Foundations of Shelter Management

Introduction

Foundations of Shelter Management is a new qualification, launched in five phases from August - November 2023.

It comprises five modules which can be implemented in a dog or cat setting, and a further collection of modules, specifically targeted to dog or cat welfare and rehoming.

- Foundations of Shelter Management (Dogs) = 5 general modules + 9 dog specific modules
- Foundations of Shelter Management (Cats) = 5 general modules + 10 cat specific modules

Modules are completed through a mixture of e-learning and pre-recorded sessions which can be accessed at any time, and scheduled interactive online sessions led by the Battersea team. Each module will take no more than two hours to complete, although many are shorter; we recognise that it can be a challenge for animal welfare personnel to attend longer training sessions, so by making the sessions bite-sized, we hope to enable more individuals to take advantage of the learning opportunities.

The qualification is aimed at both staff and volunteers from animal shelters, regardless of their role – whether you are in a supervisory or management position looking to refresh your skills, someone new to the sector, keen to learn with a view to progressing your career, or a volunteer looking to build on the induction provided by your organisation.

Individuals who fully complete the dog or cat qualification will be eligible to attend a further Practical Week of training at Battersea's London site, from the second quarter of 2024. Bursaries will be available for this.

General Modules

Introductions to the Principles & Applications of Shelter Management
Different catchment areas will result in different ways for dogs and cats to journey through an animal shelter. Considering these journeys is crucial to appreciate the role an animal shelter provides, and when evaluating how efficient that journey is. In this module, we think about how we can help the highest proportion of animals in need of our care. You will have the opportunity to apply the principles of shelter metrics to data from animal shelters and explore the impact that changing intake strategies might make to the efficiency of a shelter.

Introduction to Animal Welfare, Ethics & Decision Making
This introductory e-learning module will explore some of the key principles in animal welfare and ethics. What are the major ethical frameworks and how can these be applied to animal welfare? How can you account for the views of multiple different stakeholders when making decisions?

Introduction to Strategic Thinking and Action Planning
Here we look at some of the hierarchy of language used in strategic design. We consider the role of your organisation in your community and the impact you would like your organisation to make. You will explore root cause analyses and how these can help ensure solutions will be effective. Finally, you will begin to build a strategic action plan for your organisation. This is an e-learning module that you can complete at any time.

Under development

- Hygiene & Husbandry
- Introduction to Volunteering and Foster Practice

Dog Specific Modules

Dog Body Language and Communication
Dogs have an array of body language signals that they can use to communicate with each other and with us. Being able to recognise these signals to understand how a dog is feeling and what they are trying to communicate to us is key in identifying when they are uncomfortable and avoiding confrontational situations. This module explores the signals we should look out for as well as how our own body language can influence how a dog feels.

Stress and Enrichment in the Kennel Environment
A kennel environment can be a stressful place for a dog. In this module we look at how to identify stress signals, the potential triggers that are present in the kennel environment, in addition to what management techniques we can use to alleviate stress and improve welfare.

How Dogs Learn
Training our dogs has numerous benefits, from increasing rehomability to improving welfare. However, to train our dogs effectively we need to understand how they learn and process information. This module will explain the various learning processes that we can use and the different methods of training available. We will then explore how we can set our dogs up for success when planning training sessions with them.

Dog Behavioural Assessing
Assessing the behaviour of dogs is a key part of the rehoming process. This module explores the way in which Battersea assesses our dogs - ranging from which behaviours we assess, how we assess them and how we record our observations. How some of the principles described in the module can be adapted to suit the needs of your own animal rescue will be covered.

Performing an Enhanced Assessment (Canine)
An Enhanced Assessment (EA) is used to categorise the risk of a bite incident. It uses probability and severity components, to estimate the ongoing risk a dog poses to other people and/or dogs. This then informs what measures should be put into place to mitigate that risk. This module looks at the process of undertaking an enhanced assessment and gives you the opportunity to undertake part of the process yourself.

