



## **Behavioural Consultation Information Sheet**

***This document contains very important information – please read it carefully as soon as you have enquired about an appointment, and again the day before your appointment to ensure you are fully prepared!***

### **The consultation process in brief**

#### **1. After making your initial enquiry, you will be sent the following documents by email (or post if you do not have email):**

- Consultation Information sheet (this document). ***Please read this carefully.***
- The referral form to take to your vet (although note that this is not the only way to obtain vet's referral). Referral by email is also acceptable, as long as it is from a veterinary surgeon (not nurse or receptionist). If I am seeing more than one dog for behavioural problems, or the case involves aggression between two dogs in a household (even if only one is the aggressor), both dogs **must** be referred by your vet.
- A blank questionnaire. There are two versions: the Microsoft Word "Form" version (the easiest to use) or a text version that you can fill in with other applications or complete by hand. Please complete all questions (one for each dog that you need help with, or if the case involves two dogs in the household). **Please do not use the Word FORM version if completing by hand, or with Open Office or any other software besides Microsoft Word as it becomes unreadable!**

#### **2. Return completed paperwork.**

- ***Return the completed questionnaire(s)*** by email, by post or by hand. Please indicate how the referral has been done (if it has not already been sent to me). As soon as this is received and the referral is being arranged, the appointment can be made.

#### **3. In the interim**

- You may be given interim management advice on how to manage your dog's behavioural problems safely until I can see you.
- Re-read consultation guidelines as a reminder of how to prepare for the consultation.

#### **4. The day of the appointment**

- Remember not to feed your dog on the morning of the appointment (unless there are medical reasons why this is inadvisable).
- If your dog shows *any form of aggression* towards unfamiliar people, please ensure any safety precautions are put in place before the appointment.

#### **5. After the appointment**

- You (and the referring vet) will receive a detailed written report within a week of the appointment.
- Follow-up is then provided free of charge by email or phone on an "as needed" basis for up to one calendar month.

## More detailed information

### Before booking

Under APBC and ABTC guidelines, veterinary referral is required before treatment of behavioural problems can be undertaken (and no professional behaviourist will take on a behavioural problem without gaining veterinary involvement first). Health can affect behaviour and the purpose of this referral process is to ensure that obvious physical contributors have been ruled out, or I have been made aware of them, before treatment commences. Vet's referral is often obtained via my referral form (or the standard APBC form) but vets may also refer to me in person, by phone or by email, and may send your dog's medical records by email or post. However, if you are planning to claim on your insurance, you are advised to ensure that your vet has signed the referral form in case your insurance company wish to see evidence of the referral. Under the APBC rules, *referral must be made by a named, qualified veterinary surgeon*, not a nurse or receptionist (even though your initial contact and recommendation may have been with another member of the practice staff). If you do not have a signed referral form, and are unsure whether a referral has actually been made, please check with me. Please ensure you obtain a vet's referral for all dogs in your household with whom you may require behavioural help.

You will also be sent a questionnaire about your dog's life and behavioural problems. This is provided in one of two formats as required– either as a PDF document that can be printed out, completed in pen and posted back to me (or scanned and emailed back) – or as a Microsoft Word “Form” which is designed for use in Microsoft Word (Note it may not work on other word processors, even those that are Word-compatible), making it easy to type the information into special fields, and which is then emailed back. These two versions are not interchangeable, as the electronic version does not give enough room to type, and as trying to type into the paper version is very hard work for the user.

Once both questionnaire and referral (which may come straight from your vet or may have been a verbal referral) I will contact you to arrange an appointment as soon as possible.

As the appointment date approaches, unless we have had some other recent contact, you will be sent an email reminder of your appointment (around 7 to 10 days in advance of the appointment date) and you will be asked to confirm that you still want the appointment. If your appointment start time is in the middle of the day, please note that the start time given is not exact as it depends on the length of the previous appointment (although I can send a text message with an accurate ETA when I am on my way from the previous appointment).

The amount and rate of progress and improvement shown by individual dogs on a behaviour modification plan is highly variable and depends on many factors including the owners (and others that have influence on the dog's life) ability to adhere to the plan, the dog's individual personality and age, the length of time and frequency that undesirable behaviours have been expressed for, and on prior and future experiences and as such cannot be accurately predicted or guaranteed. Behaviour modification is very rarely a quick fix. Most dogs will show improvement, quite often marked improvement and some may even be “cured”. However, this takes time (both invested and elapsed), commitment, effort and hard work and involves changing the way certain things are done and it is you - the owner - that must do most of this work (with my help of course). It is important to understand this before you book a consultation, as owners that are not committed to the process or who have unrealistic expectations are much less likely to be successful in their attempts to modify their dogs behaviour.

