



## TCBTS Code of Practice and Ethics

### CODE OF PRACTICE

**ALL MEMBERS OF THE CANINE BEHAVIOUR & TRAINING SOCIETY (hereafter referred to as TCBTS) AGREE TO ABIDE by the ABTC CODE OF PRACTICE as a minimum standard, no matter what species they are working with, this Code is embedded in the TCBTS Code of Practice as stated herein.**

#### TCBTS ETHOS

TCBTS supports the view that academic study alone cannot yield the depth of knowledge and skill necessary for effective professional practice. The ultimate goal of TCBTS is to cultivate members who are conversant with the art as well as the science of ethical canine behaviour modification and training. In addition to the relevant academic qualifications, TCBTS practitioners should have considerable people skills as well as hands-on experience with a large number and variety of dogs and their problems. This takes time and application which is why we offer a range of membership entry points, to encourage education, experience and growth.

Academic and performance stipulations are in line with the Animal Behaviour and Training Council (ABTC) which sets the standards for knowledge and understanding, and performance skills for each role.

#### TCBTS MEMBERSHIP

Standards and assessment for each practitioner role undergo regular review. The most up-to-date assessment route for each role can be found in the TCBTS website, in the relevant section.

**TCBTS** has four full membership categories-

**ATI** (Animal Training Instructor/dog trainer).

**ABT** (Animal Behaviour Technician). Currently closed to new candidates.

**AAB** (Accredited Animal Behaviourist). Please note this is a closed register and we no longer actively recruit for this category.

**CAB** (Clinical Animal Behaviourist).

**FULL MEMBERSHIP (Behaviour roles):**

Current requirements for full membership are explained in detail on our website <https://www.tcbts.co.uk/full-membership>

#### **PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP:**

Current requirements for provisional membership are explained in detail on our website <https://www.tcbts.co.uk/provisional-membership>

#### **STUDENT MEMBERSHIP:**

Current requirements for student membership are explained in detail on our website <https://www.tcbts.co.uk/student-membership>

#### **ANIMAL TRAINING INSTRUCTOR MEMBERSHIP (Dog Training Instructor):**

Current requirements for Dog Training Instructor membership (ATI) are explained in detail on our website <https://www.tcbts.co.uk/dog-training-instructor-membership>

#### **HONORARY MEMBERSHIP:**

Outstanding people in the field of canine behaviour, whom TCBTS wishes to honour, may be invited to become Honorary Members at the discretion of the Board of Managers in recognition of their services to 'Dogdom'. Honorary Members may attend, but are not obliged to attend, the AGM Seminar and the Conference.

Practising Honorary Members (that is ABTC registered) are required to meet all criteria for registration, including annual submission of CPD, as stipulated for the role.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON WHERE YOU CAN SEE CRITERIA FOR ALL MEMBERSHIP LEVELS AND ROLES PLEASE VISIT <https://www.tcbts.co.uk>**

#### **VOTING**

All members shall be entitled to one vote each at any TCBTS meeting they attend or for an emailed proposal they receive. Voting may take place at the AGM, at a meeting online or by email. Email votes will involve a simple statement of agreement to any proposal. On receipt the email should be signed with 'I agree' and emailed back to TCBTS to indicate the member has voted in favour of the proposal. Members will be given 14 days' notice of issues on which they may vote. There shall be no valid postal votes.

#### **FINANCE**

i) All monies raised by or on behalf of TCBTS shall be applied to further the objects of the Society and for no other purpose, provided that nothing herein contained shall prevent the payment in good faith of reasonable and proper repayment to members of the Board or any person or committee appointed by the Board of Managers hereof of reasonable out of pocket expenses.

ii) The Honorary Treasurer shall keep proper accounts of the finances of the Society.

iii) An audited statement of the accounts for the last financial year shall be submitted by the Board at the AGM.

iv) A bank account or Building Society account shall be opened in the name of TCBTS with a bank/building society which shall be agreed by the Board. The Board shall authorise in writing the Treasurer and one other board member to sign cheques on behalf of the Society. All payments may be authorised by one of those board members.

