outside space to cover the back garden where the dog would be taken to go to the toilet or for exercise but this section also covers kennelling of dogs.

We would also suggest moving this section to the end of Section 1 so that it is clearer that sleeping and resting, hygiene and hazards and travel are applicable to all dogs regardless of where they live and that this section is specific to dogs living outside.” (RSPCA)

“1.4 Suggest replace ‘The environment that your dog is kept in’ in first sentence with ‘the area that your dog is kept in’.” (RSPCA)

“1.5 We suggest cross referencing this section to Appendix I and the Animal Welfare (Electronic Collars) (Wales) Regulations 2010 as ‘invisible’ fences that emit a shock via a collar are prohibited but some may consider using them to contain their dog.” (RSPCA)

“Paragraph 1.5: There is no mention of the design not allowing trapping injuries. E.g. with wire mesh, consideration must be given to the gauge of the mesh and the size of any apertures.” (Dogs Trust)

“1.5: Similarly to 1.4, we recommend that this section makes clear that other types of boundaries can be used.” (Battersea Dogs Home)

“1.6: We recommend that the space requirements for outside housing be amended to also state ‘there should be enough room for the dog to turn around, without touching the walls.’ (Battersea Dogs Home)

“Paragraph 1.6: Whilst there is mention of protection from adverse and extreme weather conditions, there is no indication of what constitutes extreme temperatures. As a minimum, we suggest there should be an area where the temperature never drops below 10 degrees Celsius.” (Dogs Trust)

“1.7 To ensure it is clear that it is outside housing which is being referred to change any area at the start of the first sentence to ‘any area of the outside housing’.

1.7 There are additional behaviours which outside housing should allow and which need to be included: sitting and standing upright.

1.7 Enclosure, as used in the second sentence, is a term most associated with wild animals. We suggest replacing this with accommodation or housing.” (RSPCA)

“1.7: We suggest the last sentence be amended to ‘All faeces and urine (where practical) should be removed at least daily and the area should be regularly and frequently cleaned.’ It is also important to note in this section that in grassed areas it will not be possible to remove urine in the same way as faeces.” (Battersea Dogs Home)

“Replace “lie down in a natural position” with “lie out flat”. In addition, this should clearly relate to the sleeping area and not to the activity area, so may be best to move this part of the paragraph to the Sleeping and Resting section.

The cleaning requirements detailed here are very subjective in terms of timing and also thoroughness of cleaning. It would be useful to cross reference this with the hygiene section, including details of which cleaning products should be used.” (Dogs Trust)

“It Is Battersea’s view that it would be beneficial for this section to highlight other behaviour problems associated with a lack of socialisation, such as aggression. We also suggest that

this part should also make clear that it is important to keep dogs entertained and stimulated. It would be beneficial to note that dogs which are bored and left alone for periods can be more prone to escaping an outdoor space which can unfortunately lead to animal welfare problems such as livestock worrying.” (Battersea Dogs Home)

“The average owner won’t understand the term ‘stimulation’, therefore it would be useful to include some examples, such as toys, chews and puzzle feeders that are safe to leave the dog with. Amend sentence to read “ensure that it remains happy and free from negative emotions such as fear, anxiety or frustration”. After “such as bedding, food and water” add “bowls”. (Dogs Trust)

“Paragraph 1.9: This is not guidance; rather it is an explanation of behaviour. A recommendation is required here, such as environmental management or seeking advice from a qualified behaviourist via a referral from their vet.” (Dogs Trust).

Hygiene

“Under section 1.10 hygiene Blue Cross believes the rather than describing cleaning up after your dog at home as ‘good practice’ it should be described as an essential. A clean environment for dogs to live in is essential to maintaining their good health and preventing disease spread so shouldn’t be considered merely good practice.” (Blue Cross)

Hazards

“1.11: It is welcome that the Code includes details of potential hazards to dogs that are found in the home. Further to this, we would suggest that a link to a source of further information on poisonous foods is included within the Code. This could be done as part of Appendix 2.” (Battersea Dogs Home)

“1.11 Dogs, and especially inquisitive puppies, will explore and eat things that are poisonous and dangerous to them so suggest adding explore to this sentence.

1.11 There are other hazards in the environment in addition to those listed e.g. open windows and balconies. We suggest that these are included so that attention can be drawn to the possible hazard of falling.

