

Dog welfare

You are responsible for ensuring that your pet's welfare needs are met. Over millions of years our dogs have evolved to behave in certain ways to stay fit, healthy and stress free. If unable to act on these instincts, a dog's welfare may be affected, inadvertently causing stress, poor health or behavioural problems.

Brambell's Five Freedoms

These are the minimum requirements for meeting your dog's welfare needs:

1. **Freedom from hunger and thirst** - providing a suitable diet and fresh water.
2. **Freedom from pain, injury and disease** - with weekly home health checks helping to prevent and identify as soon as possible.
3. **Freedom from discomfort** - e.g. suitably sized bed/crate with comfortable bedding.
4. **Freedom from fear and distress** - using your dog's 'safe space' and gradually introducing sounds and situations that could potentially scare a dog e.g. meltdowns and fireworks.
5. **Freedom to express normal behaviour** - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities, and company of the animal's own kind.

Behavioural needs of your dog

- Using their well developed teeth, dogs have a need to chew on a choice of materials for at least 30 minutes each day.
- Using a portion of your dog's daily food allowance, you can easily have a calmer dog, by allowing them to chew a filled and frozen KONG. Soak your dog's daily food ration in warm water until absorbed, then pop it in the KONG. With this frozen it should usually last for around 15-30 minutes- great if you want your dog to get a hit of that feel good hormone 'serotonin' to be calm around the children.
- Dogs are very active and need to be allowed to run, play, sniff, and explore each day. A pack would naturally travel a range of several hundred square miles every day, and researchers have even found that some breeds can maintain a speed of 30 miles per hour for more than three miles on a hunt!





- Dogs can stir easily when they sleep. They need to sleep on and off for 12-16 hours per day (18-20 for puppies), and need to be able to lie flat out on their side, in a quiet safe space, to ensure that a lack of sleep does not disrupt their behaviour.
- Although your dog will develop a bond with humans, it is a different relationship than they would have with another dog. Rewarding behaviour that you do want and ignoring behaviour that you don't want is essential to developing a healthy therapeutic relationship. A dog should never be punished or scared as this can be dangerous.
- We all need stimulation to learn and develop, and your dog is no different. However a dog entering the human world has more reason to fear new objects and situations, so extra care must be taken to gradually introduce new things and not overwhelm him or her. Using your 'safe space' and working through your tick list of 'things to introduce' will help this.