



Response from The Society for Companion Animal Studies to the Paws Clause

Introduction and Background

The Society for Companion Animal Studies (SCAS) warmly welcomes the proposals in the Paws Clause to introduce positive approaches to pets across all housing types. SCAS is an education charity whose remit concerns the study of human-animal interactions and which works to promote best practices. We are a membership organisation, whose members are practitioners and academics from the health, social care and education professions. Anthrozoology, the field of human-animal interactions is a new interdisciplinary science whose members address many societal issues. Beneficial effects arising from companion animal presence have been noted since ancient times. However, it is only in the last 40 years that serious scientific study has been undertaken into human-animal interactions. There is now irrefutable evidence that keeping pets can have significant positive impacts on human health, welfare and behaviour. Benefits also extend to the wider community through the creation of social capital.

SCAS was the first organisation in the world to be established to study human-animal interactions. In 1990 SCAS was a founder member of The International Association of Human-Animal Interactions (IAHAIO). IAHAIO is an NGO reporting to the United Nations and the World Health Organisation. IAHAIO now has some 100 member organisations representing some 300,000 individuals from a wide range of health and social care professions. Through the IAHAIO network we have unparalleled opportunities to exchange research, expertise and protocols on human-animal interactions, including best practice approaches to pets in housing.

The IAHAIO General Assembly has issued a series of Declarations pertaining to companion animals in society with special reference to human health, education and housing. These Declarations provide best practice and are for local and national government to consider and to enact. Please find appended the IAHAIO Geneva and Tokyo Declaration, which are very relevant to the Paws Clause.

Pets in Housing

SCAS has advocated positive pets in housing policies since it was founded in Dundee in 1979. Throughout the past 40 years we have sought to change attitudes and practice to pets in housing, for example, by holding conferences; through our publications, including books and best practice guidelines; via media – TV, radio, newspaper, magazines; holding strategy meetings with other charities; meetings with housing providers – local authorities, private landlords and by conducting research. In 1994 SCAS members created Pathway, the pets in housing advisory group, chaired by Sir

Roger Gale MP, SCAS Patron. This involved the veterinary profession, major animal welfare groups, the All Party Group for Animal Welfare, environmental health officers, animal wardens and assistance dog organisations and Housing Providers, notably Anchor Housing Trust. The Pathway Guidelines for Landlords and Tenants provide practical advice for responsibly introducing pets to housing and is currently being updated.

In 1998 the SCAS Pets for Life Campaign was established to provide information on pets in housing and to advocate for positive policies. In the same year Anchor Housing Trust published its research on pets and older people which found that 140,000 older people annually in the UK were required to relinquish their pets on moving to supported living settings. 38,000 of these pets were recorded as being euthanised. The fate of the others was not determined.

Anchor Housing Trust is the largest provider of sheltered housing in England. Anchor has operated a positive pet policy for many decades and advise they have never had a pet-related issue that could not be resolved. They believe older people should be able to exercise choice about their lives, and whether to have a pet is a lifestyle choice.

Wandsworth Borough Council also provides a good example. They operated an almost complete ban on pets until 2000 when they introduced a positive policy for all of their accommodation, including high rise flats and sheltered housing. They report that they have fewer pet-related problems now that pets are permitted – as they now have protocols. They also state that the animals have created a sense of community that did not exist before. People are happier (personal communication Josephine Ross, WBC).

Both Anchor and Wandsworth have presented at SCAS Conferences and encourage other organisations to adopt their approach.

SCAS members have travelled to the USA and Asia to learn first- hand more about the effects and experiences of changing rules to permit pets in housing. Prior to the introduction of pets many managers have fears and concerns. However, research demonstrates that these concerns to be unfounded. Researchers from UC Davis monitored the effects of a state law in California which permitted pets in sheltered housing. (Hart and Mader) Managers who had been concerned admitted that the pets were beneficial, also stating that the animals had created a sense of community that had hitherto been absent.

SCAS conferences pertaining to pets in housing have been held throughout the UK. Our most recent conference *"Pets in Housing: Promoting Health and Wellbeing,"* held in March 2018, provided an overview of the current situation in Britain – for tenants, for homeless people and for older people in supported living. Taryn Graham, University of Calgary, our Canadian speaker explained the situation in Ontario where landlords are prohibited by law from operating no pets clauses.

