

Pet Care Covid 19 Policy and Procedures – as at 10/07/2020

Please read this important information.

POLICY & PROCEDURES - AN OVERVIEW

Good health and welfare protocols are required in any pet business to prevent and control the spread of infectious diseases – and no more so than fighting Covid 19.

Good hygiene practices keep diseases out of groups of animals where they do not currently exist, limit the spread of disease between animals and minimise the potential for transmission from animals to humans.

Covid 19 has starkly reminded mankind of how susceptible we are (young and old, healthy and sick) to an unseen, deadly and easily transmitted virus with no cure readily available.

We have specific disease prevention and control procedures which we follow at all times, to ensure we minimise the potential for cross-contamination and onward transmission of viruses between humans and pets in our care. There are no absolute guarantees, but we can practice as safely as possible.

The overall responsibility for hygiene best practice in our pet care business belongs to the owner. But it is also the responsibility of us all, to do our best and therefore something we take incredibly seriously.

Covid 19 – our pets and humans

“There is currently no evidence of COVID-19 circulating in pets in the UK and nothing to suggest that pets might transmit the disease to humans. However, **pets could act as fomite (carrier) of the virus on their fur for short periods in the same way that other surfaces can carry the virus from one place to another.**”

(British Small Animals Veterinary Association)

It is imperative that we have procedures in place to minimise the potential for Covid 19 transmission.

Our services are provided in a manner that supports social distancing, including avoiding all unnecessary in-person contact with clients, always maintaining a safe physical distance with humans whilst also avoiding the potential transmission of the virus from both the pet's fur and any equipment.

Our disease prevention and control policy includes:

- Health checking of pets (and their owners) both before and on arrival.
- Regulating and minimising the movement and interactions between people, animals, and equipment.
- Practicing good hygiene at all times.
- Clear procedures for cleaning and disinfecting ourselves, our premises and the equipment.

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Health checking of pets (and their owners)

The safety and well-being of you, your pet(s), our own pet(s), staff and family members are vitally important to us. The following are examples as to how we endeavour to minimise any risks and are comprehensively covered in our approach:

Advance information to Prospects and Clients

- Providing a clear statement of our policy, processes and criteria for accepting pets into our care – provided to potential customers, and as a reminder for our existing customers.
- We require that every customer has read this important note, acknowledges it as such and consents to help us both play our parts in adopting a safe environment for us all.

Pre-screening pet's households

- Require every customer to be provide a Health Declaration prior to any pet care service. This can be verbal
- Are you or is anyone in your household currently sick or unwell?
- Are you self-isolating because you or a member of your household, has been diagnosed with, or is displaying symptoms of Covid 19, or, might have been exposed to someone with Covid 19?
- Are you classed as a 'vulnerable' person?
- Are you or is a member of your household classed as an 'essential' worker?

Pre-screening pets

- Is your pet showing signs (including changes in the pet's behaviour) or symptoms of illness currently?
- Has your pet been sick or unwell within the last 48 hours?
- Are you pet's veterinary vaccinations, flea and parasite treatments up to date? (Please ensure you forward copies prior to arrival)

Checks on arrival

- Physical health check your pet on arrival at the premises
- Check vaccination certificates.

Visitors and staff

- Control of visitors and customers on-site by restricting access. For example only one person allowed to pick up or drop off a dog at a time. No more than one visitor allowed in the airlock or grooming area. No visitors in the play area.
- Where possible no pet owner's leads, harnesses, equipment or bedding can be permitted during the Covid 19 pandemic. It is appreciated that dogs may be dropped off and collected by different family members and request that equipment is kept minimal.

Cleaning and disinfection

- Storage of cleaning material and equipment is stored in a designated area
- Regular and specified cleaning of kitchen area, animal accommodation, food and water dishes/bottles
- Choice of safe and effective detergents and disinfectants
- When dealing with soiled bedding, towels
 - Wear appropriate personal protective equipment, eg gloves, eye protection, apron, closed shoes with PPE disposable shoe cover before touching any soiled linen – as a minimum
 - Never carry soiled linen against body; place soiled linen in a leak-proof container (e.g. bag, bucket)
 - If there is any solid excrement on the linen, such as faeces or vomit, scrape it off carefully with a flat, firm object or if possible remove with a poop bag and put it in the designated bin or toilet before putting linen in the designated container.
 - Wash and disinfect linen: washing by machine with warm water and laundry detergent (ideally using Defra recommended products) is recommended for cleaning and disinfection of linens.

Which disinfectant?

