

## APPENDIX D

### Professional Dog Walking – Issues and Considerations

As a direct action, linked to our current review of PSPO controls for dogs locally, we have conducted a fairly lengthy trawl and reading of internet based information. This is specifically regarding Professional Dog Walkers (PDW) and as a result have highlighted some significant elements for future reference.

The headlines are recorded for information, and if further detail, depth of knowledge or insight is required the respective links are incorporated.

## NATIONAL GUIDELINES

### RSPCA

Guidelines have been produced to ensure the best in dog welfare, to assist professional dog walkers and to better inform owners, as 31 per cent admit they rely on dog walkers.

A group of leading animal welfare organisations have joined forces with us to release a set of guidelines to ensure high welfare standards in the unregulated profession of dog walking.

[We're joining forces to launch guidelines for dog walkers - RSPCA](#)

The guidelines serve to advise dog owners, Local Authorities and dog walkers on best practice to ensure man's best friend is protected.

To date only a small number of local authorities have introduced any form of regulation for local dog walkers and, as such, it can be a postcode lottery in terms of the quality of service provided by walkers.

### Professional Dog Walkers Association

At present the dog walking industry is currently unregulated and anyone can set up on their own, this is perfectly fine, legal and acceptable but just imagine the worst case scenario, someone could describe themselves as a “**professional dog walker**” but in reality has no animal experience, no dog walking industry knowledge, no business insurance, no disclosure checks, no verification, no awareness of their clients or surroundings... the “no” list can go on and the results can be catastrophic.

[Dog Walking Profession Guidelines | Walkies & Cuddles \(walkiesandcuddlesfranchise.co.uk\)](#)

The PDWA aim to influence local government and insurance companies to begin to control our industry for the protection of the public who use us, the general public whom we may encounter out on our walks and the majority of the dog walking businesses who are caring, honest and diligent.

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In order to achieve this they have developed the dog walking industry best practice guidelines, which covers three areas:

- Business Plan
- Health & Safety
- Management

#### Business Plan

In summary, a business plan is a structured description of your business, who you are, what you do, what your aims are and how you will achieve these aims.

- **Financial** you may need a formal business plan to obtain finance / loan.
- **Business development** a structured business plan serves as a reminder and focus of your reasons and aims for running your own dog walking business. It can be revised as your business grows to include for your future plans.
- Established businesses can use a business plan as a means of a health check to evaluate it's welfare and condition.

#### Health & Safety

As a professional dog walker your priority should always be the safety of your **clients**, other members of the **public** and **dogs** you may encounter, your team and yourself.

- } Hold sufficient and appropriate dog walking business insurance.
- } Work in accordance with ALL national and local animal welfare, access to land and environmental legislations.
- } Ensure a risk assessment is carried out prior to all walks.
- } Assess each dog's suitability for walks - with other dogs, consider age, capability, behaviour.
- } Keep all dogs in your care under control at all times.
- } Ensure all dogs in your care wear safe and correctly fitted collars or harnesses.
- } Ensure all dogs in your care are micro-chipped and wear a collar carrying your unique **Business ID Tag**
- } Ensure all dogs in your care are transported in a safe and secure manner.
- } All dogs to be walked away from and returned to the vehicle on the lead.
- } Carry a mini dog first aid kit at all times.
- } Do not use any form of corporal punishment for dogs in your care.
- } Ensure your team receive appropriate training.

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- } Ensure a procedure is in place for any unforeseen situation or emergency.
- } Ensure all dogs are returned home clean, dry and happy.

#### Management

Your business should be managed to the best possible level that you can and demonstrate awareness for developing yourself and your business to the next stage.

- } Develop and maintain a suitable level of experience and skill.
- } Increase your knowledge of all dog breeds in your care.
- } Provide your clients with a contract detailing your terms of engagement, service and costs.
- } Ensure all parties understand their commitment and responsibilities.
- } Maintain records.
- } Be HMRC compliant.