It is telling and very disappointing that despite our best efforts, the housing sector has largely been unwilling to engage. For example, over 80 invitations were sent to the housing organisations closest to the conference centre. Phone calls were made to provide additional information. Two national housing organisations kindly posted about our conference on their websites. However, only one delegate from a housing organisation attended.

SCAS has supported three housing bills in The Commons pertaining to pets, older people and housing. In 1998 Paul Burstow MP, Lib Dem, introduced his bill, for which SCAS provided evidence. In 2009 Dr Nick Palmer MP, Labour, also introduced his bill. SCAS, again, provided key information and gave presentations on the topic at a meeting room in The Commons. And In 2010, Nigel Waterson

MP, Conservative, presented a similar bill. All three Bills enjoyed support in The Commons but were prorogued in The Lords.

There has been a recent upsurge in interest in pets in housing restrictions and how these affect people of all ages. In the past 2 years SCAS has given presentations at meetings on this topic in London, including at the House of Lords, to MEPs and others in Brussels, to the Cross Party Group on Animal Welfare in the Scottish Parliament, at a housing conference at Manchester Metropolitan University, in Cambridgeshire and at an international conference at UC Davis, California.

Key research on pets and older people conducted for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation showed inconsistencies, a lack of policies and poor understanding of the importance of pets to older people. (McNicholas 1993) A 2001 study confirmed that policies and also knowledge and attitudes relating to animal companionship for older people are very variable. (Ormerod et al) This was again demonstrated by McBride and Bryant's work on pet policies in housing provide for all age groups in the private and local authority sector (McBride, 2005). SCAS commissioned McNicholas to repeat her research in 2007. This found that despite the plethora of research published since the Rowntree study, which demonstrates the importance of a human-animal bond for older people, there was no improvement in the situation. A Scottish study has just been conducted which again echoes these previous findings. (Watt, unpublished) Just recently SCAS has been invited to advise a research group from the Universities of Liverpool and Lincoln who are studying pets in nursing homes.

International Perspective

SCAS collaborates with individuals and organisations overseas and our members have knowledge of more progressive approaches in other countries.

In France the right to have a companion animal, provided it is properly cared for, was enshrined as a human right in 1970. The legislation was later extended to care facilities. Thus, French landlords cannot impose a no pets clause.

In the USA in 1982 California and Arizona enacted state legislation allowing older and disabled people to keep pets in sheltered housing. Researchers at UC Davis monitored the situation and found the effects to be positive and far reaching. The benefits were not restricted to pet owners. Managers who had initially been opposed stated that the animals had created a sense of community that had hitherto not existed (Hart and Mader). The National Federal Pets in Housing Bill was enacted shortly thereafter in 1983. This was enacted quickly following a meeting of senators and legislators with older pet owners which impressed upon them the importance and strength of the human-animal bond and the damage caused by breaking this. This 1983 Federal Bill pertained to older and disabled people in sheltered housing which received any form of government benefits, for example favourable insurance. It was later extended to all public housing.

In Kobe, Japan, change to allow pets in public housing was enacted following the Great Hanshin Earthquake of 1995 in which 400,000 homes were destroyed. None of the emergency shelters permitted pets and many pet owners endured the harsh winter without shelter, to remain with their pets. When allocated newly constructed housing they refused this, as pets were not permitted. Only then did local government appreciate the strength of the bond and enact positive pets in housing rules. (KNOTS, personal communication).

India has positive pets in housing legislation, across all housing types. "No apartment /housing society should ban animal keeping in an apartment/society. Such beliefs are against the Section 11

(3) states Prevention of Cruelty to Animal Act, 1960 and article 51 A (g) of the Indian Constitution. According to article 51 A (g) of the Indian Constitution, it is the responsibility of every citizen to behave compassionately towards the living creatures and animals.”

In Ontario, Canada landlords cannot operate a no pets clause (Graham, 2018).

New Zealand has this month (September 2018) introduced a positive pet policy for state house tenants. Housing Minister Phil Twyford said was a role for pets in improving quality of life. “Given how important pets can be to people’s quality of life, I favour a more accommodating approach that allows tenants to own pets” (Housing New Zealand 2018).

