

APPRENTICESHIP STANDARD

Occupation: Animal Care and Welfare Assistant

Occupational profile: Animal Care and Welfare Assistants look after the routine day to day husbandry and care of domestic and/or wild animals under guidance in a variety of different settings. The work is carried out individually or as part of a team in places such as kennels and catteries, laboratories, animal welfare centres, farm parks, rehabilitation centres, retail outlets and in the transportation of animals. Animal Care and Welfare Assistants must have a strong work ethic and be prepared to work irregular hours in all weather conditions. They must maintain safe working practices and taking responsibility for themselves, animals and others.

Typical job roles include: kennel/cattery assistant; animal technician, animal welfare assistant; animal day care assistant; animal collection officer; wildlife rehabilitation assistant; zoo keeper assistant, pet retail assistant, animal handler, veterinary care assistant, farm park assistant.

Individuals will need to achieve the core skills and knowledge, behaviours and one option from the following list:

Options: Animal Interaction and Handling, Rehoming; Movement and Transportation; Operational/Reception Duties; Breeding; Zoos, Aquaria and Exotics; Working Dog Handler; Wildlife Rehabilitation, Veterinary Care Support.

Knowledge (Core)

An Animal Care and Welfare Assistant will require a comprehensive understanding of:

- UK and EU Animal related legislation
- current legislation, policies, procedures, guidelines, Codes of Practice and ethics relevant to the workplace and the health and welfare of animals
- the species/breeds specific to your role and common characteristics
- signs that indicate potential problems with animals' health and welfare and the actions that should be taken
- the types of basic medication, routes of administering medication, safe handling and disposal of medication
- animal first aid, urgent, ongoing and preventive care
- accommodation and environment requirements that are suitable and safe for animals
- the use of different cleaning materials and equipment
- feeding, watering and basic nutrition and characteristics of foodstuffs
- how to safely approach/handle/restrain/move animals
- the behaviours of the animal, applicable to the species and how it impacts its care and welfare such as stress/distress/pain/fear/frustration
- how the animal you are working with learns and the basic principles of re-enforcement techniques
- how an animal's natural behaviour impacts its diet and feeding patterns
- the different methods required to meet the animals' need for enrichment/exercise opportunities, appropriate to species and individual animal
- different skin and coat care requirements of animals in their care
- basic anatomy and physiology
- basic reproduction and obstetrics and reproductive behaviour, including neutering
- Data Protection and records in line with legislation, codes of practice and workplace requirements

- the importance of the human and animal bond
- the changing needs of animals' dependent on their life stage
- basic awareness of capture techniques
- hygiene, bio security procedures and infection controls when working with animals including quarantine, zoonoses, anthroponosis, isolation protocols

Skills (Core)

An Animal Care and Welfare Assistant will be able to:

- comply with UK and EU Animal related legislation
- work effectively in a safe and healthy working environment following current / relevant health and safety legislation and work place policies
- identify and report potential hazards and breaches of security within animal accommodation/enclosures
- clean and maintain animal accommodation/enclosures/environment and equipment and provide appropriate resources including species specific enrichment (e.g. hiding, perches and areas to dig)
- maintain hygiene, bio security procedures and infection controls when working with animals including quarantine and isolation
- dispose of waste in a safe and appropriate manner in line with legislative and workplace requirements
- store, use and administer medication in line with legislative and veterinary instructions as appropriate
- monitor, record and report the health and welfare of animals in line with animal welfare legislation and workplace policies
- observe and be aware of the behaviour of animals and take appropriate actions
- approach/handle/restrain/move/recapture animals as part of routine husbandry appropriate for the species and individual
- exercise/socialise animals and provide appropriate enrichment relevant to their specific needs
- provide appropriate care, for example coat, skin, scales, plumage and feet to ensure good health and appearance
- provide food and water to animals and monitor the intake
- store and care for foodstuffs
- identify and describe animals using appropriate methods to the species involved (e.g. scanning for microchips)
- maintain, update and reference correct records in accordance with current legislation
- deliver customer experience (internal and external), where applicable, in line with workplace policies and procedures
- respond to animal first aid, urgent, ongoing and preventive care requirements as appropriate

