

**Overview of the role**

An Animal Care and Welfare Assistant ensures animals' health and well-being, provides care and supports animal welfare professionals.

**Standard in development**

L2: Animal care and welfare assistant

**Version 1.2****Title of occupation**

Animal care and welfare assistant

**UOS reference number**

ST0397

**Core and options**

Yes

Standard options All Animal welfare assistant Dog handler

**Option titles**

Animal welfare assistant

Dog handler

**Level of occupation**

Level 2

**Occupational maps data**

**Route:** Agriculture, environmental and animal care

**Pathway:** Animal Care and Management

**Cluster:** Animal Care and Welfare Assistant

**Typical duration of apprenticeship**

12 months

**Target date for approval**

01/09/2025

**Resubmission**

No

**Would your proposed apprenticeship standard replace an existing framework?**

No

**Does professional recognition exist for the occupation?**

No

**Regulated occupation****Is this a statutory regulated occupation?**

No

### **Occupational summary**

This occupation involves working in many different places where animals are cared for. These places can include animal charities, boarding and daycare, pet retail, wildlife rescue centres, zoos, farm parks, the armed forces, horse stables, research labs, and animal quarantine centres.

The main goal is to care for animals and make sure they are healthy and happy.

People in this role may work for small local businesses or large national organisations. They might care for different types of animals, such as dogs, cats, small mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, horses, or larger animals. They work with animals every day.

The role includes feeding animals, checking their health, helping with treatments, keeping their environments clean and safe, and making sure the animals are mentally and socially stimulated.

The main purpose of this role is to improve the animals' lives while supporting the goals of the organisation. Their responsibilities include daily animal care tasks, under a supervisor's direction. They must follow safety rules and help use resources wisely.

Animal care assistants are responsible for feeding animals, checking their health, helping with treatments, keeping the area clean and safe, and keeping good records. They also work with others like vets, other animal care staff, volunteers, and members of the public to share information and support animal welfare. Animal care workers often work unusual hours.

Dog handlers are responsible for the training and development of dogs, maintaining operational performance, operational planning, public relations, and maintaining equipment.

Dog handlers may also work closely with other handlers, instructors, veterinary staff, law enforcement or military personnel and regulatory authorities.

### **Typical job titles**

Animal day care assistant, Animal handler, Animal health officer, Animal technician, Animal welfare assistant, Equine centre team member, Equine technician, Farm park assistant, Kennel/cattery assistant, Pet retail assistant, Search and rescue dog handler, Security dog handler, Services dog handler, Stable hand, Wildlife rehabilitation assistant.

### **Are there any statutory / regulatory or other typical entry requirements?**

Yes

### **Entry requirement label**

Employers will set their own entry requirements. These may typically include a requirement for an affinity with and a desire to work with animals. The employer may require flexibility to work different work patterns.

## Core occupation duties

Duty	KSBs
<b>Duty 1</b> Follow care plan(s) to provide daily care, ensuring animals receive correct food, water, exercise opportunities and appropriate environments.	<a href="#">K1 K2 K3 K4 K5</a> <a href="#">S1 S2 S3 S4 S5</a> <a href="#">B1</a>
<b>Duty 2</b> Monitor health and behaviour through regular checks including detecting signs of illness or distress in animals.	<a href="#">K6 K7 K8 K9 K10</a> <a href="#">S6 S7 S8</a> <a href="#">B1</a>
<b>Duty 3</b> Safely handle and move animals during routine care, examinations, treatments or transportation.	<a href="#">K11</a> <a href="#">S9</a> <a href="#">B1</a>
<b>Duty 4</b> Provide enrichment opportunities for animals to engage in natural behaviours and provide mental stimulation.	<a href="#">K12</a> <a href="#">S10</a> <a href="#">B1</a>
<b>Duty 5</b> Provide and monitor appropriate social interactions.	<a href="#">K13</a> <a href="#">S11</a> <a href="#">B1</a>
<b>Duty 6</b> Maintain accurate records of animal health, welfare, behaviour, and treatments.	<a href="#">K14</a> <a href="#">S12</a>
<b>Duty 7</b> Clean and maintain biosecurity of facilities, animal accommodation and equipment, and carry out maintenance checks.	<a href="#">K15</a> <a href="#">S13</a>
<b>Duty 8</b> Assist and support colleagues in the delivery of animal care, preventative health care or treatments.	<a href="#">K16</a> <a href="#">S14</a> <a href="#">B5</a>
<b>Duty 9</b> Respond to animal emergencies, ill health or unexpected situations involving animals.	<a href="#">K17</a> <a href="#">B1</a>
<b>Duty 10</b> Ensure safe and effective performance in line with current legislation and workplace policies.	<a href="#">K18 K19 K20</a> <a href="#">S15 S16 S17</a> <a href="#">B3 B4</a>
<b>Duty 11</b> Work independently and as part of a team to complete assigned tasks.	<a href="#">K21 K22</a> <a href="#">S18</a> <a href="#">B2 B4 B5 B6</a>