In Belgium a court has recently found that banning pets from housing is a breach of human rights legislation.

Research Findings on Human-animal Interactions

Over the past 40 years the pet keeping has been subject to serious scientific scrutiny by scientists from many disciplines. This human-animal bond has been found to confer health and social benefits to people of all ages and whether they are living independently or within a residential facility.

For children, pets facilitate the developmental tasks of childhood. Parents introduce pets to the family to encourage the development of empathy, to instil responsibility and helps prepare children for tasks associated with child rearing. In teenager pets can act as an anchor when other relationships are in flux. Having a strong bond with a dog, especially, seems to help youth stay grounded – helping them to avoid risky behaviours. Further, children reared with pets in the home develop a better functioning immune system, with fewer allergies of any kind and improved resistance to infections.

Pet owners, notably dog owners take more exercise, and thus pets contribute to healthy ageing. People report that their pets mitigate against loneliness and depression. Population studies find that dog owners enjoy better health. Of particular note are cardiovascular benefits – a lower incidence of heart disease; a lower risk of heart attack or stroke; and improved survival should they have a serious heart attack or stroke. This is thought to be related to higher levels of the neurotransmitter oxytocin, a key regulator of the cardiovascular system which is elevated when one interacts with pets. The incidence of chronic disease conditions of older people is increased by lifestyle. This includes lack of exercise which is associated with heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity and arthritis. Older people with pets have better scores for the Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and these are maintained better over time. Older pet owners are more likely to remain independent and less likely to need nursing home care.

Animal-Assisted Interventions (AAI)

AAIs can involve visitations to care facilities or resident animals. Visiting animal programmes usually accredited dogs visiting nursing homes, residential care settings, hospices and hospitals. Different types of AAI can be delivered. The terminology for these set out in the IAHAIO White Paper 2014. Careful planning with a multidisciplinary approach is required and a veterinarian should be involved in animal selection and screening and advising on preventive healthcare. Animal care plans should be in writing and careful records kept. Training should be provided to animal handlers, staff and patients. It is important that residents are not denied animal contact, even if they are unable to care for a pet of their own. Facilities that have introduced pets report many benefits.

Communal animals form part of a therapeutic milieu as a shared pet. This can work well with cage and aviary birds; aquarium fish and cats – but being a communal pet does not tend to suit dogs.

Guidelines for AAI have been developed – see below.

Dogs, owned by an individual resident, can usually adapt to facility living.

Respecting Others

It is understood that not everyone wants dogs / cats or other animals around. Positive pet policies require animals to be well looked after, and do not impinge on the lives of others directly or indirectly. This includes direct behaviour, noise and smell.

Fiscal Savings

Health economists have recently been calculating the cost savings to health accruing from pet ownership. Pet owners generally make 15% fewer GP visits. In the UK the reduction in visits equates to some £2.45 billion annually. (Hall et al) The potential savings from reduced incidence of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, osteoporosis, arthritis, depression, allergies and diverting youth from risky behaviours has not yet been assessed, but will be very considerable.

Summary

It is clear that current practices regarding pets, people and accommodation in the UK does not reflect published scientific evidence pertaining to human-animal interactions. Our country has not kept pace with progress being made overseas. Many people in the UK, especially those most vulnerable and those living in rental accommodation are being denied the opportunity to have an animal companion. This discrimination has a detrimental effect on health, on child development and the right to have a family life.

Given the experience of SCAS in the UK and of our colleagues overseas in failing to effect voluntary change through educative efforts, we strongly recommend the introduction of legislation to enact for positive policies across all housing types. We would be very happy to support this through sharing our expertise and resources.

Please find below some useful guidelines and protocols for both pets in housing and for AAI below.

