



Happy and **Healthy**

A guide for dog owners
who are homeless or in
housing crisis



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Dogs Trust Hope Project

Dogs Trust Hope Project provides free and subsidised veterinary treatment for dogs whose owners are homeless or in housing crisis, through a veterinary entitlement card scheme.

We also provide animal welfare advice for owners and work to encourage housing providers and homelessness organisations to accept clients with dogs.

Veterinary Entitlement Card Scheme

To apply for a Hope Project veterinary entitlement card you must:

- Be homeless or in housing crisis (sleeping rough, squatting, living in temporary council accommodation, temporary supported accommodation, a hostel, nightshelter or on an unauthorised travellers site)
- Apply through a participating homelessness organisation or be able to prove your NFA status

If your dog has not been neutered, your initial veterinary entitlement card will be valid for 4 months only. To renew your card for a further 8 months, you must get your dog neutered.

If your dog is already neutered when you apply to the scheme, you will be issued with a card for 12 months.

For details on how to access the scheme or to find out if it runs in your area, please contact the Hope Project team on **020 7837 0006**.

What's covered

Preventative Healthcare

The following treatments are available FREE through the Hope Project veterinary entitlement card scheme:

Worming

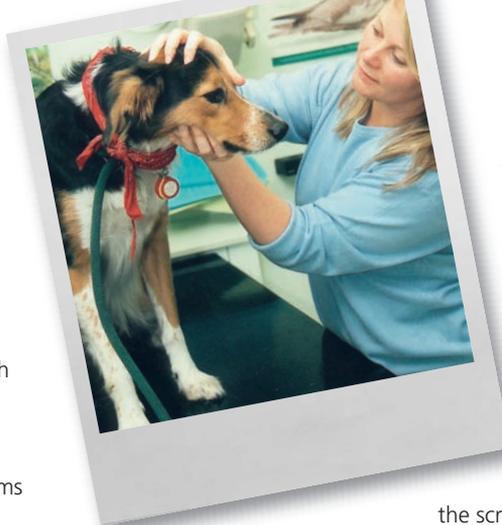
All dogs will have worms at some point in their lives, with puppies being most at risk. Untreated worm infestations can affect adult dogs and cause quite serious illness in puppies. They can also be a risk to YOUR health. As a responsible dog owner, you must treat your dog for worms regularly, at least twice a year for adult dogs and every two to four weeks for puppies.

Flea Treatment

Even clean and healthy dogs can get fleas. If your dog has fleas he will scratch more, and you may notice black specks of 'dirt' on his coat or skin (these will turn pink/red if you place them on a piece of moist white tissue). To prevent your dog from getting fleas, you should regularly visit your vet for flea treatment. If your dog has an infestation of fleas, make sure that you spray his environment with a flea spray (available from vets) as fleas spend the majority of their life in the home environment and not on the dog.

Vaccinations

Some dogs die from diseases which they can easily be protected from with just a couple of injections as a puppy and then regular boosters. Puppies should be vaccinated



at 8 weeks of age and then again at 10–12 weeks. Regular boosters are needed to protect the dog throughout his life.

Microchipping

Microchipping is a method of permanently identifying your dog. A microchip is a small electronic device the size of a grain of rice which is inserted into

the scruff of the neck between the shoulder blades. Each microchip has a unique number so that your dog can be identified via a national pet database.

The Hope Project will automatically register your dog on the Petlog Pet Identification Database. The microchip can be registered to your telephone number or temporary/'care of' address, but you must ALWAYS keep these details up to date.

Neutering

In an ideal world every dog would have a suitable home and a caring owner. Unfortunately this is not the case. Thousands of healthy dogs are destroyed each year in the UK simply because they could not be found loving homes. Neutering is a humane way to reduce the stray dog population and prevent thousands of unwanted puppies being born each year.

Neutering refers to either 'castration' (the removal of the testicles) for male dogs or 'spaying' (the removal of the ovaries and the uterus) for female dogs. Your dog must be neutered within 4 months in order for you to continue receiving help from the Hope Project.