v) Subscriptions: A subscription shall be payable on being accepted as a member of such a sum as determined by the Board of Managers to cover registration fees at the relevant level of membership, including ABTC registration fees where relevant, and administration costs. When subscriptions are not paid in full, on the due date by a member, then the member will be given one month to rectify this, after which time an administration fee may be made. Subscriptions will be payable in April. Should a member fail/refuse to pay their annual renewal fee within two months of the due date, then that member may have their membership of TCBTS cancelled and if a full member, be required to surrender their membership certificate.

#### **ROTATION OF OFFICERS ON BOARD OF MANAGERS**

Board Members will normally be expected to serve an initial term on the Board of a period of three years from the date they joined the Board. Retirement from the Board shall be by written notification to the Board of not less than six months (unless for health reasons) or a reasonable period to allow for appointment of another Full or Provisional Member and the handover of duties, as seamlessly as possible. Candidates for Board Membership must have fulfilled the annual participation requirements, including attendance of events and CPD documentation.

#### **[TCBTS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE](#)**

#### **[TCBTS GDPR and SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY](#)**

#### **ALTERATIONS TO THE CODE OF PRACTICE**

Any alteration to this Code of Practice shall only be ratified by the consent of not less than two thirds of voting membership attending the AGM or meeting considering the amendment. Such meetings may take place online. At least 14 clear days' notice shall be emailed to members of a meeting to be called to alter the Code of Practice shall be given by the Board Secretary to all members, setting forth the terms of the proposed alteration (The Society will not be held liable or responsible for failure of members to check their emails or for any disruption to email services or infrastructure resulting in delivery failure of emails).

## **DISSOLUTION**

If the Board of Managers by a simple majority decide at any time that on the grounds of expense or otherwise it is necessary or advisable to dissolve TCBTS, it shall call a meeting of all members of the Society who have the power to vote. Notice of not less than 28 days of such meeting shall be given in writing stating the purpose and reasons for the meeting. If such a decision shall be confirmed by a simple two thirds majority of those present and voting, the Board shall have the power to dispose of any assets held by or on behalf of TCBTS. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts shall be given or transferred to any canine organisation benefiting the welfare of dogs agreed by a simple majority of the remaining voting members.

## **NAME**

The name of the Association shall be The Canine Behaviour & Training Society, referred to as TCBTS (formerly known as the UK Registry of Canine Behaviourists Ltd. /UKRCB).

## **REGISTERED OFFICE**

The Registered Office of TCBTS (Company number 4120030) shall be **c/o Aston Hughes & Co, Selby Towers, 29 Princess Drive, Colwyn Bay, LL29 8PE** or premises as mutually agreed by the Board of Managers.

**All official correspondence shall be addressed to the current TCBTS Board Secretary.**



## **CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR PRACTITIONERS OF ANIMAL TRAINING AND BEHAVIOUR THERAPY**

### **Declaration on professional registration**

Rights and responsibilities go hand in hand. For this reason, on registration with the ABTC, and in exchange for the right to practise in the name of ABTC, every registered practitioner of animal training and behaviour therapy makes a declaration

" I PROMISE AND SOLEMNLY DECLARE that I will pursue the work of my profession with integrity and accept my responsibilities to the public, my clients and the profession and that, ABOVE ALL, my constant endeavour will be to ensure the welfare of animals committed to my care."

### **Purpose**

This code forms the basis for ABTC practitioner member organisations' code of conduct. These are minimum standards that are required. An organisations' code of conduct may have additional requirements.

It provides protection to the general public and safeguards animal welfare.

It sets out the key principles and standards which practitioners of animal training and behaviour therapy must follow and uphold.

The Code is essential for practitioners in their professional lives and for regulation of the profession.

### **Scope and Objectives**

Individuals have professional obligations to their clients, the animals they are helping, the animals that help them, their employers (where relevant), to one another, to students, the animal requiring the service, to colleagues in other disciplines (e.g. Veterinary Surgeon) and to society.

