

Behavioural Consultation Guidelines

This document contains very important information – please read it carefully BEFORE completing your questionnaire.

The Consultations

Like most behaviourists post-pandemic, most consultations are done initially via Zoom, with a optional home-visit available to those within my catchment area to help put theory into practice if desired.

Currently I am able to offer two types of consultation (as having multiple options means clients have choices over the format and cost of the process):

- Zoom Consultation - ***the most inexpensive - and therefore the most popular - option.*** (with a subsequent optional in-person follow-up session in your home to help put the plan in to practice)
- In-person consultation at your home (only available within a radius of approximately 15 miles from Marnhull, North Dorset) Much more expensive than a zoom consultation (see Fees) for the identical service, and normally only requested by clients who are not able to use Zoom (Note that *follow-up* home visits (if requested) are not subject to the same tight geographical limits).

You can also choose whether or not to receive a detailed report or a bullet-point summary with either of these options (please note that the report option chosen cannot usually be changed without rescheduling the appointment as the choice of report greatly affects the time that needs to be allocated (by me) for the appointment so it is essential this is known at the time of booking).

Why Zoom?

During the pandemic almost all behaviourists worked exclusively (and successfully) via Zoom., Many are now starting to offer home visits as an alternative or, as I am, as an add-on after the main zoom session (if needed and if you are local) mainly to aid with demonstrations.

If you have never used Zoom before and would like a test session before the consultation, please tick the box on the questionnaire or email me and I can arrange this free of charge.

In most cases Zoom consultations work extremely well especially where video clips have been sent ahead of time and, in some cases, can work better than in-home sessions. Beside zero risk or Covid transmission, Zoom consultations have a number of advantages over traditional consultations:



...Helping your best friend to be even better...

- Videos filmed over a few days or weeks allow me to see a much fuller and more natural range of behaviour and body language in various different situations than does being at your home for 2 or 3 hours.
- The absence of the behaviourist in the home also means that everyone especially your dog can be more relaxed.
- The core consultation can be made much cheaper as time and cost of travel does not have to be factored into the fee.
- Follow-up sessions – if needed - are also much more affordable as they can be very short, as frequent as desired, and need no travel cost added on.
- Waiting times for the main consultation are shorter. Pre-pandemic waiting times of 4 to 6 weeks were not unusual, now I can usually fit people in for the zoom session within 2 -3 weeks, and emergencies usually within one to two weeks.
- Sessions need never be cancelled due to covid law changes, shielding or self-isolations.
- Bear in mind, in the overwhelming majority of cases, it is not necessary – or often even desirable - to witness a dog's most extreme behaviour (especially behaviours involving aggression) first hand or in videos in order to reach a diagnosis or devise a treatment plan. Behaviourists are highly trained to be able to read and interpret very subtle dog body language signs and behaviour. A dog's reaction to the trigger at a much lower level (eg sight of another dog at a distance, on lead) is usually just as useful diagnostically as a dog becoming highly aroused and/or aggressive towards the same dog a short distance away. It is also important to limit exposure to triggers *at a level that causes a severe reaction* because this a) often places dogs and others at risk of being hurt or frightened, b) is likely to gradually worsen the behavioural problem through repeat stress and exposure and c) can even result in liability problems for the owner. In some cases – where the motivation of the dog is unclear, or the case or behaviour are particularly unusual, it can be useful to see elements of the behaviour in “full swing”, or even (extremely rarely) in person in the home (but this will be advised if it is the case). Please note that this has always been the advice given and has not changed with the onset of behaviourists working via Zoom, but this fact may help to reassure potential clients that they are not “missing out” on an accurate diagnosis if I don't meet their dog in person.

If, after the zoom session, we both feel that an in-person visit is needed to demonstrate and/or coach (and you are within the area I cover), then this can be arranged at an additional cost. See Fees later on in this document.

Zoom is greatly preferred to WhatsApp/Facetime as I am able to use my computer and can share my screen to demonstrate or explain things. However, if you are unable to use Zoom for any reason, we can agree on a different format for the call. I will send you a meeting invitation. Open the email on the device you wish to use (computer, tablet or smart phone), click the link contained in the email and ensure you select “with audio” so that we can hear each other. I will then admit you to the meeting.