The benefits of neutering:

- Neutering will not change your dog's personality
- Neutering is the only guaranteed way of preventing unplanned puppies
- A spayed bitch will not have the messy seasons that many experience twice a year or have phantom pregnancies
- Spaying reduces the risk of some common and often fatal cancers and illnesses in later life
- Castrating a dog will typically make it calmer and a lot less likely to stray. Every year, the Hope Project gets calls from owners whose dogs have been seriously injured in road accidents after they have strayed. These are usually unneutered male dogs that have run off in search of a mate
- Sadly dogs are sometimes stolen for fighting and breeding. If your dog is neutered, it will greatly reduce the chance of this happening

Additional treatment

An entitlement card can be used to receive additional, necessary treatment for your dog, up to the value of £250. You are liable for the first £10 of each treatment, which must be paid direct to the veterinary practice.

Ongoing treatment

If your dog is diagnosed with an ongoing medical condition, the Hope Project will pay £25 per month towards veterinary treatment and prescriptions. If the treatment exceeds £25 per month, you will be responsible for the remainder of the costs.

What's not covered

Pregnancy

The Hope Project will not pay for any treatment related to pregnancy, whelping or the rearing of puppies (but will pay for the neutering of a bitch that has been 'caught').

Vaccinations

We will only pay for one puppy/full course of vaccinations per dog. If you fail to turn up for the second part of your dog's vaccination, you will have to pay for the course to be started again.

Dog fights

The Hope Project will only pay for one course of treatment relating to bite/fight wounds. If your dog is involved in any subsequent fights, you must pay for the full cost of treatment.

Pet Passports

We will not pay for or make any contribution towards the cost of a Pet Passport, including the rabies vaccination.

Basic First Aid

The following information is only intended as a guide to help you if your dog is injured or taken ill. You should always contact your vet for further advice as soon as possible. Do not give your dog any medication intended for humans.

Bleeding

If your dog is bleeding, you should apply pressure to the wound using your thumb (or a cotton wool pad if available). If you have a bandage, place a dressing on the wound and wrap the bandage over it. Do not use a plaster. Do not leave a bandage on for more than 24 hours. Contact your vet as soon as possible. If there is something stuck in the wound do not attempt to remove it as it may be preventing the bleeding from getting worse. Apply pressure around it to control the bleeding before you get to a vet.

Poisoning

If your dog has eaten or swallowed something poisonous, try to identify what it is and call your vet immediately. Do not make your dog vomit.

Stings

Bathe the area around the sting with water (and bicarbonate of soda if available). Apply ice to reduce the swelling. If your dog has been stung in the mouth or throat, you should contact your vet for advice.

Heat Stroke

On a hot day your dog may be at risk of heatstroke. If you notice that your dog is panting heavily or seems distressed, take him somewhere cool. Wet his coat with cool water and apply an ice pack to the head (a bag of frozen peas is very effective). Contact your vet as soon as possible. Only offer your dog small amounts of water to drink at a time as any more than this could make your dog worse.

Fights

If your dog is involved in a fight, check him for wounds. Puncture wounds to the head or body can be very serious and you should take your dog to a vet straight away. Your dog will probably need antibiotics to prevent the wounds from getting infected even if they appear very small.



Common Health Problems

Arthritis

Many dogs get arthritis as they get older and even young dogs can sometimes suffer. If your dog is lame, you should avoid walking him for a few days. If the limp still does not improve, take your dog to see a vet.

Bad breath

Make sure you brush your dog's teeth regularly using special dog toothpaste. This will prevent the build up of tartar which is often the cause of bad breath.

Constant head shaking or scratching of the ears

Check your dog's ears for irritation or discharge. If symptoms continue for more than a few days, consult a vet for treatment.

Coughing

If the cough is persistent, it could be an indication of kennel cough or a more serious condition. Visit a vet for treatment.

Frequently 'scoots' on his rear on the floor or chews at his rear

Make sure your dog is wormed regularly (worming treatment is available through participating vets on the Hope Project). You may need to visit your vet to check if your dog has an anal gland problem.

Increased water intake

If the temperature has not changed and you have not altered your dog's diet, you will need to check with your vet that everything is okay. It will help if you can take a fresh urine sample with you in a clean jar.

Sore or itchy skin

Make sure your dog is treated for fleas regularly (flea treatment is available through participating vets on the Hope Project). Minor skin irritation can be treated with antiseptic skin creams or lotions. Take a trip to the vet for diagnosis and treatment.