Options

Options	Skills. Will be able to:	Knowledge. Will require a comprehensive understanding of:
<p>Animal Interaction & Handling</p> <p>Typical job roles include:</p> <p>Animal Technician</p> <p>Animal Welfare Assistant</p> <p>Animal Day Care Assistant</p> <p>Farm Park Assistant</p>	<p>Beyond routine animal husbandry as listed in the core i.e. for animals with specific needs, unknown or unpredictable behaviour i.e animals recovering from routine operations such as neutering, or who may be obese, pregnant or fearful. Behaviour such as barking or pulling on the lead or who react unpredictably when meeting other animals. These animals will have a plan to follow prepared by a more senior person.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • follow a prepared interaction/handling plan to prepare the animal and resources required i.e. muzzle, collar leads, harnesses, head collars, crush cage, grasper, snake hook, hoods • undertake interaction/handling activities and use methods such as desensitisation and socialisation in accordance with the interaction/handling plan • handle the animal throughout the interaction/handling to promote the animal's health, normal behaviour and physical and emotional welfare • monitor, report and record the response and welfare of the animal throughout interaction/handling activities • apply techniques which take into account the animal's welfare and emotional wellbeing, such as positive reinforcement to interact/handle the animal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the preparation of animals for interaction/handling, depending on the animal, the environment and the interaction/handling activities to be undertaken • signs which indicate mental and physical condition of the animal in response to handling/interactions • the importance of accurately assessing animal behaviour and welfare before, during and after interactions/handling activities • the importance of positive reinforcement to the animal and how to provide it • the monitoring, reporting and recording processes relating to animal responses and animal welfare during interaction and handling
<p>Rehoming</p> <p>Typical job roles include:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contribute to the assessment of an animal's readiness for rehoming • provide advice to customers/clients on the suitability of animals according to their circumstances and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the needs of an animal and factors to be assessed in relation to an animal's readiness for rehoming

<p>Animal Welfare Assistant</p> <p>Zoo Keeper Assistant</p>	<p>experience in line with the workplace policies and procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support customers/clients during the rehoming/intake process and provide direction to further sources of information and guidance following rehoming of an animal • contribute to the assessment of the animal during the intake process • contribute to the matching process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the facilities, care and attention required by different animals and how to explain these to customers/clients in relation to their circumstances and experience • the support appropriate and available to customers/clients during the rehoming/intake process and the sources of information and specialist advice following rehoming/intake of an animal • the animal intake processes in line with workplace policies and procedures
<p>Movement and Transportation</p> <p>Typical job roles include:</p> <p>Animal Collection Officer</p> <p>Animal Technician</p> <p>Wildlife Rehabilitation Assistant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepare means of transport appropriate for animals, ensuring serviceability and cleanliness • prepare animals for movement and/or transportation taking into consideration their welfare potentially dealing with sick or injured animals • use of appropriate equipment and methods to move and transport animals ensuring their safety and security • monitor the physical and emotional health and welfare of animals during and after movement and transportation • identify route and contingency plans • identify if an animal required veterinary care and take appropriate action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the legal requirements relating to the movement and transportation of animals • the different animals' requirements, for example life stage, internal and external environmental factors, climate control and noise • the preparation required for the movement and/or transportation of animals • the appropriate equipment and methods to move and transport animals for example barriers, caging and restraint • the monitoring of physical and emotional health and welfare of animals during and after movement and transportation
<p>Operational/ Reception Duties</p> <p>Typical job roles include:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present a safe, friendly and welcoming reception for internal and external customers/clients/animals as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the animal product and sundry items safe storage, display and stock rotation process • the extent of information, advice, support and guidance on a range of topics such as animal welfare given to customers within own responsibility