1.11 The final sentence of 1.11 states that you should always consult your vet if you are concerned that your dog has eaten or come into contact with anything that could be harmful. We suggest adding ‘immediately’ to this sentence because the time when advice is sought is as important as the frequency.” (RSPCA)

Travel

“1.12: The first sentence should be amended to read ‘When transporting your dog in a vehicle you should make sure they are comfortable and safe at all times.’ (Battersea Dogs Home)

“Dogs are regularly transported in vehicles. Ideally, although not compulsory, you should make sure that your dog is not able to move freely when being transported. In the event of an accident or sudden and unexpected manoeuvres, an unrestrained dog can be seriously injured or cause injury to others. A safety harness, specifically for use in a car, or a secured, purpose built cage of adequate size and with good ventilation will keep your dog in one

place. You should ensure, however, that when securing your dog in a restricted area, it is not constantly subjected to direct sunlight.” (Countryside Alliance)

“1.14: As a member of the Dogs Die in Hot Cars campaign group we are pleased to see the risks of leaving dogs unattended in vehicles on hot days highlighted in the Code. We would also suggest that the following is added – ‘Dogs are unable to regulate their own body temperature, and as they struggle to keep cool they are at significant risk of illness very quickly in cars, conservatories or other warm areas.’ Further to this, we also suggest that this section highlights the risks of dogs left in vehicles in cold temperatures too.” (Battersea Dogs Home)

“1.14 It is stated that ‘dogs should never be left unattended in a car.....’. Is the ‘should’ not a ‘must’ or could this be reworded as ‘It is very important that you do not leave your dog unattended in a car’”. (RSPCA)

“Paragraph 1.14: More information on this is available via the Dogs Die in Hot Cars campaign, we suggest including a link to further details:

<https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/dogs/health/dogsinhotcars>” (Dogs Trust)

Section 2 – Diet

“2.1 Sentence one refers to a clean bowl or trough. This is very specific, suggest replacing with a suitable container. It is also important to take clean, fresh drinking water with you when away from home in case there isn't any available so suggest this is added. Suggest adding further wording to the end of the 4th sentence which refers to changes in the amount of water your dog drinks: 'It is therefore important to be aware of your dog's normal drinking habits'.” (RSPCA)

“It should be clear that feeding a balanced diet in the correct quantities and appropriate for the individual life stage is important for maintaining optimum body weight, as well as for ensuring provision of essential nutrients, and that veterinary advice should be followed.” (BVA & BSAVA)

Balanced Diet

“To save confusion as to what 'early' means we suggest replacing 'from early in a dog's life' to 'at all stages of your dog's life'.” (RSPCA)

“2.3 As the amounts recommended by manufacturers are considered guidance, and the amount for an individual dog could be greater or less than stated, we suggest that rather than stating 'follow the food manufacturer's instructions closely, replace with 'When feeding prepared food, you should read and be guided by the food manufacturer's instructions. Monitor your dog's weight and body condition closely adjusting the amount of food as necessary.'” (RSPCA)

“2.5 Breed is included as a factor to take into account when considering what diet to provide a dog. There is huge individual variation within a breed and other factors like activity, health and lifestyle are much more important than breed. We suggest that this is removed.” (RSPCA)

“2.6 As this point relates to feeding the diet in the correct portions, would it not fit better under feeding regimes?” (RSPCA)

“2.8 For consistency with the point raised under 2.3, we suggest revising the second sentence so that it states: 'The feeding instructions on dog food packaging are a good guide or you can also seek... Obesity is also a significant welfare issue with large numbers of pet dogs affected. Including this point may be helpful.'” (RSPCA)

“2.8: We welcome that the document is, rightly, largely written in an encouraging tone that explains the concepts included within it simply. However, there is a little tonal confusion in this part. The section on obesity, which is dealing with a serious welfare risk, is a little alarmist in nature and poses the risk of scaring owners into feeding their dog too little. The point about reward-based training is important, however it is important that it is made clear that reward-based training is supported by animal welfare organisations. Therefore, we recommend adding 'which is recommended by most animal welfare organisations' after the reference to 'for training purposes.'” (Battersea Dogs Home)

“Under section 2.10 body condition it would be useful to include a body conditioning chart with images to help make the descriptions more easily understandable for owners.” (Blue Cross)

“Section 2.10 on body condition requires the owner to recognise that ‘stomach looks empty’ which does not seem to be a reasonable expectation. Body condition score diagrams should be included.” (BVA & BSAVA)

“2.13 It is most important that a dog is undisturbed when feeding and this isn’t completely clear from the current statement. We suggest revising so that it states ‘...to eat undisturbed’. (RSPCA)

“Section 2.14 should be clear that veterinary advice should be sought in the event of unexplained increase or reduction in appetite.” (BVA & BSAVA)

“Amend to read as “Dogs that are pregnant, feeding their puppies, unwell, old or young will have different dietary needs from the average healthy adult dog. Your vet is the best person to advise you about the care of your dog in these circumstances.