## Option occupation duties

### Animal welfare assistant duties

Duty	KSBs
<b>Duty 12</b> Contribute towards the achievement of organisational goals and personal targets.	<a href="#">K23 K24</a> <a href="#">S19 S20</a> <a href="#">B2 B4</a>
<b>Duty 13</b> Provide information to external stakeholders to inform and improve animal welfare.	<a href="#">K25 K26</a> <a href="#">S21 S22</a>

### Dog handler duties

Duty	KSBs
<b>Duty 14</b> Assist in the training of the dog in order to maintain operational performance.	<a href="#">K27</a> <a href="#">S23</a> <a href="#">B4</a>
<b>Duty 15</b> Operate the dog in accordance with regulations, legislation and organisational policies and procedures.	<a href="#">K28 K29</a> <a href="#">S24 S25</a>

## **KSBs**

### **Knowledge**

- K1:** The role and importance of individual care plans, and how they are shaped by the species, the individuals age, life stage, seasonality, health and the five animal welfare needs.
- K2:** Species specific and individual nutritional requirements and the influence on diet selection and feeding processes.
- K3:** How species and individual requirements influence the temporary or permanent accommodation.
- K4:** How species and individual requirements influence the exercise opportunities offered.
- K5:** Sustainable approaches to feed, accommodation and waste management.
- K6:** Principles of animal learning based on current, scientific evidence.
- K7:** The physical and behavioural characteristics of individuals, species and breeds and their normal and abnormal behaviours including indicators of distress.
- K8:** Methods to identify individual animals.
- K9:** Signs of good health, pain, injury and disease in animals and the actions that should be taken if welfare is compromised.
- K10:** Processes for working with infectious animals, including those with zoonotic or anthroponotic disease.
- K11:** Methods used for safe approach, handling, moving and transporting animals
- K12:** Species-specific animal enrichment opportunities and methods.
- K13:** The social needs of animals and how these can be met through appropriate interactions with humans and or animals.
- K14:** Types of records and the information to be recorded in relation to animal health, welfare, behaviour, and treatments, using appropriate anatomical terminology.
- K15:** The importance of biosecurity and procedures for cleaning, disinfecting, cleaning and disposal of waste and maintenance checks.
- K16:** Types of species-specific preventative healthcare and their application methods, for example vaccinations, grooming and skin care, parasite treatment, beak, teeth, foot and nail care.
- K17:** Types of animal health emergency situations, including ill health and unexpected situations involving animals, and the actions to be taken.
- K18:** Animal related legislation and its influence on ethical working practices, to ensure animal welfare and how it is implemented through workplace policies.
- K19:** Health and safety related legislation and its influence on working practices and how it is implemented through workplace policies, including use of risk assessments.
- K20:** The scope of personal and professional responsibility and how to escalate concerns.
- K21:** The suitability of different communication styles for different situations and purposes.
- K22:** Benefits of teamwork and how to ensure effective teamwork.

### **Animal welfare assistant:**

- K23:** Factors which influence an organisation's ability to maximise animal welfare and meet the organisation's goals.
- K24:** The importance of personal targets and how they can be measured.
- K25:** Suitability of methods used for providing information to stakeholders, relevant to the organisation, whilst ensuring professionalism and confidentiality.
- K26:** How to positively communicate concerns, to inform and improve animal welfare.

### **Dog handler:**

- K27:** How the dog's characteristics, including physical, sensory, and their stress and emotional responses, can affect the dog's training for its specific role.
- K28:** How to maintain trained behaviour to minimum operational standards.