## **The Consultation**

During the consultation I will ask some questions about the information given in the questionnaire and gather detailed information about the progression of your dog's behavioural problems and the details and timing of any incidents and other relevant events. After this information is gathered, I will then spend some time explaining your dog's behaviour and how it has developed and we will discuss and set goals. We will then start to talk through the steps of the behaviour modification plan that I am recommending, giving demonstrations where relevant. The consultation itself normally lasts between 1 ½ and 2 ½ hours in total. Appointments are available during office hours Monday to Thursday.

When I arrive, I will ask for your referral form (if a paper referral has been made and the form left with you). If your dog(s) have been shut away while I am shown in, I will usually ask for them to be brought in – (sometimes this will be on lead or muzzled if the behavioural problem involves aggression towards strangers).

### **Emergency/Urgent appointments**

If your dog's behavioural issues require an urgent appointment (most often because there is an unavoidable risk to a person or animal in the same house) I will try to fit you in within 3 weeks.

### **After the consultation**

After the consultation, I will write up a report called a Behaviour Modification Plan (BMP) summarising your dog's history, the diagnosis and the treatment plan recommended, a copy of which is sent to you and the referring vet within 7 days of the consultation. Some of the recommendations I make may not appear directly related to the problem behaviours but it is important to follow all points in the plan (unless identified as optional or unrelated). This BMP is sent out to you by email and/or post as requested.

Two types of report are available. The standard report is a lengthy "full" report (10 to 14 pages excluding appendices) containing a detailed description of the diagnosis, and complete summary treatment plan for all behavioural problems covered in the consultation. This is ideal for people who want a lot of information and explanation, and want a full programme up front. The second type is a brief report (3 to 5 pages excluding appendices) which omits a detailed diagnosis section and sets out the first steps in behavioural modification for each main problem covered in a simpler, but more "step-by-step" format. This is ideal for owners who would be overwhelmed by a very long report containing a great deal of information.

### **Follow-up**

The aim of the consultation and report is to give you enough information to work with your dog without the need for further follow-up sessions. In order to assist with this, one calendar month of follow-up support by email is provided free of charge. This allows time to read the report, check understanding and raise any initial queries and, if necessary, "tweak" the advice given once you start work with your dog. After this, if further help is needed, follow-up support by phone or email is available. Home visit follow-ups are also available.

### **Payment**

The fee covers: preparation for the consultation, the consultation itself, travel time and cost (to and from the consultation), production and dispatch of a detailed written report within 7 days of the consultation, liaison with the referring vet as needed and follow up by phone or email for up to six months if needed. All fees are payable directly to me at the end of the consultation. I accept cash and cheques and bank transfers. Please make cheques payable to Helen Taylor Dog Training & Behaviour (or leave blank as I have a stamp). If you would like to pay by bank transfer please enquire about this at the time of booking. If payment is being covered by a third

party (eg a rescue organisation) and payment has not been made in advance, you will be asked to sign an indemnity to pay the bill if, for any reason, the third party fails to pay.

## Fees

### Consultation

The cost for the consultation process is as follows (see below) plus a callout which is calculated by postcode (see attached chart).

Behavioural problem	Number of dogs that you require help with:		
	One dog	Two dogs (including <u>all</u> cases of aggression between two housemates even if only one dog is the aggressor)	You require help with three dogs (including <u>all</u> cases of aggression between three or more housemates even if only one dog is the aggressor)
Price for consultations from 1 June 2017	£180	£230	£270

### Follow-up options (if needed beyond first free month)

Ad-hoc support by email/phone	£20 per hour (£20 min charge)
Home visit (DT9/10/11, BA8, SP7/8):	£40 per hour plus callout charge
Home visit (all other postcodes):	£80 (total session fee) for up to 90 minutes, plus callout charge
Email support retainer	£30 per month (paid in advance)

If you claimed the original consultation fee against your pet insurance, you may find that any follow-up fees can also be claimed as a “continuation claim”, but always check with your insurance company in this regard.