It should also be added in that Puppies need more frequent feeding than a healthy adult dog.” (Dogs Trust)

“Paragraph 2.16: This paragraph is currently referring to two different issues, travel sickness and bloating. We suggest the travel sickness point should be added as a paragraph in the travel section. Then the point regarding bloating can remain within this section.” (Dogs Trust)

“2.16 Not feeding your dog immediately before travel is open to misinterpretation and so we would suggest revising the wording about feeding before travel so that it is consistent with that around feeding before exercise and states a recommended time period.” (RSPCA)

“paragraph 2.16 where you talk about not feeding near vigorous exercise as may cause ‘bloat’, you may want to mention it can cause a ‘stomach torsion’ which can lead to death if not treated quickly.” (Guide Dogs Cymru).

“2.16 – The travel sickness and bloat need listing as two separate issues”. (Anonymous).

Section 3 – Behaviour

“It is Battersea’s view that this point is misleading – the sections that apply to early years are well identified in the text, and the behaviour section is relevant to all dogs, so it may be sensible to remove the current opening paragraph.” (Battersea Dogs Home)

Early Experiences

“3.2: We recommend removing the words ‘later in life’ from the end of the third sentence. There is a risk otherwise of giving a false impression of how quickly these problems can arise. Also, the last sentence should be more specific about allowing a puppy to mix with other dogs and animals. We suggest the following amends ‘This key period overlaps with when puppies are usually given their initial course of vaccinations and your vet will tell you when it is safe to allow your puppy to mix with other dogs and animals.’” (Battersea Dogs Home)

“3.2 Socialisation is not defined and so suggest revising the first sentence to ‘Puppies learn most readily about other dogs, people and animals when they are very young. It is important that puppies are provided with positive experiences from three to 14 weeks of age so that they have the best chance of developing into well adjusted and happy dogs.’” (RSPCA)

“3.2 & 3.3 Both sections focus on the early experiences of puppies. However, it is important that these socialisation and habituation continue throughout adult life and we would suggest including a point to cover this.” (RSPCA)

“Paragraph 3.4: Amend to read as follows “Do not disturb a sleeping dog; instead allow it to wake up of its own accord”. (Dogs Trust)

Training

“Whilst all sections refer to the use of rewards to train dogs there is nothing about the use of punitive or aversive techniques, equipment and methods. These abound training and behaviour modification and can seriously compromise dog welfare as well the relationship between dog and owner. In some cases, they can make behaviour problems worse or cause new behaviour problems to develop. We would really like to see information covering these points included in the Code and reference to equipment not to be used including, but not exhaustive of, choke chains, prong/pinch collars, anti-bark collars, smacking, shouting, hitting. A lack of information in this area would be a real missed opportunity for dog welfare.

3.6 We suggest adding a point about why training is important for dogs e.g. it helps dogs learn how to behave appropriately and allows us to keep them under control.” (RSPCA)

“Paragraph 3.7:

- There is no mention that a dog must not be punished.
- In addition, this paragraph implies that dogs only learn from their formal training sessions. It should be clarified here that dogs learn all of the time, from every interaction they have. Owners need to know this to avoid undesirable, inadvertent learning.” (Dogs Trust)

“Under section 3.8 we feel links to suitable dog training classes or schemes would be useful. For example the schemes run by Dogs Trust and Kennel Club. (Blue Cross)

Exercise

“3.9 There is significant individual variation within a breed and so using this as a guide for the amount of exercise a dog needs could be very misleading.” (RSPCA)

“3.10: We would suggest amending the last sentence to make clear that advice should be sought from a vet: ‘If you are in any doubt about what exercise your puppy needs, seek advice from your vet.’ (Battersea Dogs Home)

“Under section 3.10 we believe it should say seek advice from a vet or trained behaviourist rather than just seek advice.” (Blue Cross)

“Paragraph 3.11:

- We suggest a provision should be made to allow puppies to be exercised in a private garden or other enclosed outside space that is exclusively for the use of the puppy in question.
- Following this very restrictive advice as it currently is written will likely result in an under-socialised/ under-habituated puppy.” (Dogs Trust)

“Paragraph 3.12:

