

16th October 2023

Statement from the Animal Behaviour and Training Council (ABTC)

The ABTC takes every complaint that comes to us from our practitioners, practitioners' clients, member organisations, and others outside of our member organisations, seriously. Every communication we receive via email or social media channels is responded to; no one is ignored.

The ABTC has robust processes for reviewing complaints, and where complaints are escalated where evidence has been provided, this moves onto the Disciplinary Committee, comprised of a group of ABTC reviewers who are independent of any processes/procedures that may be linked to an individual or member organisation in question.

The ABTC sets out very clearly the aims, values, and standards across the different roles for which our Practitioner Organisations agree to follow and, therefore, our Practitioner Organisations (POs) are responsible for monitoring all of their members in turn. ABTC steps in where necessary as the overarching organisation of our member organisations.

For clarity and to reassure our member organisations and registered practitioners: when we receive applications from training and behaviour organisations to join the ABTC, they go through a rigorous step-by-step review of their assessments of their applicants/practitioners; plus, policies and procedures are reviewed and sometimes require amendments to bring them to the required standard. Feedback is given, and interviews are conducted to ensure feedback is understood and open and honest lines of communication are had. These practitioner organisation assessments are based on all the material those wishing to be part of the ABTC provide us, as part of the process.

We understand that there have been concerns of late regarding how organisations can be part of ABTC where their practitioners are not on the registers. We cannot insist that POs add all their members to the ABTC register; however, we encourage it. And, in some instances, we may have POs with legacy practitioners who have associations with those POs yet have never been assessed under those POs' current assessments and standards that are in line with and reflect those of the ABTC. Consequently, there is a risk that, despite POs moving forward with their own practices and Codes of Conduct that focus on humane, ethical, and professional training and behaviour practices, sometimes a person/or persons may slip through the net. Additionally, this extends to member organisations regularly reviewing all their content broadcasted internally and externally across their communication channels, including but not limited to their websites and social media channels, to ensure these remain up-to-date and

align with the ABTC principles they have agreed to. We remain ever grateful to our ABTC member organisations for flagging any concerns as and when they may arise; so we, in turn, can work with those POs involved. The ABTC reserves the right to suspend the status of a member organisation's membership or registration, in the case of a practitioner, that is the subject of any investigation until the conclusion of that process and an outcome is determined.

Please be assured, that being part of the ABTC and being on the register is recognised by the veterinary community, government departments, and the general public as the go-to place to find practitioners that have been robustly assessed to the ABTC standards.

Thank you.

ABTC email: info@abtc.org.uk

Promoting Excellence in Animal Behaviour and Training

Registered in 2015, the ABTC (Animal Behaviour and Training Council) is the only UK charity dedicated to ensuring that the approaches used in the field of training and behaviour optimise animal wellbeing. The council sets the standards of knowledge and practical skills needed to be an animal trainer, instructor, behaviourist and other specialist practitioner roles. As an umbrella organisation, ABTC membership is open to all stakeholder organisations in the training and behaviour sector. Engaging with organisations focused on companion animals as well as those that work with and care for a diverse variety of other species, the ABTC has over forty member organisations. For more information visit www.abtc.org.uk