In order that they may discharge their obligations to their clients they must be able to meet the expense of the professional provisions which are necessary for safeguarding and promoting the rights of both the client and the animal. The primary objective of this code is to express the values and principles which are essential to those working with animal behaviour and training.

### **Principles of practice**

Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners seek to ensure welfare of animals committed to their care and to fulfil their professional responsibilities, by maintaining five principles of practice:

- Professional competence
- Honesty and integrity
- Independence and impartiality
- Client confidentiality and trust
- Professional accountability

These standards should be considered in the context of the five principles of practice.

### **Professional responsibilities**

Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners have professional responsibilities in regard to animals; clients; the profession and the public. These responsibilities are considered further below.

On occasion, the professional responsibilities may conflict with each other and Animal Trainers and Behaviour Practitioners may be presented with a dilemma. In such situations, they should balance the professional responsibilities having regard first to animal welfare.

#### **1. Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners and animals**

- 1.1 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must make animal welfare their first consideration when attending to animals.
- 1.2 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must keep within their own area of competence and refer cases responsibly.
- 1.3 Members and Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must not endorse "correction" based training devices as these use positive punishment with the aim to instil anxiety (for example, but not limited to, prong collars, check [choke] 'chains', electronic training devices

[generally known as ‘shock collars’ and ‘anti-bark collars’], pressure harnesses and halters, spurs, harsh bits, whips, tight nosebands).

- 1.4 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must use science-led, compassionate and non-punitive methods. Training and Behaviour programmes must not be based on Positive Punishment or the creation of anxiety or fear, but must adhere to the least intrusive interventions, and use a synthesis of information about the animal's ethology, health, and affective (emotional) state, and of psychology, to produce accurate behavioural diagnoses and appropriate training and treatment plans for the individual case.

## **2. Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners and clients**

- 2.1 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must be open and honest with clients and respect their needs and requirements.
- 2.2 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must provide independent and impartial advice and inform a client of any conflict of interest.
- 2.3 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must provide appropriate information to clients about the practice, including the costs of services.
- 2.4 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must communicate effectively, including in written and spoken English, with clients and ensure informed consent is obtained before any training or behaviour protocols are carried out.
- 2.5 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must keep clear, accurate and detailed client records. These should be kept securely and any no longer considered necessary must be deleted (in line with GDPR).
- 2.6 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must not disclose information about a client or the client's animals to a third party, unless the client gives permission or animal welfare or the public interest may be compromised.
- 2.7 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must respond promptly, fully and courteously to clients' complaints and criticism.

## **3. Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners and the profession**

- 3.1 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must take reasonable steps to address adverse physical or mental health or performance that could impair fitness to practise; or, that results in harm, or a risk of harm, to animal welfare, public health or the public interest.
- 3.2 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners who are concerned about a professional colleague's fitness to practise must take steps to ensure that animals are not put at risk and that the interests of the public are protected.
- 3.3 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must maintain and develop the knowledge and skills relevant to their professional practice and competence and comply with ABTC requirements for continuing professional development (CPD).

3.4 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must ensure that all their professional activities are covered by professional indemnity and public liability insurance or equivalent arrangements.

3.5 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must not represent themselves or others as having expertise they cannot substantiate or, credit others as Animal Training or Animal Behaviour Practitioners unless appropriately registered with the ABTC.

#### **4. Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners and the Veterinary Team**

4.1 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must work together and with others in the veterinary team and business when necessary, to co-ordinate the care of animals and the delivery of services.

4.2 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must communicate effectively, including in written and spoken English, with the veterinary team and other veterinary professionals in the UK.

#### **5. Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners and the ABTC**

5.1 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must be entered in the appropriate ABTC Register.

5.2 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must provide the ABTC with their CPD records when requested to do so.

5.3 ABTC Training and Behaviour Practitioner Organisation members must disclose to the ABTC any caution or conviction, including conditional discharges which may affect registration, whether in the UK or overseas (except for spent convictions and minor offences excluded from disclosure by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act).