<p>Animal Welfare Assistant</p> <p>Kennel/Cattery Assistant</p> <p>Pet Retail Assistant</p> <p>Animal Day Care Assistant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide information, advice, support and guidance on a range of topics such as animal care and welfare to customers/clients and seek advice when necessary • use appropriate methods of technology for internal and external communication such as telephone, walkie talkies, email and scanning documents • prepare, receive and store deliveries of goods including animal related products such as food stuffs and sundry items • prepare and display stock for sale, including stock rotation • take payment for goods, services and charitable donations • process customer and animal registrations and bookings • keep records for individual animals and people in line with the organisation's procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • different methods of payment • customer enquiries, including complaints and appropriate action to take in line with organisational policies • the range of customers/clients/animals and how to respond appropriately to varied situations applicable to their job role • the organisation's policies and procedures for making customer and animal registrations and bookings
<p>Breeding</p> <p>Typical job roles include:</p> <p>Animal Welfare Assistant (Breeding Centre)</p> <p>Animal Technician</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepare animals and environment for mating • monitor animals during parturition, recognising signs of difficulty • carry out general care of animals through gestation • prepare and manage pregnant animals pre and post parturition • provide appropriate care and monitoring of neonates • carry out procedures for caring for the young (once weaned) and introducing them to new environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the stages of gestation • behavioural changes • the changes to the dietary/nutritional and exercise requirements throughout the reproductive cycle • the various stages of parturition and issues that can occur • social and environmental factors which will impact on development • socialisation periods associated to species

<p>Zoo Keeper Assistant (Breeding Programme)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • socialise young animals appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • signs and symptoms of common disorders associated with inbreeding/ conformation/exaggerated features and how to prevent them
<p>Zoos, Aquaria and Exotics</p> <p>Typical job roles include:</p> <p>Assistant Zoo Keeper</p> <p>Animal Handler</p> <p>Pet Retail Assistant</p> <p>Animal Technician</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain security of boundaries and enclosures in relation to legislation • respond appropriately to actual and/or potential emergency situations e.g. escaped animal • carry out animal monitoring activities such as annual count • obtain information on the animal from appropriate sources to help determine the nature of its behaviour • identify normal and abnormal behaviours in animals and respond accordingly • set up enclosures/aquarium in accordance with the intended purpose • contribute to the animal conservation plan and targets • plan and implement interpretative activities i.e. educational information boards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • captive and wild behaviour of the animal • the principles of ethical breeding • captive and natural behaviour • abnormal behaviours (stereotypes and imprinting) • awareness of conservation, rehabilitation and education • predator/prey awareness • the zoo licence and recording of data • basic capture and release techniques of native wild animals • basic enclosure design including security, double doors, boundaries • emergency protocols e.g. animal escaping • awareness of social/solitary needs of animals • the importance of being able to accurately identify zoo, aquaria and exotics • legal and ethical implications of moving and transporting wild animals
<p>Working Dog Handler</p> <p>Typical job roles include:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fit and maintain appropriate equipment, ensuring the dog can operate safely • conduct refresher/maintenance training with the support of a helper and dog trainer at an appropriate frequency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how the dogs' characteristics (physical and sensory) are used by the dog to deliver the operational effect • issues involving the dogs' stress and emotional responses, i.e. how to gauge and read the theoretical