Yours faithfully, on behalf of SCAS Board

Dr Elizabeth Ormerod BVMS

Lesley Winton

Dr Anne McBride

Guidelines and Protocols

A. Guidelines for Pets in Housing

Age UK AIMS **Keeping Pets in Private Retirement and Sheltered Housing**. 2006, revised 2008

McBride, **Pets in Housing: Issues, Policies, Solutions** book chapter in *Pets and Older People*, 2005 edited by Ormerod and Dono, pub by SCAS

Pathway Pets in Housing Guidelines 1995, revised 2007, currently under revision

RSPCA (2004) **Housing pets and people: animal welfare guidance and advice for housing providers**. RSPCA, www.rspca.org.uk

B. Guidelines for Animal Assisted Interventions – visiting and resident animals in residential care setting, hospitals, schools and other care facilities

IAHAIO White Paper **Definitions for Animal Assisted Intervention and Guidelines for Wellness of Animals Involved** 2014, updated 2018

<http://iahaio.org/best-practice/white-paper-on-animal-assisted-interventions/>

Ormerod, E. **Companion Animals in Health and Social Care Institutions: Review of Risk Management** Proceedings SCAS Conference, May 2001, London

Ormerod E. Book chapter **Planning and Implementation of AAI** in *Pets and Older People*, 2005 ed by Ormerod and Dono pub by SCAS

Pets in Residential Care: guidelines for care homes on how to introduce a pets' policy. Joseph Rowntree Care Weekly 1993

Royal College of Nursing 2018 **Protocol for dogs in health care settings**

SCAS Code of Practice in Animal Assisted Interventions 2013, revised 2018 www.scas.org.uk

Schantz, P. **Preventing Potential health Hazards incidental to the use of pets in Therapy** *Anthrozoos*, 1990, vol IV, number 1

SHEA Expert Guidance **Animals in Healthcare Facilities: Recommendations to Minimize Potential Risks** *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology* May 2015, vol 36, no. 5

Waltner-Toews, D. and Ellis, A. (1994) **Good for your animals, good for you: How to live and work with animals in therapy and activity programmes and stay healthy**. Pub by University of Guelph



The Geneva Declaration, 1995

Recent research is demonstrating the various benefits of companion animals to people's well-being, personal growth, and quality of life.

In order to enable their presence and ensure the harmonious companionship of animals in our lives, owners, and governments both have duties and responsibilities. IAHAIO members have adopted five fundamental resolutions at their General Assembly, held in Geneva on 5 September 1995. IAHAIO urges all international bodies concerned and all national governments to consider and activate the following resolutions.

Geneva Resolutions

1. To acknowledge the universal non-discriminatory right to pet ownership in all places and reasonable circumstances, if the pet is properly cared for and does not contravene the rights of non-pet owners.
2. To take appropriate steps to ensure that the human environment is planned and designed to take the special needs and characteristics of pets and their owners into account.
3. To encourage the regulated presence of companion animals in schools and school curricula, and to work to convince teachers and educators of the benefits of this presence through appropriate training programmes.

4. To ensure regulated companion animals access into hospitals, retirement and nursing homes, and other centres for the care of people of all ages who are in need of such contact.
5. To officially recognize as valid therapeutic interventions those animals that are specifically trained to help people overcome the limitations of disabilities; to foster the development of programs to produce such animals; and to ensure that education about the range of capabilities of these animals is included in the basic training of the health and social service professions.



IAHAIO Tokyo Declaration, 2007

Given the scientific and medical evidence proving the beneficial effects to human health and well being arising from interactions with companion animals,

Given the biological and psychological evidence for the innate affinity of humans to nature, including other living beings and natural settings,

The members of the International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations unanimously approved the following resolution and guidelines for action at the IAHAIO General Assembly held on October 5, 2007 in Tokyo, Japan.

It is a universal, natural and basic human right to benefit from the presence of animals.

Acknowledgement of this right has consequences requiring action in various spheres of legislation and regulation. IAHAIO urges all international bodies and national and local governments:

1. To enact housing regulations which allow the keeping of companion animals if they can be housed properly and cared for adequately, while respecting the interest of people not desiring direct contact with such animals:
2. To promote access of specially selected and trained, healthy and clean animals to medical care facilities to participate in animal assisted therapy and/or animal-assisted activities;

3. To recognize persons and animals adequately trained in and prepared for animal-assisted therapy, animal-assisted activity and animal-assisted education;
4. To allow the presence of companion animals in care/residential centres for people of any age, who would benefit from that presence
5. To promote the inclusion of companion animals in the school curricula according to the "IAHAIO Rio Declaration on Pets in Schools"

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