- There is no explanation of what the exemptions are.
- In addition to noting there are dangers from traffic and other dogs, it should also be included that the livestock and farmer pose a danger to the dog.
- The second part of this paragraph which explains how a collar or harness should fit needs to be separated out.
- Once separated out, more detail should be included into this new paragraph that details that prong and pinch collars, as well as choke chains are not acceptable as they can cause pain, suffering or injury. Suggested wording “Avoid harsh, potentially painful or adverse training methods including persistent shouting, smacking, choke chains, pinch and prong collars.
- In addition there is no mention that the use of electronic training devices and boundary fences systems are not permitted by law.” (Dogs Trust)

“3.12 It is not clear what ‘unless exempt’ means and so we would suggest that this is removed and instead it is stated that there are exemptions to these requirements and more detail can be found in Appendix 1.” (RSPCA)

Play and Interaction

“3.16 Changes in behaviour are often the first signs of illness as well as unhappiness and we suggest this is added to the third sentence of this paragraph.

- 3.16 The fourth bullet states barking (unless there is good reason). It isn’t entirely clear what this means.

Does it mean unless it is in response to something specific e.g. someone knocking on the door or a person entering a property?

- 3.16 Many welfare organisations provide illustrations which show the signals use to tell us how they are feeling. We would suggest making reference to this at this point in the Code.” (RSPCA)

“3.17: Battersea agrees with the intention of 3.17. However, we would recommend the following amend to the wording for clarity, ‘Give your dog access to a safe hiding place so that it has somewhere to go if it is feeling afraid.” (Battersea Dogs Home)

“3.18 Although vet’s are extremely knowledgeable in the physical health of dogs this is not necessarily the case for behaviour and mental health. To ensure that behaviour problems are diagnosed and treated appropriately a vet should refer cases like uncharacteristic aggression or sudden fearful or aggressive responses to a behaviour expert. We suggest the following wording: ‘Your vet may refer you to a dog behaviour expert. It is important that they have a combination of appropriate qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience. They should work in ways which protect dog welfare.” (RSPCA)

“3.19: This part should also make clear that the toileting area should also be away from the feeding area.” (Battersea Dogs Home)

“3.20 A keeper of a dog, or the person responsible for a dog, has a legal obligation to clean up after it (use either a ‘pooper scooper’ or a plastic bag) when in a public place under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, unless exempt.” (Brecon Beacons National Park Authority)

Section 4 – Company

“4.1: We recommend a reworking of this point to state ‘Any dog has the potential to be a danger in certain circumstances. Therefore, you must always supervise your dog when it is around children or unfamiliar animals.’ (Battersea Dogs Home)

“4.1 The RSPCA is very pleased to see this key safety information included in the Code. However, as the aim of the boxed section is to prevent children from being bitten, we suggest that the wording is revised to state this: ‘Any dog has the potential to bite. Never leave your dog unsupervised around children or other animals.’ We also suggest adding a point about materials to keep children and people safe around dogs which are available from many welfare organisations.” (RSPCA)

When Away from Home

“4.5 In the final sentence we would suggest that this should read ‘...and you need to ensure that they understand....’ rather than ‘..... and you should.....’.

- 4.6 Dogs may suffer when alone not only through lack of company but also due to boredom. Suggest the second sentence is revised as follows: ‘Some dogs can become bored and others, which haven’t been taught to cope when left alone.....’
- 4.6 We believe that the last sentence relating to roaming needs to be a standalone point.” (RSPCA)

Section 5 – Health

Healthcare

“Breeding and Neutering: add “i.e. litters produced” to the end of the paragraph”. (Dogs Trust)

“Battersea feels it would be beneficial to include details on ‘getting a dog’ in this section, including advice on the risks of buying a pet online. There are many key points on responsible pet ownership included under this heading in the Code and therefore we feel this needs to be reflected in the summary.” (Battersea Dogs Home)

- “5.3 As well as being aware of the signs of illness in their dog, it is also important that owners monitor and check their dog daily for signs of illness.
- 5.3 We suggest adding constipation and difficulty passing urine to sickness and diarrhoea.
- 5.3 We suggest revising lack of appetite so that it states ‘lack of, or a change in, appetite’.
- 5.3 We suggest adding a point about onset of fearful behaviour or dog being uncharacteristically aggressive.” (RSPCA)

