

Bad Behaviour?!

e w s

Our pets can give great joy and happiness, but if a behavioural problem occurs, the pleasure can turn to desperation as you try your best to cope with it. No matter what you do, nothing seems to be working! The behavioural problem is escalating and you are at the end of your tether. From your pet's point of view, they are not too happy either, as behavioural issues can mean that your dog or cat is struggling with a problem in their life. Humans can talk through their worries or bad experiences, but our pets show their feelings by the way they behave, like wagging their tail when they are happy. So when something is troubling them, the 'behavioural speech' they display can sometimes be misunderstood, and labelled as 'bad behaviour'.

What are they trying to tell you?

Behind a behavioural problem, there is an underlying cause. The key is to identify and understand what triggers it, so as to help rectify the actions.

The Wrecked Living Room! Torn Cushions - Soiled Carpet Paintwork Scratched

The dog is excessively panting and agitated. First reaction? What a bad dog! However this destructive behaviour could be the signs of 'separation anxiety'. This pet has become very dependent on the presence of one person, and when they go out, the fear of being separated is too much to bear. Panic then triggers a complete melt down, resulting in the living room disaster.

Oh No! A cat will spray to mark out their territory. Outside the house it is acceptable behaviour, but inside it is not. Cats do not like change, they like a routine lifestyle in their territory to know they are safe. So from their viewpoint, when this is

threatened, anxiousness sets in. They then attempt to defend their territory and lifestyle by spraying/markings. Their confidence has been badly shaken and needs rebuilding. Has another cat entered their 'space'? A recent house move, or newly arrived baby can upset your cat's routine.

Help is Available

Behavioural problems can include anything from ripping cushions to major aggression. There is no need for you or your pet to suffer, as help is available. Discussing the difficulties, will be the first step forward to resolving the problem. With a little time and perseverance, you and your pet can achieve a more enjoyable and 'well-behaved' life together.

Now is the Time for Training

At this time of year most people have forgotten about fireworks and bangs, and will only start to be concerned again when the nights begin to draw in. However, if you have a noise phobic pet, this is a brilliant time to commence work on desensitising them to those scary noises, which are so frightening for your pet. The chances of any fireworks going off during your behaviour programme are slim, and therefore you stand a better chance of success.



Sounds Scary is a desensitisation CD that works to increase your dog's tolerance of bangs.

It addresses firework phobias, also gunshots and thunder,

which will often be equally scary to noise phobic dogs. The basic premise of the CD is to play the noises at such a low level that your pet becomes used to them - and then gradually increase the noise until they are able to cope with very loud bangs. Once they have become desensitised to the bangs, you can start to reward them when they hear these sounds, therefore making the act of hearing loud noises, a prelude to a treat rather than scary. If you would like to start your pet on this programme, please contact the surgery where we can explain in more detail the best approach and use of the CD.

Guinea Pig Care

Many of you will have met our resident guinea pigs, Stacey and Nessa. They have been at Hollybank since 2009 and accompany us on our visits to schools, nurseries and scout groups, to help us teach children about handling and caring for pets.

Guinea pigs are often very overlooked, as many people choose rabbits as their child's first pet. However, for young children guinea pigs, are actually much easier pets to look after and handle. They don't tend to jump or scratch in the same way that rabbits do and their smaller size means they are perfect for little hands to hold. It is also very unusual for guinea pigs to bite - the most they normally manage is a friendly nibble on fingers!

Guinea pigs generally do not require nearly as much veterinary attention as rabbits. No vaccinations are necessary; they are far less likely to have problems with their teeth and are much harder as a rule. Of course, as with all pets there are some individuals that are more prone to illness than others and bladders stones, abscesses and mites are the most common problems we see in guinea pigs.

Stacey and Nessa have a warm hutch protected from the elements, and with plenty of hay. They also enjoy going out in their run for some fresh grass, and would be very lonely without each other. Guinea pigs need to be kept in pairs, as they are very sociable creatures. It is ideal to get two of the same sex, otherwise you risk them having babies! If you are thinking of getting a guinea pig or rabbit and would like some advice, please contact one of the Hollybank staff.



Safe Spring Cleaning!

Love it or hate it, the house, garden and car are beckoning a 'freshen up' after the winter months, but as we get dusters, cleaners and garden gear to the ready, please be aware that various products can be poisonous to your pets. Sadly in some cases it can be fatal.



Carefully read instructions on use and storage of DIY, home, garden and car products such as **weed killers, slug pellets, rat & mice bait, detergents, creosote, oil, paint or brush cleaners.**

Provide animal proof storage

Cats climb and balance extremely well, and the most determined dog, will get that cupboard open! **Slug Pellets** contain the toxic chemical metaldehyde. Please take great care when using them in your gardens. **Cocoa Mulch** smells very appealing to dogs, but contains theobromine, which can cause problems if eaten by your pet.

Please call us for further information or advice, if you think your pet has ingested or come into contact with a poisonous substance. This is urgent, as it can cause a wide range of symptoms, from a minor stomach upset to organ failure.

Signs to watch out for include:

vomiting - diarrhoea - lethargy - drooling/frothing panting - muscle tremors - agitation

Neutering your Pets

At Hollybank we strongly recommend neutering all dogs from 5 months of age, unless of course you are planning to breed from them! In females it is called 'spaying' and males, 'castration'.

Spaying

Previously advice has been mixed, but huge benefits have now been proven that spaying your bitch before her first season

Immensely reduces the chance of mammary cancer.

Eliminates the risk of pyometra, a life-threatening infection of the uterus.

Stops the worry of unplanned pregnancies.

Castration

For a male dog it

Removes the risk of testicular cancer

Reduces the chances of prostate disease.

Can decrease or stop unwanted behaviours of mounting, humping or marking indoors.

For nervous dogs, we may suggest delaying castration and undertaking a behavioural programme first. Removing testosterone can reduce confidence in nervous dogs, which may mean a bad reaction if put in a stressful situation.

Chemical Castration

This is a non-permanent alternative to surgical castration, which can be used in breeding, show dogs and also nervous dogs, to see their reaction prior to permanent, surgical castration. A small pellet placed under the skin like a microchip, lasts for six months in big dogs and longer in smaller dogs.

Cats

We recommend neutering male and female cats **from 4 months of age.**

Neutered Male Cats

Roam much less frequently.

Get into fewer fights, so greatly reduces the risk from wounds and infections.

Female Cats

If outside, will get pregnant very quickly, frequently and from a very young age. So keep your cats indoors until they have been neutered!

Please do not hesitate to contact us at the surgery, if you would like further information.

Rabbits

We advise to neuter male and female rabbits **from 3-4 months of age.**

Females can be aggressive if not spayed, and are prone to **uterine adenocarcinoma** (cancer of the uterus).

Neutered Rabbits tend to be more sociable and can be kept in mixed pairs.



www.hollybankvets.co.uk



Hollybank
VETERINARY CENTRE

584 Chester Rd **Sandiway**
Cheshire CW8 2DX

Mon Weds & Friday **8.30am - 6.30pm**

Tues & Thursday **9.30am - 7.30pm**

Saturday **9am - 12 noon**

Consultations by appointment only

24hr Emergency Service

01606 880 890