NB These prices only refer to follow up regarding the original behavioural problem(s) addressed during the original consultation and within a 18 months of the original referral. If the problem is a new one, or has been resolved and has since returned, a full consultation including vet’s referral will be needed.

### More than one dog?

If you have more than one dog, it is advisable to obtain vet’s referral and complete a questionnaire for both/all your dogs unless you are sure that you do not need behavioural advice for that dog. NB referral for both dogs is ALWAYS needed if the case involves aggression between these dogs – even if one dog does not appear every to be the aggressor. Under APBC/ABTC rules, **I am unable to give specific behavioural advice on any dog that I have not had a vet’s referral for.** IF it becomes evident that the other dog is NOT involved, then you will only be charged the single dog fee (and the report will reflect this). The referral process does not affect my fee unless advice on the other dog(s) is actually needed (see above).

### Insurance claims

If your pet insurance policy covers referrals for behavioural problems, as a CCAB and full member of the APBC, you may be able to obtain reimbursement for my some or all of my fees through your insurance policy if you so desire (although not all owners wish to do this). When claiming against insurance, payment is made to me on the day in the normal way and a receipt is issued to allow you to file your claim. Most insurance companies request that the claim

form is completed by the owner and referring veterinary surgeon. Please note that, while I will help in any way that I can, *I have no influence over insurance company procedures and policies.*

### **Callout charges**

Callout charges for home visits (charged in addition to the consultation fee above) are calculated by postcode. A list of current callout charges can be found on my website on the Downloads and Forms page (or should be sent to you in your information pack).

### **Students and mentoring**

All CCABs are required to provide “supervised experience” and mentoring to fully or partly qualified behaviourists working towards CCAB status, much like medical students sitting in on GP sessions. Your permission will be sought before a student is brought to a session, and the student’s role – which depends on the stage they are at - will be explained at that time. In most cases, attendance is strictly observation only, with the student playing no active part in the process (other than lending a helping hand if needed!). You are free to decline to have a student/observer present and do not have to give your reasons (however if you have been fitted into a cancellation slot on a day where a student has already arranged to observe for the day, this is not possible and you will instead be offered an alternative date if you prefer not to have a student present).

### **Cancellation policy**

It is very difficult for many people to take an appointment of this nature at less than 5-7 days notice so late cancellations cause a great deal of inconvenience and may deny others the opportunity of taking a short-notice slot. Therefore, ***If you need to postpone or cancel your appointment, please give as much notice as possible, but 48 hours at the very least.*** You can cancel an appointment by phone, by voicemail message, text or email (even out of hours). I do not normally make a charge for cancellations made more than 48 hours before the day of the actual appointment. However, cancellations made on the day of the consultation (eg sudden ill health) must be made by phone message no later than 7.30 am on the day, or a charge of £30 will be levied. If the consultation cannot go ahead on arrival – either because a vet’s referral (either verbal or written) has not been obtained or because there is no-one at home, the full fee including callout charge will be charged.

### **Obtaining a cancellation appointment**

If your case is urgent and/or you would like to be offered a cancellation please indicate this in the questionnaire. Be aware that, by their very nature, many cancellations are made at only a few days notice. Preference will be given to the most urgent cases where time is of the essence, such as behavioural problems in young puppies, noise nuisance complaints and serious aggression being directed towards people or other animals in the same house, but geographical constraints will also apply. Please note that I am not able to “hold” short-notice cancellation appointments if I have been unable to confirm with you by phone, text or email (although I will try to contact you by all means at my disposal).

### **General guidelines for the consultation itself**

1. Please do not feed your dog on the day of the appointment (unless there are medical reasons why this could cause a problem, or your dog is less than 12 weeks old) but, other than food, please follow your normal routine.
2. Please ensure you have some high-value treats available for the session if needed. This should be some sort of meat treat, cut into very tiny pieces and should be something your dog does not normally get and is likely to find very exciting. I may also bring treats with me so, if there are any foods that your dog cannot have, please be sure to let me know beforehand so I can avoid bringing the wrong treats.