Sticky, sore or red eyes

If your dog has sticky or sore eyes for more than 24 hours, or if there is a discharge, you should visit a vet for a proper diagnosis.

Upset stomach

Starve your dog for 24 hours, allowing only water to drink. If he is still sick on just water, or is not better after 24 hours, contact your vet. You shouldn't allow your dog to scavenge or eat scraps. Make any changes to his diet gradually.

Getting a Dog

Whilst Dogs Trust appreciates that the bond between a homeless owner and their dog is especially close, we are aware of how difficult it is for homeless people to find temporary accommodation that also accepts their dog. Many housing providers and services for the homeless still do not accept people with dogs, so please think carefully if you are considering getting a dog as a pet.

Owning a dog, if you haven't had one before, is a life changing event. Before you make the decision to get a dog, you should consider everything that is involved. The average life expectancy of a dog is 12–15 years so, if you are serious about getting one, you need to be sure you can cope with the responsibilities of feeding, walking, grooming and cleaning up after him for his whole life. Dogs can be fantastic pets but they are also time consuming and caring for them will be very expensive.



Looking After Your Dog

Food

It is best to feed your dog a good quality commercially prepared food. Dry dog foods are less messy and more convenient but remember that your dog will need to drink more water. Instructions on the packaging suggest how much to feed. Adult dogs can be fed once or twice a day (morning and evening) if you wish. Remember, your dog's appetite will vary with his exercise and lifestyle, so watch he is not getting too fat or thin and adjust the quantities accordingly. Avoid rich foods and sudden changes to your dog's diet. Puppies need a carefully balanced diet containing high quality ingredients. Because they are growing rapidly they also need feeding more frequently than adult dogs.

Water

Always make sure your dog has access to clean, fresh drinking water and try to monitor how much water your dog drinks. If your dog is suddenly drinking more, and you haven't changed his diet or it isn't very hot, take a trip to the vet to check the possible causes.

Grooming

Regularly brushing your dog's coat is a good way of monitoring his health as it allows you to check for any new lumps, bumps, cuts, skin complaints, fleas or ticks. Most dogs enjoy being groomed and it will also help you develop a close bond.

Bathing

Most dogs love a lukewarm bath but make sure you only use a dog shampoo. Always remember to dry your dog thoroughly with a towel (and a hair dryer if possible). This is very important if you will be outside with your dog, or if it is cold, because dogs can feel dry to the touch quite quickly but they may still be damp underneath.



Dental Care

Dental disease is very common in dogs and, if left untreated, can lead to all sorts of problems.

Regular brushing is the most effective way of removing plaque from your dog's teeth, keeping gums healthy and also preventing bad breath! Brush your dog's teeth twice weekly using a small, soft, human toothbrush and a pet toothpaste. Chewing will also help to keep teeth clean, but do not let your dog chew bones or stones as these can break teeth and lead to serious health problems.

Ears

You should regularly clean your dog's ears to prevent ear problems. Use a damp piece of cotton wool to wipe the ear clean but do not insert anything into the ear as this may hurt your dog and cause damage.

Eyes

Check your dog's eyes are clear and free from discharge. If his eyes are sticky or look sore, you should visit a vet.

Claws

Most dogs' nails will wear down naturally. If they get too long, ask your vet for advice.

Pregnancy

- Do you know how to care for a pregnant bitch?
- Can you be sure your bitch will not need an expensive caesarean?
- Do you know how to look after puppies in the first weeks of their life?
- Could you be sure that the new owners will be able to look after a dog for his entire life?

If you cannot answer YES to all of these questions, you are putting the lives of your dog and her puppies at risk.

If your bitch does become pregnant, it is not too late to have her neutered. During pregnancy, the earlier your dog is neutered the better.

It is not necessary to let your dog have a litter of puppies before neutering. This is an old wives tale which has no scientific basis. In fact, pregnancy can pose a significant health risk to your dog.

Lost dogs

If your dog strays or becomes lost, you should notify the police and the local authority dog warden. If your dog has been microchipped, you should notify the relevant pet microchipping database. Please also see the contact details in the back of this booklet for pet lost and found services.

