

Dog Behaviourist Trial – 12 months on, whats happened?



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Trial

- Dog behaviourist to provide a consultation and two follow up visits to dog owners home
- Council to pay for dog behaviourist
- Behaviour modification plan developed
- No further action/investigation is undertaken by Council during behaviourist program

Trial

12 dogs have been referred to behaviourist for assessment

- 9 dogs – Anxiety
- 4 dogs – fear barking
- 4 dogs – Aggression
- 1 dog – Cognitive dysfunction
- 1 dog – Lack of stimulation and exercise
- 1 dog – Significant mental health issues

Trial

- 10 out of 12 dogs did not have any obedience training
- 4 out of 12 dogs were rescue or unwanted dogs
- None of the dogs involved in the trial have been issued control orders for barking

What we learnt?

- Must check in with both dog owner and complainant on a regular basis
- Provide positive reinforcement to the dog owner on action taken
- Provide feedback to behaviourist to be utilised on follow up visits
- Can deescalate angry and frustrated complainants

What we learnt?

- Financial position still a barrier when requiring vet referral
- We are not trained animal behaviourists
- Authorised Officers may need additional training in identifying anxiety
- Further research, understanding and education of mental health in dogs needs to occur

Conclusion

We often measure success in barking dog complaints by a reduction in the number of complaints received, however we need to focus on addressing the wellbeing of dogs in our community through education and understanding of underlying mental health issues in dogs, which will reduce the number of complaints received and be the true success.



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