We advise anyone involved with dog welfare, whether an **owner** or **professional dog walker** to familiarise yourself with the Law on both **National** and **Local levels**.

[Dog Walking Regulations | Walkies & Cuddles \(walkiesandcuddlesfranchise.co.uk\)](http://walkiesandcuddlesfranchise.co.uk)

Local Authorities may have their own bye-laws governing **professional dog walkers** and can include, but not limited to:

Restrictions on number of dogs which can be walked at any one time especially in public areas, where you may walk your dogs, if the dogs can be walked off their leads, dog walking business license, requirement to carry identification, compliancy to code of practices, carry dog first aid kit.

Contact your local **Dog Warden** for information in your home area.

### Key Legislation

#### Licenses and Laws

As a professional dog walker, it's prudent that you get accustomed to what this career entails and keep up to date with any rules and regulations that may impact your business.

[Dog Walking Licenses and Laws in the UK \(2022\) \(petbusinessinsurance.co.uk\)](http://petbusinessinsurance.co.uk)

In the UK, it's currently not necessary to have a dog walking licence, qualification, or certification. With no universal minimum requirements in place, all you need to legally operate a successful dog walking business is a love of dogs and adequate spare time.

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Nonetheless, whether to obtain a licence or not depends on the nature of your dog walking business. ***If your business is purely dog walking, then you're not legally obligated to apply for any licence and you can get started right away.*** However, if it incorporates the boarding of dogs, then you will need to obtain a licence from your local council.

#### How Many Dogs Can I Legally Walk at Once?

There's no straightforward answer to this quandary since the central government doesn't set the limit. The Control of Dogs Act 2010 permitted local authorities to set their own maximum number and restrictions, meaning that the number varies by council area. Some council areas are yet to set the limit, while others have imposed a complete ban on dogs, such as some beaches in Essex, Lincolnshire, and Devon in the months of summer.

Generally, though, ***most council areas, including Wandsworth in London, limit the number of dogs that can be walked at a time to four.*** In some specific areas of the borough, dog walkers can apply for a license to walk up to eight dogs at once.

To be on the safe side and bypass the £100 fine imposed on lawbreakers, just walk no more than four dogs at any one time. Also, make sure that you have a lead for each dog.

## PSPO's

### Wandsworth

#### [Public Spaces Protection Order - Wandsworth Borough Council](#)

The maximum number of dogs that an individual may take onto specified areas- it will be an offence to take more than **4 dogs** at any one time into the areas covered by the PSPO with the exception of licensed multiple dog walkers in certain parks and open spaces

### Leeds

#### [Dogs in Public Spaces Protection Order \(leeds.gov.uk\)](#)

10. A person in charge of more than one dog on land to which this Order applies must not walk more than 4 dogs at any one time.

11. Professional dog walkers who hold the appropriate insurance may walk up to a maximum of 6 dogs provided that these dogs are not walked with or alongside any other dogs (regardless of how many other people who are in charge of any other dogs at that time are present) and that they are in full control of all of the dogs at all times unless:

- a) he has reasonable excuse in failing to do so; or
- b) the owner, occupier or other person having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to his failing to do so.

### Haringey

#### [Control of dogs in public | Haringey Council](#)

One person can walk 6 dogs at most at one time.

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#### Sefton

[Dogs \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://sefton.gov.uk)

- Restrict the number of dogs that can be walked by one person to a maximum of 6 dogs on or off the lead.

#### Durham

[Enforcement powers for irresponsible dog owners - Durham County Council](#)

It is an offence in Durham to walk more than six dogs together at any one time

#### Richmond Ruling

[Dog walker and council both claim success in High Court ruling on PSPO \(localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk\)](#)

Responding to the ruling, the London Borough of Richmond highlighted how the judge had concluded that its plans to limit the number of dogs walked by one person at any one time were lawful.

It said: “Whilst the legal action was ongoing, the council took the decision suspend and not to enforce the Order. However, now that the outcome has been confirmed, the council will work with enforcement officers and Park Guard – the company commissioned to oversee park security across the borough's parks and open spaces – to enforce the order.

