

Dog Walking Safety Induction

Purpose: This document has been prepared in order to enhance the safety of all volunteers walking dogs as part of the wider Covid-19 volunteer response. The document outlines key safety advice and guidance for volunteer dog walkers and has been prepared in the best interests of animal and volunteer welfare.

This is in the context of a national emergency and the need to help each other.

Animal Welfare Act 2006: As domesticated animals, dogs are protected under the Act. The law says an owner of a dog is always regarded as responsible for him/her. A dog walker is also identified as being responsible for it - whilst he/she is in charge of the dog. So, a dog walker has legal responsibilities and can also be held criminally liable under the Act.

Initial Contact

The following process will apply to introducing you as a volunteer dog walker:-

- Those being shielded and other residents in the city who require the support will contact a special hotline to request help.
- You'll be contacted if you match the necessary criteria (i.e. a close distance from the owner).
- You'll be sent either: the owner's telephone number and address details and either: some general information about the dog OR a checklist of questions about the dog which you should run through with the owner before you start your first walk.
- You should then contact the owner to arrange the most convenient time to go for a first walk and talk through any details necessary. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** This is in order to avoid face to face discussion.
- You should avoid entering the owner's house for any reason. Arranging a specific time for pick up and drop off and discussing details on the phone will enable you to exchange at the door. **If you are using protective gloves should be put on before approaching the house.** Options include the owner leaving the dog in entrance area and staying behind a closed door.
- If entering a house is necessary, please ensure you maintain a 2 metre distance in accordance with social distancing guidelines. If you wear gloves, wash your hands after removing them.
- The Dog owner will be responsible for giving any essential items for the dog walk (i.e. leads, dog waste bags). If you wear gloves ensure they are on before handling any items of equipment.
- Confidentiality – please be respectful of confidentiality of the person you are supporting.

Basic Walk Guidance: Please adhere to the following guidelines when walking your dog:-

1. [DEFRA](#) have most recently advised that those walking dogs should be out for the minimum time possible.
2. **Dogs should be kept on a lead at all times** to avoid contact with other dogs and walkers, risks of losing the dog or the dog being involved in an accident.
3. Dog walkers should avoid heavily populated areas or shared paths which may increase the chances of collision with cyclists.
4. Members of the public should be given right of way at all times.
5. It is the responsibility of the dog walker to collect any dog waste, using general waste bins and ensuring protective gloves are worn at all times.

Guidance on unusual dog behaviour: The following guidelines should be adhered to when walking dogs:-

- The dog walker should not conduct any behaviour modification.
- The dog walker should not use any equipment which could cause fear, anxiety or distress (e.g. spray or prong). The dog walker should use equipment provided by the dog owner.
- The dog walker should check all equipment is well fitting and fit for purpose before the start of each walk.
- The dog walker should not act in any way which would cause fear, anxiety or distress.
- Dog walkers should give full attention at all times to the dogs under their control.
- Un-neutered dogs or bitches in season should be kept on a lead at all times, should be walked in quiet areas and walked alone.
- Dogs should be provided with adequate water as needed
- **No more than 2 dogs should be walked during one session.**

Appropriate clothing/PPE: With variable weather conditions expected, please ensure you have the following available:-

- A warm and waterproof coat
- Sturdy and water-resistant footwear
- Wash your hands with soapy water for at least 20 seconds before and after the activity
- Gloves to be worn if available

Reducing spread of Covid-19

- **Do NOT** enter the home of the dog owner; pick up and drop off should be completed at the door while adhering to a strict distance of 2 metres separation.
- Dog walker should wash their hands before and after activity and use anti-viral hand gel wherever possible.
- Dog walkers to avoid unnecessary contact with their dog at all times.

- Dogs to be walked in open spaces such as parks and [social distancing guidelines](#) to be adhered to at all times.
- Equipment used on the dog walked should be minimised, i.e. no dog toys used.

Lone Working: We strongly recommend that you carry a charged mobile phone when dog walking.

If you have any queries or concerns about your volunteering please contact the volunteer coordinator.

Logging your hours: If you would like to keep a record of your volunteering, please sign in to [Can Do Bristol](#) and do the following:-

- Go to *My Dashboard*
- Go to *My Actions* under *My Profile*
- Click 'I did this' next to the *BCC official Covid-19 Response activity* and include a message about how many hours you have volunteered.
- Please complete this action once you have finished all of your dog walking during this period.

Other useful links: Please review the following before planning any dog walk:-

- [National Cycling routes](#)
- [Highway Code](#) / [Highway Code concerning animals](#)
- [Local green spaces](#)

A copy of the Risk Assessment for this role is available on request from your Volunteer Co-ordinator