**K29:** Factors affecting the professional standards for the handler and how they are maintained when operating the dog, for example presence of the public, levels of handler's stress, environmental conditions.

### **Skills**

**S1:** Follow individual care plans to meet the animal's specific welfare needs.

**S2:** Select, prepare and provide food, for example a meal, reward-based training or food-based enrichment, to animals in a way that meets their dietary needs.

**S3:** Select, prepare and maintain accommodation, fixtures and fittings to animals in a way that meets their individual needs.

**S4:** Select, prepare and provide exercise to animals in a way that meets their individual needs.

**S5:** Work in ways which minimise environmental impact and promote sustainability.

**S6:** Observe animal behaviour to identify factors that would influence approach and handling techniques, and which indicates the animal's welfare may be compromised.

**S7:** Use appropriate methods to identify individual animals.

**S8:** Assess and report animal health using methods suitable for the individual animal and situation, escalating health and welfare concerns as appropriate.

**S9:** Use and adapt techniques to move and handle animals for routine care using the least invasive, minimally aversive methods for the situation and individuals.

**S10:** Select, prepare and provide enrichment to animals in a way that meets their individual needs.

**S11:** Provide animal socialisation opportunities appropriate to the individual animal's needs.

**S12:** Contribute to record keeping with clear and accurate information.

**S13:** Maintain biosecurity by cleaning, disinfecting, disposing of waste and maintenance checks in line with company procedures and legislation.

**S14:** Assist with the delivery of preventative healthcare in accordance with the animal's individual care plan.

**S15:** Care for animals to meet their welfare needs by following workplace policies, legal, ethical and regulatory requirements.

**S16:** Work safely within personal and professional limitations, seeking support or escalating concerns as appropriate.

**S17:** Work in a way which maintains the health and safety of animals and people in accordance with workplace policies, regulations and risk assessments.

**S18:** Communicate within the workplace using methods appropriate to the situation and purpose.

### **Animal welfare assistant:**

**S19:** Suggest improved ways of working that contribute to the organisation's goals whilst maximising animal welfare.

**S20:** Seek feedback and identify personal development needs.

**S21:** Apply different communication techniques when dealing with external stakeholders, using technical and non-technical language to inform and improve animal welfare.

**S22:** Identify key information appropriate to the situation, to ensure clear, concise and accurate communication which informs and improves animal welfare.

### **Dog handler:**

**S23:** Conduct refresher or maintenance training with the support of a helper and dog trainer at an appropriate frequency to maintain the minimum standard of operational performance.

**S24:** Ensure that the dog team, including handler and dog, maintains the minimum standard of operational performance as determined by national standards or the employers' policies and procedures.

**S25:** Operate the dog team within the legal and ethical framework associated with their employment.

### **Behaviours**

**B1:** Animal welfare focussed, showing respect and empathy for animals in their care.

**B2:** Takes ownership of work and reflects on own performance.

**B3:** Puts safety first for self and others.

**B4:** Has a strong work ethic and conducts themselves in a professional manner.

**B5:** Team focussed and works effectively with stakeholders.

**B6:** Respectful of others by embracing equality, diversity and inclusion.

### **Qualifications**

#### **English and maths**

English and maths qualifications must be completed in line with the [apprenticeship funding rules](#).

**Does the apprenticeship need to include any mandated qualifications in addition to the above-mentioned English and maths qualifications?**

No

### **Consultation**

TBC

### **Progression routes**

[ST1359 Animal care and welfare manager-1.0 L3](#)

On completion of the apprenticeship learners may progress onto the level 3 animal welfare manager apprenticeship or may move back into full time education to complete a level 3 programme. Alternatively they may stay in industry, progressing up the career ladder to job roles including taking on supervisor responsibilities within their chosen job role.

### **Supporting uploads**

**Mandatory qualification uploads**

**Mandated degree evidence uploads**

**Professional body confirmation uploads**

### **Involved employers**

Animal Focused, Scenterbarks, Look North grooming and training centre, Labcorp, Abbey country feeds, Ministry of Defence, Redwings Horse Sanctuary.

### **Other involved stakeholders**

CVS Vets, Haddon Training, Derby College, VetSkill and Lantra.

### **Subject sector area**

3.3 Animal care and veterinary science