APBC Reflective Accounts Form

Please use this form to record written reflective accounts on all self-directed and non-certified learning and training that you are submitting for APEL and how this relates to the knowledge section (eg Animal Health and Welfare) of the standard. Use one form for each knowledge section, making sure you do not include any information that might identify a specific client, service user, colleague or other individuals.

Name: APEL applicant 1

Knowledge section - K&U number(s): Animal Behaviour 2

What was the nature of the activity?

As a Rehoming and Animal Welfare Assistant in the dog intake kennels my role included recording behavioural observations and other relevant observations on the dogs in my care. This involved logging daily observations on each dogs behavioural state. Codes were categorised into green, amber and red codes. As these dogs were in rescue kennels it was important to be able to recognise signals relating to key behavioural states, such as fear, nervousness, aggression, ill-health so that basic or advanced care plans could be put in place and the dogs could receive the best possible care as well as safety measures put in place for members of staff and volunteers.

Why did you choose to undertake this activity?

This was part of my job as a Part-time Rehoming and Animal Welfare Assistant. I joined the dog and cats home to gain important practical experience working with dogs some of which may have a number of complex requirements.

What did you learn from this activity?

I learnt to observe and recognise the body language of a variety of different breeds of dogs in kennel environments. It helped me to appreciate the subtleties and variety of behaviours. Also, that whilst it is important when reporting on behavioural states of rescue dogs to have some clear indicators of measure, it is not always beneficial to label behaviours.

How did you change or improve your practice as a result?

Dog body language is subtle and not always easy to interpret. My time working as Rehoming and Welfare assistant helped me to develop a better understanding of dog body language and

behaviour. Having worked with a variety of dogs that were often experiencing heightened behavioural states, I feel confident in my understanding of how this needs to be addressed as part of any behavioural plan. I also have an appreciation of the levels of behavioural issues and how important it is that dog's with severe behavioural states are treated by those with sufficient knowledge and experience in order to help the dog, rather than make matters worse.