3. If I am seeing your dog for aggression or other problem behaviours towards a specific dog or dogs (such as two dogs living in the same house) then all the dogs should ideally be present at the appointment. If the dogs belong to different households, then at least one owner of each dog(s) need to be present as well, to ensure that all owners understand the behavioural modification programme.
4. If I am seeing your dog for aggressive behaviour towards known people (eg family members) then it is helpful if at least one of these people can be present during the consultation. If this is not possible, please video normal interactions with the person to show me during the consult that occur on a regular basis. Please do not try to provoke an aggressive response or do anything else that you would not normally do. Aggression marks the endpoint of a process that usually starts with signs of anxiety or stress, and it is these I will be looking for, not actual aggression.
5. If I am seeing your dog for aggressive behaviour towards other dogs or people, and your dog becomes noticeably stressed during encounters, please try to avoid the stimulus that your dog reacts to (eg strangers, or unfamiliar dogs) for at least a week prior to the appointment as this will help your dog to return to a more stable state and make him or her easier to work with.
6. Safety and liability. For both safety and legal liability, please take all necessary precautions appropriate to your dog's issues (eg keep on a lead and avoid off-lead dogs, keep on a lead or shut in another room when visitors arrive) to ensure your dog cannot hurt or frighten people or other dogs.
7. As many members of the family (adults and older children) as possible should attend the appointment. If the problem behaviours relate to the family's child(ren) at it is helpful (but not essential) for at least one of the children can be present, for at least part of the consultation.

### **Additional guidelines - home visits**

1. When I arrive, please behave as you normally would when inviting visitors into your house but please ensure your dog is not loose in the front garden of your property. ***If your dog – or any other dog that lives at or may be at the property - ever shows any form of aggression towards strangers arriving at the property (including barking), please inform me before I arrive.*** Depending on the nature of the problem, you may also be asked to muzzle your dog when we are introduced and, if this is the case, you will be advised to introduce the muzzle in advance (as described in the separate handout). ***Please ensure your dog is behind a door or gate before showing me in.***
2. If I am seeing your dog for behaviour towards visitors to the house - including both aggressive (eg barking at visitors) and non-aggressive behaviour (eg jumping up), it would be very helpful to arrange for at least one caller to arrive at the house during the session to help with the training process. If unsure at what point to arrange the visitor to arrive, please ask.
3. I carry a fairly heavy bag and may need to return to my car during the consultation for additional equipment. If there is no obvious parking outside your house, please advise of nearest parking location (within 100 metres).
4. If your house is difficult to find with Sat Nav, or if there is no obvious name or number sign posted outside, please describe the location.
5. Start-times. If your appointment is the first of the day (a start time between 9 and 10 am), then I will be prompt. However, as the length of appointments vary, if I am coming on from a previous appointment, I will only be able to give you an approximate start time at the time of

booking, for example “1pm plus or minus 40 minutes”. However, I can send you a text message with an accurate ETA when I am *en route* from the previous appointment.

### **Standard Interim safety advice for owners of dogs that show aggression towards people or other animals**

Under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (which came into force on 13 May 2014 and modified the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991) an offence may be committed if the behaviour of a dog causes someone to feel “reasonable apprehension that they may be injured” or that a dog was “dangerously out of control” in any place in England or Wales (whether or not a public place). As an interim safety measure, until a full assessment of your dog can be made during the consultation, please take all necessary precautions to ensure your dog cannot threaten, nip or bite people or other animals. This may include keeping the dog on a lead, walking in different locations to avoid people or dogs, muzzling, keeping behind a door or stair-gate when visitors come to the door or are in the house etc.

### **About Helen Taylor Dog Training & Behaviour**

Helen Taylor is a full-time, professional qualified behaviourist and has been practicing for over 10 years. She also provides private training for routine training issues, particularly with young puppies. Helen has an honours degree in Zoology and an Advanced Diploma in Canine Behavioural Management. She is a Certificated Clinical Animal Behaviourist (CCAB). She is also Full Member of The Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors (APBC), and The Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT, No 881). Helen is also a Registered Practitioner (Clinical Animal Behaviourist) under the Animal Behaviour and Training Council (ABTC - the industry’s regulatory body). She is recommended by and takes referrals from all the major veterinary practices throughout most of Dorset and beyond.

### **Accrediting/regulatory Organisations**

<http://www.apdt.co.uk>

<http://www.apbc.org.uk/>

<http://asab.nottingham.ac.uk/accred/reg.php>

<http://www.abtcouncil.org.uk/>

I look forward to meeting you and your dog(s)!

Helen Taylor BSc(Hons) ADipCBM

Certificated Clinical Animal Behaviourist (CCAB)

Full Member APBC & APDT (881)

Registered Practitioner (CAB) Animal Behaviour and Training Council (ABTC)

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