5.4 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must comply with reasonable requests from the ABTC as part of the regulation of the profession, and comply with any undertakings they give to the ABTC.

#### **6. Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners and the public**

6.1 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must seek to ensure the protection of public health and animal welfare, and must consider the impact of their actions on the environment.

6.2 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must report facts and opinions honestly and with due care.

6.3 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners promoting and advertising products and services must do so in a professional manner.

6.4 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must comply with legislation relevant to the provision of their services.

- 6.5 Animal Training and Behaviour Practitioners must not engage in any activity or behaviour that would be likely to bring the profession into disrepute or undermine public confidence in the profession.



## **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

ABTC will consider complaints against Practitioner Member Organisations or their registered practitioners when the complaints procedure of the Member Organisation has not resolved the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant. Only complaints of professional misconduct will be considered by ABTC. The ABTC standard of professional behaviour is set out in the ABTC Code of Professional Conduct and is common to all Practitioner Members. Complaints of professional negligence are a civil matter and will not be dealt with further by the disciplinary process. There may be occasions when repeated or particularly severe negligence breaches the threshold for misconduct and such cases will be considered.

### **Process**

Before a full disciplinary hearing is commenced it will be necessary for a panel to consider whether the complaint comes under the remit of ABTC as outlined above. The panel will consist of three people: two practitioner members of Practitioner Organisations and an independent Chair. If any person has a potential conflict of interest they will be excluded from any part of the complaints procedure. The complaint will be considered from evidence provided in writing by the complainant and from the practitioner. No oral hearings will be held at the initial investigation stage and the panel may be convened electronically.

The panel may come to one of four conclusions:

- The complaint is of negligence only and will not be dealt with further;
- The complaint is of misconduct but is rejected;
- The complaint is of misconduct but is minor and is closed with advice about future conduct to the organisation or practitioner;
- The complaint is of misconduct and warrants investigation by the Disciplinary Panel.

If the complaint is referred to the Disciplinary Panel further evidence may be required. In those circumstances the Practitioner Organisation will be requested to further investigate the complaint. Such investigation will be at the discretion of the Practitioner Organisation.

The Disciplinary Panel will be made up of two lay people, two practitioner members from Practitioner Member Organisations and an independent Chair. None of the Panel may be the same as those who originally considered the complaint. The hearing will take place in person and both the complainant and practitioner will be invited to be present. (The hearing may be held virtually if government rules require it, but in those circumstances the full panel, practitioner and complainant must be able to communicate in real time.) Both may choose to be represented. Evidence will be provided orally with or without the production of relevant documents. A contemporaneous record will be made of all the proceedings of the Panel.

Once evidence has been heard the Panel will consider whether sufficient evidence has been presented to show beyond reasonable doubt that the practitioner displayed professional



misconduct. Once the decision has been made the practitioner may make a statement in mitigation and the Panel will then consider what penalty, if any, should be imposed.

### **Penalties**

Once the Disciplinary Panel has reached a conclusion and heard any mitigating submission from the person complained about they will consider what penalty is appropriate. The options are:

- No penalty;
- A warning about future conduct;
- A requirement to undergo further training and assessment;
- Suspension from the ABTC Register for a specified period;
- Removal from the ABTC Register.

The penalty may be appealed in the same way as the decision of the Disciplinary Panel. If the decision is to suspend or remove the name of the person complained about from the Register he or she will no longer be able to be a member of a Practitioner Organisation until such time as a Panel agrees to their name being restored to the Register.

### **Appeal**

The practitioner may appeal the decision of the Disciplinary Panel. A further panel of similar composition to the Disciplinary Panel (but different individuals) will consider the contemporaneous record of the disciplinary hearing and review the decision and penalty of the Panel. The meeting may be held virtually as set out for the Disciplinary Panel. They may uphold or vary the decision and penalty. The decision of the appeal panel is final.

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