During the video consultation I will ask some questions about the information given in the questionnaire and gather more detailed information about the progression of your dog's behavioural problems and the details and timing of any incidents and other relevant events. I will then share and discuss any video clips you have sent and will then start to explain why your dog is behaving the way he is. I will then start to talk through the steps of the behaviour modification plan that I am recommending, giving demonstrations and sharing my screen to show handouts, diagrams and video clips when needed.

The video consultation would normally last between 2 and 2.5 hours in total. Please try to ensure you will not be interrupted unless it is important (although all are welcome to “attend”)

Appointment slots are available Mondays to Thursdays. Please note that the latest start time for a zoom consultation is 1300 (if a detailed report is required) or 1430 (if a summary report is required).

Want a fully in-person appointment?

If you feel unable to cope with a video/Zoom session at all, then you can request a fully in-person appointment although this is significantly more expensive and availability is more limited. Please note that an in-home/in-person appointment is rarely necessary or even helpful from a diagnostic point of view (unless advised to the contrary).

So in most cases, if you think you will need hands-on help, it is far more cost effective to have a zoom consultation and follow this up with a brief home visit if you still then feel that that would be helpful.

All advice and materials, whether printed, given verbally or recorded, are strictly confidential and copyright and not to be shared with anyone outside of the owner's immediate family without written permission of both parties.

Booking procedure

Referral

Under APBC and ABTC guidelines, veterinary referral (by a named veterinary surgeon) 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. 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.

Questionnaire

You also need to complete a questionnaire (available from the Bookings and Downloads page of my website) about your dog's life and behavioural problems. If possible, please complete this electronically, eg in MS Word or OpenOffice, and return to me via email (Help@helentaylordorset.co.uk) or via a file transfer service eg Wetransfer.

If you do not have access to a printer, you can request a paper copy of the questionnaire (and also the eventual report) to be sent in the post for a small administrative charge (see Fees).

Please avoid:

- completing the questionnaire on a tablet or phone (it is far too long for this to be practical and this inevitably leads to insufficient information being provided).
- Sending scanned or photographed images of a hand-completed questionnaire (they are often unreadable once emailed and printed out).

Holding fee

On receipt of your questionnaire and referral, I will issue you with an invoice for the holding fee (see Fees section). However, if you wish you can make payment without waiting for an invoice using the details given below:

Account Number: 40641788
Sort Code: 09-06-66
Name: Helen Taylor Dog Training and Behaviour
Bank: Santander
Reference: Dog's name and your surname

Once I have received these, I will contact you to arrange an appointment for the Zoom consultation (or in-person visit if you are choosing this option) as soon as possible. Lead times are usually between 1 and 4 weeks from this point, but if your case is an emergency (ie a case involving aggression to someone or something in the same house), I will try to fit you in as soon as possible.

Video clips

While you are waiting for your appointment (at any stage in the process), please take and send some short video clips of your dog in various normal situations at home and, if it can be done safely (and is necessary) of the problem behaviour. Video of the problem behaviour is not always necessary, safe or helpful especially in cases of aggression however, so please ask for further guidance on your particular case. Please send a maximum of 12 video clips of no more than 2 minutes each in length (so that too much time is not taken up during the consultation going over them). Most smart phones allow for trimming of video clips prior to sending if needed. All video files must arrive no later than the day before the consultation and should be sent via Wettransfer (or other similar file transfer service) or by WhatsApp. **Please do not send videos via email or ordinary text message.**

Filming

Please try to film your dog in the following situations even if they do not seem relevant to your dog's issues. When filming your dog try as much as possible to video him from the side and get his entire body in the clip.

- A known and/or unknown person arriving at the house and/or passing the house
- Your dog seeing a person and a dog on a lead walk.
- Your dog's behaviour around (human or canine) food
- What happens if you put your dog in a room on his own away from the family
- How your dog behaves in the garden.
- How your dog behaves when he has a toy or a stolen item (although see note below).
- Any behaviour which you think is unusual or which concerns you (but see below).
- Your dog interacting "normally" with other dogs – playing, greeting (if this happens).

If you are seeing me for aggression related issues, **please ask for advice before trying to video these behaviours as it may be dangerous, deleterious to the dog's problems or unnecessary to see the dog at his worst.** Please do not attempt to video your dog's behaviour if doing so may put you, your dog or other people or animals at risk of being injured or frightened (as this could render you liable under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991). Do not attempt to encourage a dangerous behaviour in order to capture it on video or allow the behaviour to escalate out of control or to continue to record longer than strictly necessary to capture it on film (or if doing so would prevent you intervening in a situation that should not continue). For example, if your dog shows aggression towards people or other animals, under no circumstances must you allow him/her to run up to people/other animals aggressively in order to capture this on film (but a video of your dog's body language when he sees a person/animal from a safe distance would be very helpful). If you are unsure whether to try and record some elements of your dog's problematic behaviour, please ask for guidance.