Getting a Dog

“Under section 5 health there is a subsection relating to ‘getting a dog’ We believe it would be useful to add a section on responsible online purchase of dogs, we know that many people now choose the internet as the place to source a new puppy so it would make sense to include some advice on how to do it safely here. We would suggest that the document references the PAAG minimum standards and that all purchasers ensure that adverts are complying with the minimum standards before they contact the seller.” (Blue Cross)

“This section should strongly encourage seeking veterinary advice pre-purchase, particularly with regard to the type/breed of dog, and also any likely health problems or other potential future costs (ie clipping for long haired breeds). It should also be clear that inherited health problems may not always be clear from birth and may manifest later in life. Pre-purchase resources such as those available from PDSA and Dogs Trust could also be referenced. Potential owners should ensure they can afford the ongoing costs of dog ownership and, if appropriate, consider taking out pet insurance.” (BVA & BSAVA)

Grooming

“5.10 It is more accurate to state that certain coat types will need more attention than others as some shorter hair dogs can require more grooming than longer haired ones. We suggest adding a point about advice on how best to groom your dog can be sought from a pet care specialist.” (RSPCA)

Breeding and Neutering

“5.11: As a rehoming organisation that sees thousands of unwanted dogs come through our gates every year Battersea would recommend putting the neutering part (5.12) before the breeding part (5.11). In Battersea’s view neutering is an important consideration for any

responsible owner and therefore, we feel this this should be reflected in the Code.”
(Battersea Dogs Home)

“5.11 The second sentence states that if a decision to breed is made then the health and welfare should be considered. Revise this to ‘must’ be considered.

5.11 Where appropriate socialisation is stated in the fourth sentence, we suggest adding adequate as both quantity and quality of experience is important”. (RSPCA)

“As a rehoming organisation that sees thousands of unwanted dogs come through our gates every year Battersea would recommend putting the neutering part (5.12) before the breeding part (5.11). In Battersea’s view neutering is an important consideration for any responsible owner and therefore, we feel this this should be reflected in the Code.

We also suggest amending the third sentence within this section to ‘Before breeding, you should consider the health of the parents, the avoidance of inherited defects, how you will ensure appropriate socialisation and the likelihood of finding suitable homes for the puppies.’

Furthermore, we would also welcome the inclusion of a sentence promoting adopting a dog from a rescue or rehoming centre as an alternative to breeding.

5.14: We suggest changing ‘pet shops’ to ‘pet supply shops’.” (Battersea Dogs Home)

General Comments

“Battersea would welcome clarification on the final presentation of Code and whether it will include photos and/or diagrams to illustrate specific points within the Code. It is our view that including visual representation of some points would be beneficial in communicating the advice in the Code to the public. The Code published by DEFRA in England is a colour document, with pictures, infographics and tables to illustrate data in an approachable way. We feel that a similar approach is necessary in Wales, and would be happy to help if required in so doing. If it is the intention to design the Code following review of the text, then we would appreciate clarification on that point.” (Battersea Dogs Home)

“The draft document contains a section on ‘Getting a Dog’ which states: “If you decide to get a puppy, a good way to ensure that the important considerations are met is through the Puppy Contract. An example of such a contract and more information can be found at <https://puppycontract.rspca.org.uk/home>”. The Kennel Club supports the intentions of the Puppy Contract – in addition under our Assured Breeder Scheme, our breeders are required to use such a contract. However, the Puppy Contract alone does not protect puppies or puppy buyers adequately.” (Kennel Club)

“We believe the code of practice is a good document which covers all the major factors when it comes to meeting the welfare needs of dogs. The draft document covers a wide range of issues and therefore is a sizeable document. We believe that it is essential that the document is presented in a useable format not only for enforcers but also for dog owners themselves. Blue Cross would suggest the Welsh Government look at producing shorter step by step guides for individual aspects of the code of practice and also consider how to present the document in an online or mobile format which would make it more user friendly.

We believe the document could include more links to further information than is currently included and believe these links should be split by section to make it easier for new owners to access the information they are looking for.” (Blue Cross)

Next Steps

Comments and suggested amendments will, where appropriate, be incorporated into the Code. A final draft will be laid before the National Assembly for Wales for 40 days. If within the 40 day period, the Assembly does not resolve to annul the draft, the Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs will issue the Code in the form of the draft laid before the Assembly.

All stakeholders and respondents to the consultation will be informed when the new Code is published.

List of respondents:

Battersea Dogs Home

Blue Cross

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

British Veterinary Association (BVA) & British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA)

Dogs Trust

Countryside Alliance

Guide Dogs Cymru

Kennel Club

RSPCA