<p>Animal handler</p> <p>Security Dog Handler</p> <p>Services Dog Handler</p> <p>Search and Rescue Dog Handler</p>	<p>to maintain the minimum standard of operational performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interpret the dog's behaviour and indications and react accordingly to the operational situation • ensure that the dog team (handler and dog) maintains the minimum standard of operational performance as determined by national standards or the employers' policies and procedures • operate the dog team within the legal and ethical framework associated with their employment • transport working dogs 	<p>and practical applications of the characteristics and how this can affect the dog's performance in its specific role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to maintain trained behaviour to minimum operational standards • individual dog body language and behaviour traits • moving and transporting working dogs
<p>Wildlife Rehabilitation</p> <p>Typical job roles include:</p> <p>Wildlife Rehabilitation Assistant</p> <p>Zoo Keeper Assistant</p> <p>Farm Park Assistant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respond to collection requests • identify wild animals that are suitable for rehabilitation and release • plan and undertake rehabilitation for release into the wild • capture and handle healthy and casualty wild animals • move and transport wild animals appropriately • release and monitor wild animals as appropriate • carry out the hand rearing of wildlife species • identify a range of different species (wildlife) or breeds (domestic) in order to understand the behavioural and ecological needs of the animal as well as be aware of the potential risks it may pose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the differences between treating and interacting with domestic and wildlife species • rehabilitation policies and procedures including the need to record the specific location, date and time of collection of wildlife • the principles of releasing rehabilitated animals • post release monitoring • the basic legal and ethical implications pertaining to wildlife rehabilitation and transport • knowledge of legislation and licences specific to wildlife rehabilitation • abnormal behaviours in relation to stereotypic and imprinting • the principles and procedures in relation to orphan wildlife species hand rearing legislation and methods

		for identification of wildlife pre-release and for post-release monitoring
<p>Veterinary Care Support</p> <p>Typical job roles include:</p> <p>Veterinary Care Assistant</p> <p>Animal Welfare Assistant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support, as directed, a veterinary surgeon / veterinary nurse in a clinical environment with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dealing with potential and actual emergency situations • pre and post-operative care • patient monitoring for example anaesthetic monitoring • in-patient care • diagnostic care/tests/X-rays – positioning and exposing • the dispensing and administration of medication • end of life care for pets and providing support for the owner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • common medical, behavioural and surgical care requirements • the principles of care and related procedures and how to deal with these • clinical parameters of common species seen in a veterinary environment • legislation and limitations in relation to role and responsibilities in a clinical environment • legislation in relation to the dispensing and administering of medication • end of life care processes, procedures and support • how to deal with emotional customers/clients

Behaviours

Safe Working	Maintain safe working practices, which must be adhered to at all times with constant situational awareness and adaptability to ensure safety of the animal(s), themselves and others. Have the ability to work efficiently to meet time deadlines and workplace requirements.
Work Ethic	Have a strong work ethic, a willingness to learn. Be respectful, punctual, reliable, trustworthy and diligent and prepared to work irregular hours, in all weathers. Take a pride in their work, showing commitment and loyalty, whilst conducting themselves in a professional manner.
Responsibility	Have responsibility for themselves, others and the animal(s) in their care, showing respect, empathy, patience and tolerance in all situations. Work with methods that reduce any risk of physical injury and emotional stress to animal(s), themselves or others. Manage your own emotional wellbeing and resilience. Accurately report any concerns, incidents and abnormalities.

Team Work	Have the ability to work both individually and as part of a diverse team as required, understanding their role and changing priorities when the situation dictates. Show respect to their fellow workers.
Communication	Respect the need for confidentiality and adhere to data protection policies. Communicate effectively with colleagues, visitors and customers/clients. Demonstrate good interpersonal and active listening skills. Know when to ask for advice or guidance.
Professionalism	<p>Professional and ethical responsibilities and the values of your work place. The limits of your own authority, expertise, training, competence and experience. Industry knowledge, respect and empathy for animals. Awareness of new ideas and openness to develop skills and new ways of working. Use social media responsibly.</p> <p>The legal duty of care under animal health and welfare legislation and codes of practice and other relevant legislation affecting the keeping of animals</p>

Qualifications: Apprentices without level 1 English and Maths will need to achieve this level and take the test for level 2 English and Maths prior to taking the end-point assessment

Level: This standard is at Level 2

Duration: Minimum 12 months, typically 18 months

Review: After 3 years