The day before the consultation you will be sent a link for the Zoom meeting.

Note: 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 always 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.

While you are waiting for your appointment please take all necessary precautions appropriate to your dog's issues to avoid triggers (eg keep on a lead and avoid off-lead dogs, keep on a lead or shut in another room when visitors arrive). This is for reasons of safety, to prevent people or other dogs from being hurt or frightened, and for legal liability – but will also help to prevent the behaviour problem becoming even more ingrained. Once a behaviour problem has developed, repeat exposure to the trigger at a level that causes a reaction, will usually worsen the problem over time.

Note also that although a copy of the zoom recording is normally available for a small additional fee, **the zoom recording is not guaranteed** as I cannot be held responsible for a technical failure.

After the consultation

After the zoom consultation I write up either a detailed Behaviour Modification Plan (BMP) or a two-page summary (depending on which option you choose in the questionnaire). The BMP explains the history, diagnoses and the detailed treatment plan recommended, while the summary report is a bullet point summary of the main treatment plan options only. If you select a summary report, an exact copy is also sent to the referring veterinary surgeon. However, if you select a full report, a selected extract (consisting of the background, listed issues, potential causative factors and any treatment plan options specifically relevant to the referring vet) is sent (not the full report). A copy of the report is sent to you and the referring vet by email or post 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). If you have requested a copy of the Zoom consultation recording this will also be sent to you at the same time.

Follow-up

The aim of the consultation and report or summary 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 – or a single short Zoom follow up session - is provided free of charge in the first month. After this, if further help is needed, follow-up sessions by Zoom can be arranged (charged separately)

Fees

From 1 May 2025

Session type:	Number of dogs involved or that you require help with*:		
	One dog	Two dogs*	Three dogs*
1.Zoom consultation up to 2 ½ hours in length, generic handouts, and one month's email or Whatsapp follow-up support. OR	£210 (of which £105 is taken as the holding fee)	£240 (of which £120 is taken as the holding fee)	£260 (of which £130 is taken as the holding fee)
3.Purely in-person consultation ** (no Zoom element) NOTE: see 'Want a fully in-person appointment' above	£400 (of which £150 is taken as the holding fee) Plus callout charge	£420 (of which £160 is taken as the holding fee) Plus callout charge	£450 (of which £170 is taken as the holding fee) Plus callout charge

Additional options available:			
Two-page bullet-point summary of main treatment plan.	£35	£40	£45
Detailed written Behaviour modification plan typically 12-15 pages long	£95	£110	£115
Follow-up (via Zoom) Or extension of original session beyond 2Hrs 30 mins at your request	£50 per hour, rounded up to the nearest 15 minutes.		
Follow-up home visit** at your home following the main consultation.	£75 for up to 75 minutes (usually ample), plus £60 per hour for any time after that plus a callout charge.		
Copy of Zoom recording	£10		
Insurance admin fee (NB ONLY applicable if direct contact becomes necessary between myself and your insurance company)	£10		
Callout charge for any home visits	Equivalent to £1 per mile for the round trip (eg if you are 15 miles away, callout charge would be £30).		
Paper charge (if questionnaire and/or report requested by post)	£5		

*If the case involves aggression between two or more dogs in the same household then both dogs **MUST** be referred and the two/three-dog price will always apply (even if only one dog is the aggressor). In all other cases - even if two or more dogs have been referred - if the second/third dog in the household is found not to be involved and advice on that dog is therefore not needed, then the single dog price only will be charged, even if both/all dogs have been referred.

** The availability of home visits is dependent on location.

Holding Fee

A holding fee (which is not an additional fee, but is deducted from the total consultation fee stated above) - is taken to hold an appointment when the questionnaire and referral are sent in. This is then deducted from the fees shown above (it is not an additional fee). See cancellation policy below. As soon as I have the questionnaire and referral, I will send you an invoice for the holding fee (which has my bank details on it).

