



# APBC

ASSOCIATION OF PET  
BEHAVIOUR COUNSELLORS

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## What constitutes a Referral to a Behaviourist?

- The APBC continues to recognise a strong link between the veterinary surgeon and the behaviourist in all cases, not least because of the link between some medical conditions and behavioural symptoms. The APBC emphasises the importance of being part of the VetLed Team in that it requires that all its members work solely on veterinary referral, regardless of species.
- A referral can take many forms. Some are more formal as in the completion of a referral form and some less so, in the form of an email communication or telephone conversation.
- A referral should include the provision to the behaviourist of the animal's full medical history, shared with the client's consent.
- It is recommended that both the behaviourist and the veterinary practice note the referral on their records for the animal, and whether it was from 'the practice' or a named veterinary surgeon.
- It is also advisable to ensure the most convenient method for all involved, particularly to ensure the ease of the process for the referring veterinary surgeon in terms of time undertaken.
- A client can request a referral from their veterinary surgeon or a veterinary surgeon can initiate a referral to a behaviourist following discussion with a client.
- It is preferable and strongly recommended for a clinical examination to be carried out within a reasonable time before the referral consultation. This will assist in establishing whether there is any involvement of a medical condition in the behavioural symptoms. However, it is appreciated that this may not always be practical, or indeed possible, given individual animal temperaments and other extenuating circumstances. Individual discretion should be used on a case-by case basis by the behaviourist and referring veterinary surgeon and adjusted as the behavioural modification process requires.
- The referring practice should be kept informed by the behaviourist of the outcome and any developments of the case. Maintaining such communication is core to the working of the VetLed Team. Such communications may be written or verbal as appropriate.
- This should be a reciprocal arrangement so that any drugs prescribed or treatment relevant to the behaviours are shared with the behaviourist.

- Inevitably there are situations where individual veterinary surgeons or practices may have preference to whom they refer clients for behavioural advice. APBC members are encouraged to build relationships with local practices and inform them of the merits of APBC membership in terms of being able to see cases on referral. This should help clarify any confusion of the appropriateness of referring to both full and provisional APBC members.
- The APBC encourages veterinary practices to refer to appropriately qualified behaviourists. It is a founding member of the industry regulating body, the Animal Behaviour and Training Council (ABTC). Members include the BVA, BSAVA and BVNA.
- All Full Clinical Animal Behaviourists (CAB) members of the APBC meet the ABTC standard for this role.
- To clarify a further common misunderstanding about any difference between ‘Certificated Clinical Animal Behaviourists’ (CCAB) and CAB, both are assessed against the same ABTC standards for knowledge and performance skills and are therefore equivalent. There are currently two approved routes for an individual to be assessed as meeting the standards for Clinical Animal Behaviourists. One is via the Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour (ASAB) accreditation giving the nominal CCAB and the other is via the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors (APBC) giving the nominal CAB. All are listed on the ABTC and APBC sites as CAB.
- Both provisional and full APBC CAB members have achieved the relevant academic qualifications for knowledge and understanding. Provisional members are working to gain requisite practical experience prior to achieving full membership. They are often supported by APBC full members.
- The APBC also has Full and Provisional members who work as Animal Behaviour Technicians (ABT). This a more preventative orientated behavioural role and is also a referral-based service. (<https://abtc.org.uk/owners/types-of-pracitioners/>).
- Further information about APBC members can be found here: <https://www.apbc.org.uk/referrals/>.
- Further BSAVA resources:

“Referral for Behaviour or Training”: [https://www.bsava.com/Portals/0/resources/documents/secure/PS\\_behaviour\\_referral\\_230117.pdf?ver=2017-01-23-112409-937](https://www.bsava.com/Portals/0/resources/documents/secure/PS_behaviour_referral_230117.pdf?ver=2017-01-23-112409-937)

“Animal Behaviour and Training Associations: [https://www.bsava.com/Portals/0/resources/documents/secure/PS\\_Behaviour\\_and\\_Training%20Associations\\_23012017.pdf?ver=2017-01-23-112015-123](https://www.bsava.com/Portals/0/resources/documents/secure/PS_Behaviour_and_Training%20Associations_23012017.pdf?ver=2017-01-23-112015-123)