Record Keeping (Canine)
This module explores the benefits of effective record keeping for you, the dogs in your care and your organisation, whilst encouraging you to reflect on your own record keeping practices. It will also explore how you can use the information you record to make effective, evidence-based decisions.

Influencing Rehoming Success for Dogs
There are always barriers to rehoming that prevent us from rehoming dogs as quickly as we might like. This module aims to reflect on the factors that influence your ability to rehome dogs effectively, whilst helping identify the ways in which they may be overcome. It will also explore ways to promote your dogs and the steps that can be taken to improve rehoming success.

The Customer Journey (Canine)
This module provides the opportunity to reflect on the rehoming journey that your customers (the people looking to rehome from you) go through and identify opportunities to improve the customer experience you deliver in your rescue, to help increase rehoming efficiency.

Puppy Development
This module explores the various stages of puppy development, additionally highlighting how to effectively socialise puppies, what life skills are key to them and why a home environment is ultimately the best place for raising a puppy.

Cat Specific Modules

Domestication of the Cat
Today's domestic cat descends from the African Wildcat, a species still found in the wild today. The African wildcat is very similar to the domestic cats we see today. In this module, we will explore how cats came to be domesticated, the wild behaviours that underpin the behaviour we see today and how this helps us to better understand the cats that come into our care.

Cat Intake and the Cat Journey
This module looks at cat-friendly homing principles and how we prioritise the intake of cats using a tiering system at Battersea. It will also explore the journey a cat will typically take here at Battersea from intake to final outcome.

Cat Behaviour and Body Language
In this module, we look at the behavioural strategies available to cats to help them better cope with stressful situations. We also look at subtle changes in behaviour and body language and how to recognise different temperaments of cat.

Cat-friendly Interactions
Cat-friendly interactions not only benefit the cats in our care, but humans too. It is especially important for new owners to have positive encounters with their cats. We will look at these benefits and how they enable cats to find their new home sooner by using the 3 second rule and the 'CAT' acronym.

Stress Management in Cats
Any new environment can elicit stress in cats, whether this is a cattery or foster home. With effective stress management, we can reduce the length of time a cat experiences stress and prevent chronic stress. In this module, we will look at measures we can take to manage stress in the shelter and foster setting and help cats to settle into this new environment quicker.

Cat Welfare Assessment
At Battersea, we use a traffic-light system to assess the welfare of the cats in our care. This helps us to continually monitor any changes in welfare or behaviour so that we can implement changes to a cat's care in a timely manner if needed. We will use examples to highlight how best to assess welfare based on the behaviour seen in the shelter.

Cat Temperament Assessing
We will look at the six behaviour profiles that are useful for assessing temperament in cats and how this helps us to assign a traffic light colour to each individual and ensure they receive the appropriate outcome.

Decision Making to Improve Cat Welfare
Quality of life is something we are all continually monitoring for the animals in our care. This module describes the concepts of learned helplessness and behavioural depression in cats, and the interventions we can put in place to prevent suffering and assess quality of life.

Cat Welfare Walkaround
Here at Battersea, we have regular welfare meetings to discuss the need for any intervention, outcomes for individual cats and where a cat is in their journey. We will take you through some conversations that we have that enable us to assess each cat's welfare and the next steps within individual cases to ensure that cats are progressing.

Assessing Cats for Rehoming
We all want the perfect home for the cats in our care. In this module we discuss some of the barriers to rehoming and how we can overcome these. We will also look at how we assess our cats and the considerations we make before matching customers to our cats.

To Access Foundations of Shelter Management

Modules can be completed or booked via Academy Online, our e-learning platform.

To access Academy Online, you can either click on this link or scan our QR code:

You will be asked to create an account; please ensure you provide the name of the rescue that you work or volunteer for, and wherever possible, a business email address, rather than a personal email address. Email addresses may only be used once.

If you have any queries, please email academy@battersea.org.uk and a member of the team will be happy to help.