#### Newcastle-Under-Lyme

Committee report in full with challenge and comment –March 2021

1. [Variation of PSPO Dog Controls.pdf \(newcastle-staffs.gov.uk\)](#)

2.7 In their guide “Dealing with irresponsible dog ownership: Practitioner’s manual” 1 (October 2014) DEFRA advises: “When setting the maximum number of dogs able to be walked by one person, the most important factor for authorities to consider is the maximum number of dogs which a person can control; expert advice is that this should not exceed six. Authorities should also take into account the views of dog owning and non-dog owning residents within the area to which the Order will apply, to establish what they consider to be an appropriate maximum number taking into account all the circumstances in the area. Key factors will include whether children frequently use the area, if the park is heavily populated etc.”

### Other Points of Interest

#### Dogs Trust

Dog owners are using professional dog walking services more now than ever before, and yet most have no legal agreement in place with their dog walker.

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[10 top tips for dog walkers | Professionals | Dogs Trust](#)

#### Limit the leads

Don't walk too many dogs at any one time. Your [insurance policy](#) will outline how many dogs you can walk, perhaps keep to four so that you can manage them and any extra dogs that may approach when you're out. Be aware of any local regulations as well.

#### Dog Business School

[Professional Dog Walking – Guidelines, Flashcards And Quizzes | Dog Business School](#)

#### Horsell Common - Surrey

[Professional dog walker licences to be introduced at common to protect wildlife - Surrey Live \(getsurrey.co.uk\)](#)

Dog walkers will be restricted to walking a maximum of four dogs at any one time and will be required to abide by the Society's code of conduct.

#### Hampstead Heath Controls and Challenge

Professional dog walkers can use the Heath at any time of the day under the scheme, and walk a maximum of four dogs at once.

They will be required to be insured and adhere to agreed behavioural standards.

A licence fee will cover administrative costs and make an appropriate contribution towards the running costs of the Heath, which is a registered charity.

The move brings Hampstead Heath in line with regulated professional dog walking schemes at other London open spaces

[New scheme for professional dog walkers to improve safety and protect wildlife on the Heath \(cityoflondon.gov.uk\)](#)

[Petition - Improve the new licensing scheme for professional dog walkers on Hampstead Heath. - Change.org](#)

This is what is fair:

1. 'No limit on licenses' so that everyone is able to continue working. Instead of limiting them at the outset, licenses should in the future be withdrawn from operators who breach their licensing conditions.
2. Walkers should be allowed to continue to walk up to six dogs on the condition that only four are allowed off-lead at once. Walkers are insured to do so, they are trained to do so, and their

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license will only permit them to walk dogs professionally if they are competent. If they are not, the license can be withdrawn.

#### Wiltshire Scheme

In July 2021 the Dog Warden team set up a voluntary Dog Walker Scheme to help people returning to the workplace find suitably trained Dog Walkers to help exercise their dogs. Dog walkers are required to have the correct insurance, have suitable vehicles for transporting dogs and adhere to a code of conduct to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the dogs in their care and others around them.

[Dog walker scheme - Wiltshire Council](#)

#### Northants Challenge

[Dog walkers in Northants start petition after being BANNED from walking more than four pooches at a time | Daventry Express](#)

#### New Forest PDW Charter

Professional dog walkers are commercial businesses and usually walk multiple dogs at once, so they have an additional duty to operate responsibly. They also have an excellent opportunity to set a positive example to other dog walkers. However, there are currently no national regulations for commercial dog walking, except where it is done as part of a day care or home boarding service.

[Dog walking in the New Forest \(newforestaccessforum.org.uk\)](http://newforestaccessforum.org.uk)

All professional dog walkers that operate in the New Forest National Park are therefore encouraged to abide by the best practice standards set out in this Charter.

#### Dorset Consultation

[Dog related Public Spaces Protection Orders \(PSPO\) - Dorset Council](#)

A good example we could model for ourselves.