Playing and Training

Playing

Exercise is essential to keep your dog fit and healthy. At least one walk a day (preferably two) and a good run off-lead in a safe area will help your dog to burn off his excess energy, making him a nicer, calmer dog to be around. Dogs also need to exercise their brains to be completely happy, so active playing will help wear him out more quickly than just walking and will build a strong bond between you.

Basic Training

You should start training your dog as soon as you get him. Train your dog by rewarding him with something he wants as soon as he does what you ask, so that he is far more likely to do it again. Rewards can be anything, including food treats, a favourite toy, playing a certain game, or praise. You should NEVER use punishment in training. If you punish your dog, he may become scared of you and eventually mistrust you.

Sit: With your dog standing in front of you, show him you have a reward in your hand. Slowly move the reward above and over his head and say "sit". His head should go up as he tries to reach the reward and his bottom should go down into the 'sit' position. Give him the reward and praise him. Do not push his bottom down to make him sit, as this may hurt his back.

Down: Ask your dog to sit and show him the reward in your hand. Slowly move your hand down towards the ground just in front of his feet and say “down”. He should follow your hand with his nose and lie down. Give him the reward and praise him. Do not push or force him down as you may hurt him.

Stay: Make your dog sit or lie down. Step away from him as you say “stay”. Silently count to five then step back to him. Give him a reward and praise him. If he gets up, ask him to sit again and repeat the command. When your dog is doing this short “stay” correctly, gradually increase the distance between you and your dog and/or the time that he is asked to stay. If he gets up when he is not supposed to, go back a stage to a shorter distance or time until he is doing as he is told every time.

Come: Ask a friend to hold your dog by the collar while you show him a reward in your hand, then walk away from him for a few steps. As he is released, call his name and say “come”. Praise him as he comes to you and give him the treat as he reaches you. After a couple of days, if your dog is coming to you on command, start to make him sit before you give him a reward so that he will learn to automatically sit



whenever he comes to you. This will give you extra control for when you are outside.

You should train your dog in a quiet area, free from distractions such as crowds of people, other dogs and food. Training sessions should be a maximum of 15 minutes long and fun for you and your dog.



Leaving Your Dog

In a public place

Dogs Trust does not advise owners to leave their dogs tied up alone in a public place. However, we realise that for some dog owners it is inevitable that there will be times when they are unable to leave their dog with a friend and they may be forced to leave their dog tied up for short periods. If this is the case, we suggest you:

- check first that you are allowed to leave your dog in the area
- leave your dog in a quiet place where people will not approach him
- leave your dog in the shade or sheltered from the rain
- make sure there is fresh drinking water available for your dog
- leave something for your dog to lie on
- leave your dog somewhere where you or someone you know can see him
- check that your dog is okay as often as possible (at least every 20mins)

Please remember, if your dog is 'dangerously out of control' or injures somebody, even if you are not with him at the time, you will still be responsible for your dog's actions. If your dog can be aggressive or unpredictable, we suggest that you DO NOT leave your dog unattended at anytime.

Indoors

Leaving your dog alone for extended periods of time may cause him to become bored, anxious or destructive. Dogs Trust recommends that dogs should not be left for longer than 4 hours at a time.

To prevent boredom, make sure that you leave your dog with toys and other things to occupy him whilst you are away. Instead of feeding him his dinner in one 'predictable' meal each day, scatter dried food around the room for him to find or hide treats so that he has to search for them.

Make sure that he has had sufficient exercise to wear him out before he is left.