- We use a broad-spectrum product designed to kill bacteria, viruses and fungi
- We always check the product labels, manufacturers' instructions

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Waste disposal

- Refuse storage and collection is placed in bags or bins, that are not accessible by dogs.
- Arrangements will be made with the Waste Collection Authority or waste management contractor authorised for the purposes of the duty of care, for removal of other wastes from the establishment under the Environmental, or as mandated by the local authority.
- Foul waste-water must be disposed of by discharge to the approved drainage system. Measures must be taken to minimise the risks from rodents, insects and other pests within the establishment.

Social distancing, hygiene & handover protocols

- 'Continuation of trade should comply with social distancing precautions and hand washing guidance that have been set out as part of the coronavirus guidance.' (Defra)
- We will consider each individual situation and how to safeguard the person we are assisting.
- We will avoid any contact with the occupants of the pet's home - maintaining at least 2 m distance at all times.
- We will agree the pet care process in advance including the time and duration of pet care service (eg walk/day care).
- We will maintain our social distance while walking, keeping to quiet areas and not allowing other people or pets to come into contact with dogs in our care.
- We will wash our hands for 20 seconds using soap and water before leaving our home and on return, and before and after every interaction.
- When it is not possible to wash our hands, we will use our own hand sanitiser following hand washing protocols
- We will wear disposable gloves where appropriate and responsibly dispose of them after use.
- We will wipe your pet with a disposable pet safe wipe or clean, soapy damp cloth before the pet care service commences, before placing your pet in our transport (which will have already been cleaned and disinfected), and on completion of our service, prior to your pet's return.
- We will use a different lead (one of our own) to the owner's. We will bag and then wash the lead with soap and water once the dog has been returned.

When walking a dog from a 'vulnerable person' or shielded household

Particular emphasis...

- We will avoid any contact with the occupants of the pet's home - maintaining at least 2 m distance at all times. If this is not possible a face covering will be worn.
 - We will keep the dog on a lead or walk in private areas to avoid them coming into contact with anyone or other pets.
- We will wipe the dog with a disposable pet-safe wipe or clean, soapy damp cloth before returning

When walking a dog from a household where people have, or are suspected of having coronavirus

Particular emphasis...

- It is especially important to protect ourselves and others.
- We will consider each individual situation on its merits.
- Avoid any contact with the occupants of the home - maintaining at least 2 m distance at all times.
- We will not enter the home
- Wipe the dog with a disposable pet safe wipe or clean, soapy damp cloth before the pet care service.
- Keep the dog on a lead to avoid pets and other people touching them in case the virus is on their fur.
- We will take particular care when cleaning up after dogs in this context, using a sturdy or double bagged poo bag to be safely disposed of as soon as possible.

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OTHER

Zoonotic disease

Covid 19 is a zoonotic disease. Zoonosis is any disease which can be transmitted from animals to humans. Several dogs and cats (domestic cats and a tiger) in contact with infected humans have tested positive for COVID-19. In experimental conditions, both cats and ferrets were able to transmit infection to other animals of the same species, but there is no evidence that these animals can transmit the disease to human and play a role in spreading COVID-19. COVID-19 is mainly spread through droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or speaks.

Our biosecurity policy includes steps to reduce the spread of these types of diseases.

This is achieved by:

- Cleaning routines
- Using personal protective equipment (PPE) and clothing e.g. gloves, disposable or wipeable aprons and face coverings.
- Washing hands thoroughly with soapy water, using hand sanitisers between handling pets or wearing disposable gloves.
- Disinfectant mats at entrances and cleaning of door handles
- Pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems should take precautions when handling animals and animal waste products.

Keeping up to date

Covid 19 – medical and scientific understanding is ever evolving. It is important to keep up to date. We will monitor and amend these policies and procedures as required based on information provided by frequently visiting the following sites:-

- <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm?utm_source=hse.gov.uk&utm_medium=refferal&utm_campaign=coronavirus&utm_term=covid-landing&utm_content=home-page-popular
- <http://www.cfsg.org.uk/coronavirus/layouts/15/start.aspx#/SiteAssets/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fcoronavirus%2fSiteAssets%2fSitePages%2fHome&FolderCTID=0x0120003A1C7D63FC84AF468ABB596BD7F2BB86>
- It is especially important to protect ourselves and others.
- We will consider each individual situation on its merits.
- We will regularly review our Risk Assessment and update as required.

Disclaimer: This policy is meant to provide general guidelines and should be used as a reference. It may not take into account all relevant local laws, guidelines and Government laws and is not a legal document. Neither the author nor DogBusiness.co.uk will assume any legal liability that may arise from the use of this policy and procedures.