Main Session and Follow-up Fees

For the first month after the main consultation, further clarification, queries and advice on the issues discussed in the session is available free of charge on request if submitted via Whatsapp

or Email. After this time, Zoom/video call follow-ups are charged at £50 per hour (rounded up to the next 15 minutes), minimum 15 minutes

NB These prices and conditions refer to follow-up regarding the original behavioural problem(s) addressed during the original consultation or described in detail in the questionnaire. Entirely new problems will require a repeat vet's referral (to ensure I am complying with the rules) although not usually a new questionnaire (unless a very long time has elapsed and the problems are entirely new to the dog) and can usually be charged at follow-up rates (although this depends on complexity and on whether a report is required). Follow-up for the original problem(s) after a very long period if no earlier follow-up advice has been requested may also require a repeat veterinary referral, as this might suggest other factors have since come into play (new or worsening existing medical conditions etc).

Payment

I accept payment via BACS (preferred) or, if this is not possible, by cheque (Payable to Helen Taylor Dog Training and Behaviour). The holding fee is paid before the session is booked. The balance of the consultation fee is due on the day of the consultation using the bank details already provided on the invoice for the holding fee. If you wish to pay by cheque it is recommended that the full fee is sent before the session takes place- as no materials are released until payment of the balance has cleared. If a home visit is being planned, the fee for that is payable after that session. If you require a second invoice in order to pay the balance, please ask for this before or during the zoom session. A receipt for the entire fee can also be provided on request either to enable you to claim on your pet insurance or just for your own records. If payment is being covered by a third party (eg a rescue organisation) full payment is required in advance.

When paying the holding fee (or balance invoice) you can wait for me to send you an invoice or you can pay at any stage when submitting your questionnaire/referral, using the following details:

Account Number: 40641788

Sort Code: 09-06-66

Name: Helen Taylor Dog Training and Behaviour

Bank: Santander

Reference: Dog's name and your surname

More than one dog?

If you have more than one dog, it is advisable to obtain vet's referral for both/all your dogs unless you are sure that you do not need behavioural advice for that dog although please note that referral (and a completed questionnaire) for both/all dogs is ALWAYS needed if the case involves aggression or relationship problems between these dogs – even if one dog does not appear every to be the problem/aggressor. In other behaviour problems, if you have completed a referral from and/or questionnaire for more than one dog and it is evident the other dog(s) is/are not involved and no advice is given, then the single-dog fee will be charged. However, please note that **under APBC/ABTC rules, I am not allowed to give tailored behavioural advice on any dog that I have not had a vet's referral for.**

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 fees (usually minus an excess) 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 in the normal way and a receipt is issued for the final total to allow you to file your claim. 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” without a further excess being deducted, but always check with your insurance company in this regard. It is not possible for me to claim directly from your insurance company as some vets are able to and the standard fees assume no direct contact between myself and your insurers. I will assist you in any way that I can, but if **direct** contact with your insurers becomes necessary (eg completing forms or sending an extracted copy of the report at their request) a small administrative fee will become payable to cover the time taken for this (see Fees above). As sharing of reports requires written permission from both myself and you, please refer your insurance company to me if they request a copy of any behavioural reports (as I do not send out full reports to third parties).

Cancellation policy

It is very difficult for most clients to take an appointment of this nature at less than a week's notice so late cancellations and postponements cause a great deal of inconvenience and cost, and may deny others the opportunity of taking a slot. The holding fee is fully refundable if the appointment is postponed or cancelled more than 3 working days prior to the appointment, **but is forfeit in full if cancellation or postponement is made with less than 3 working days notice** as it is rarely possible to fill an appointment slot of this nature at such short notice.

If a home visit cannot go ahead on arrival at your home eg because there is no-one at home when I arrive, the full fee will be levied. Mutually agreed weather-related in-home or garden visits (if Covid restrictions do not allow in-home visits) are exempt from this.

Confidentiality

Everything discussed during our sessions is strictly confidential and cannot or will not be discussed with or disclosed to any third party (apart from the referring veterinary surgeon – who receives either the summary report or an extract from the full report) without written consent from both parties.

All content including verbal advice, video recordings, reports, Whatsapp/Text messages, emails, and handouts are copyright Helen Taylor and strictly confidential (unless otherwise specified), and may not be distributed or shared without written permission.

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 17 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://www.ccab.uk>

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

Helen Taylor BSc(Hons) ADipCBM

Certificated Clinical Animal Behaviourist (CCAB)

Full Member APBC & APDT (881)

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

10/09/2025

See overleaf for summary flow chart of process

Behavioural consultation process – flow chart