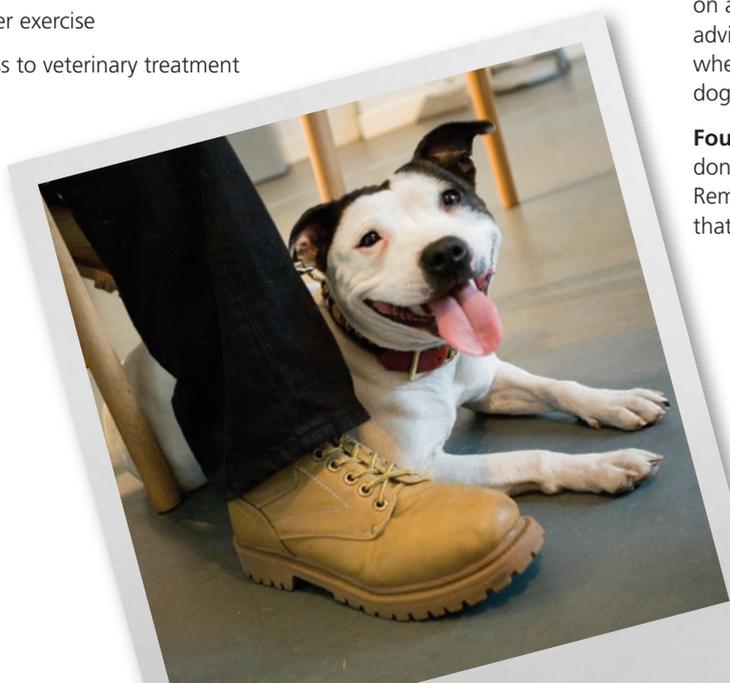
If your dog shows signs of anxiety when left alone, ask a behaviourist for advice. (Details of free behaviour advice can be found at the back of this booklet).



Dog Laws

Duty of care: The new Animal Welfare Act 2006 and the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 place a 'duty of care' on all pet owners to provide for their animal's basic needs. This means that you are responsible for providing your dog with:

- adequate food and fresh drinking water
- somewhere suitable to live (ie somewhere warm and dry)
- proper exercise
- access to veterinary treatment



Identification: All dogs must wear a collar with their owner's name and contact details on it when in a public place.

Control: You must keep your dog under control at all times. Your dog could be seized and destroyed if 'dangerously out of control' in a public place. You may also receive a criminal record, up to 6 months in prison and/or a fine of up to £5000.

Keeping dogs on a lead: It is an offence to have a dog on a designated road without it being held on a lead. It is advisable to keep your dog on a lead in all public places and when you are around other animals. You should only let your dog off-lead in safe areas.

Fouling: If you allow your dog to foul in a public place and don't pick up after him, you could be fined up to £1000. Remember to always carry a poop-scoop or plastic bag so that you can clean up after your dog.

Accommodation and Dogs

Unfortunately, many homelessness organisations and housing providers still do not accept clients with dogs. However,

to help dog owners who are homeless or in housing crisis find somewhere to stay with their pet, Dogs Trust has put together a list of hostels, day centres and housing schemes across the UK that currently accept dogs. A copy of this list is available on our website or by contacting the Hope Project team on **020 7837 0006**.

The Hope Project actively encourages homelessness organisations and housing providers to accept clients with dogs. We recently produced an information booklet called Welcoming Dogs, which contains advice and guidelines to help organisations make an informed

decision about accepting dogs. A free copy of the booklet can be downloaded from the Hope Project website at www.dogstrusthopeproject.org.uk



Contact Details

Animal Health, Assistance and Rehoming

Dogs Trust Hope Project

tel 020 7837 0006

email hopeproject@dogstrust.org.uk

website www.dogstrusthopeproject.org.uk

Blue Cross

tel 01993 825500

website www.bluecross.org.uk

Irish SPCA

cruelty line 1890 515 515

website www.ispca.ie

PDSA

tel 0800 917 2509

website www.pdsa.org.uk

RSPCA

general enquiries 0870 33 35 999

cruelty and advice line 0870 55 55 999

website www.rspca.org.uk

Scottish SPCA

tel 0131 339 0222

website www.scottishspca.org



Behaviour Problems

Battersea Dogs & Cats Home Behaviour Hotline

tel 0905 020 0222

email behaviouradvice@dogshome.org

Dogs Trust (Training and Behaviour Coordinator)

tel 020 7837 0006

Nestle Purina Pet Care Service

tel 0800 212 161

website www.purina.co.uk

Pet Bereavement

Pet Bereavement Support Services (The Blue Cross)

tel 0800 096 6606

email pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk

Lost Dogs

Battersea Lost Dogs and Cats Line (within M25 only)

tel 0901 477 8477

Dog Lost

tel 01302 743361

website www.doglost.co.uk

If you would like to apply for a Dogs Trust Hope Project veterinary entitlement card or you have any questions about your existing card, please call the Hope Project team on **020 7837 0006**