



## **COVID-19 – ADVICE FOR ANIMAL RELATED BUSINESSES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND**

**Updated May 2021**

**(This guidance is subject to change depending on Government advice)**

The Prime Minister's announcement on 22<sup>nd</sup> February set out the steps to relax the rules surrounding coronavirus restrictions in four steps. This guidance gives advice on how the revised rules should be interpreted by the pet industry. It is set out in a similar manner to government guidance in four steps with target dates for each.

Clearly the virus is still active and will still be around even after the last of the restrictions are lifted. Consequently, the general advice regarding hand hygiene, social distancing and the wearing of face coverings will continue for some time and will relate to all activities. The [handover protocols](#) should be used until Step 4.

Some sectors of the industry will see little change apart from the general relaxation of rules that apply to specific circumstances. As an example, microchip implanters who work in other people's homes will need to continue following the general rules about doing so.

The guidance highlights those sectors where there is a specific change. Where general rules cover an activity, industry should follow them.

**Step 1A (8<sup>th</sup> March)**



The rules are unchanged for the pet industry and the restrictions in place for lockdown remain.

Step 1B (target, but no earlier than 29<sup>th</sup> March)

- **All activities requiring contact with the public should continue to be by appointment only** so that only one person (household or support bubble) is on the premises at any time.
- Handover of animals should continue to follow the [protocol](#) and take place where possible outdoors.
- Training classes organised by a business, charity, public body or similar may take place for **either** up to six people **or** from two households in any place outdoors. The organisation should ensure the activity takes place in a COVID-secure manner to ensure there is no mixing. Trainer and clients should wear face coverings and maintain social distance.
- Groomers may undertake all grooming by appointment. Care should be taken to ensure COVID security when the pet is admitted or returned.
- Puppies or kittens may be collected from the breeder at a private home with the handover outdoors. Where the pet is bred at a commercial premises handover may take place indoors in a COVID-secure manner wearing facecovering and maintaining social distance. Viewing prior to purchase should continue remotely.
- Adopters may attend a re-homing centre to collect an animal as a single household or support bubble. Where the re-homing organisation is not a private home, handover may take place indoors in a COVID-secure manner wearing facecovering and maintaining social distance. Otherwise handover should take place outside. When appropriate a dog may be taken by the re-homing organisation to a home to meet an existing dog outside.
- A person relinquishing a pet may visit a re-homing centre to do so by appointment but must hand over the pet outside if the centre is a private home. Otherwise handover may take place inside in a COVID-secure manner wearing facecovering and maintaining social distance.
- Boarding establishments were permitted to accept unvaccinated animals in the light of restricted availability of veterinary services. Establishments must now require animals to be vaccinated prior to boarding as if in normal circumstances.



Step 2 (target, but no earlier than 12<sup>th</sup> April)

- **All activities requiring contact with the public should continue to be by appointment only** so that numbers are limited following a risk assessment to maintain COVID-security to prevent indoor mixing of different households.
- Handover of animals should continue to follow the [protocol](#) and take place where possible outdoors.
- Adopters may attend a re-homing centre to meet an animal by appointment. Where the re-homing organisation is not a private home, the meeting may take place indoors in a COVID-secure manner wearing facecovering and maintaining social distance. Otherwise the meeting should take place outside.
- Training classes may take place for **either** up to six people **or** from two households in any place outdoors except a private dwelling. Where the training is organised by a business, charity, public body or similar, and there has been a risk assessment larger groups are permitted commensurate with the venue. The organisation should ensure the activity takes place in a COVID-secure manner to ensure there is no mixing. Trainer and clients should wear face coverings and maintain social distance and hand washing after handling dogs is advised.
- COVID restrictions on dog walkers cease.

Step 3 (target, but no earlier than 17<sup>th</sup> May)

- Numbers should be limited following a risk assessment to maintain COVID-security to prevent indoor mixing of more than six people or two households or bubbles.
- Handover of animals may take place indoors by appointment with up to six people or from two households or support bubble.
- Training classes may take place for **either** up to six people **or** from two households in any place indoors or up to 30 people outdoors. Where the training is organised by a business, charity, public body or similar, and there has been a risk assessment larger groups are permitted commensurate with the venue. The organisation should ensure the activity takes place in a COVID-secure manner to ensure there is no mixing. Trainer and clients should wear face coverings and maintain social distance and hand washing after handling dogs is advised.



- Breeders may allow in-person viewing of puppies and kittens from up to six people or two household or support bubbles
- Purchasers may collect a pet indoors from a private dwelling by appointment for up to six people or two households or support bubbles.
- Adopters may collect an animal from a rehoming centre indoors in a COVID-secure manner.

Step 4 (target, but no earlier than 21<sup>st</sup> June)

- All restrictions removed. The use of appointments and face coverings is likely to continue to be advised.