



Job Description



Job Title:	Scientific Officer - Companion Animals
Department/Team:	External Relations/Science/Companion Animals
Location:	Headquarters
Line Manager's Title:	Head of Companion Animals

1. Overall Job Purpose

The role supports the Companion Animals Department's objectives to promote the highest standards of companion animal welfare.

To collate, critically evaluate, manage and present scientific and technical information regarding the health and welfare of companion animals to ensure that wherever possible and relevant the RSPCA's projects, policies, communications and information resources are underpinned by up-to-date and authoritative science.

To represent the Society's policies, aims and objectives through presentation of scientifically robust argument to the general public and outside bodies, including government, industry, and the media.

2. Structure

See Establishment Structure Charts.

3. Key Tasks/Job Description

- 1) To work closely with colleagues in income generating departments (i.e. Enterprises and Fundraising), providing specialised expertise with respect to companion animals, to ensure that information is scientifically accurate and in line with current Society policy. Products are reviewed and developed, with corresponding labelling, to ensure they help owners to meet their animals' welfare needs, are safe, act in accordance with the law and do not contravene RSPCA policy or compromise animal welfare.
- 2) To develop operational guidance and standards (e.g. licensing conditions, operational guides) for companion animal species housed in RSPCA centres and branches to ensure the Society complies with the Animal Welfare Act (2006) and maintains and improves the welfare of animals in RSPCA care. Providing support to individual

centres and staff members to help them meet the standards and implement the guidance.

- 3) To develop and deliver training resources to the Inspectorate and Animal Care staff and volunteers regarding understanding and meeting the welfare needs of companion animal species. This includes the development of face to face training courses, e-learning courses and written resources.
- 4) To be a point of contact for the Inspectorate and RSPCA centres and branches to provide technical advice, further information and resources as required.
- 5) To work creatively and collaboratively with the Campaigns department to plan, implement, deliver and ensure factual accuracy of specific workstreams with the aim of prompting political and behavioural change in order to prevent animal cruelty and improve companion animal welfare.
- 6) To work closely with colleagues in the Press department, responding to a range of issues and representing the Society's views on companion animal welfare. This includes preparing written position statements, articles and press releases, and undertaking media interviews (including press, radio and television) as an RSPCA spokesperson.
- 7) To work closely with the Digital Media team, providing engaging, accurate and relevant content that is mobile-optimised for the RSPCA website, newsletters and official social media channels. Reviewing and maintaining existing content to ensure accuracy and relevance to audience. Responding to urgent social media requests in a timely fashion.
- 8) Using up to date research to develop scientifically-based pet care advice and information for current and prospective owners to enable them to meet their pets' welfare needs. Including written resources (e.g. adoption materials, leaflets, books digital content, factsheets); delivering presentations at public events (e.g. London and National Pet Shows) and answering individual enquiries from members of the public via telephone and email.
- 9) To represent the RSPCA externally and promote companion animal welfare by participating in working groups, meetings, consultations, conferences and workshops with key stakeholders including other NGOs, industry, veterinary bodies, academics and MPs.
- 10) To exploit existing, and establish and develop new contacts (individual and groups of independent external specialists) within the scientific community and the field (e.g. universities, academics, behaviour experts). Providing point of contact and technical oversight on research that will enhance knowledge and improve companion animal welfare.

- 11) To work closely and collaboratively with the Public Affairs Department on key issues to improve policy and law concerning animal welfare and raise awareness of the work of the RSPCA. This includes providing information for legislative debates, consultation responses on legislative changes, guidance for Local Authorities, and providing information on a range of issues in response to individual enquiries from politicians.
- 12) To provide accurate, evidence-based scientific and technical advice to Head of CAD, RSPCA trustees (including working groups of Council), Directors and other staff, members and supporters as required regarding all aspects of the welfare and care of companion animals.
- 13) Maintaining a comprehensive and up to date knowledge of animal welfare science and husbandry practices, including relevant scientific, legislative, ethical and animal welfare issues relating to relevant companion animal species.
- 14) To undertake departmental administrative tasks as required, such as managing, maintaining and expanding the department's knowledge database relating to companion animal welfare science, electronic filing and taking telephone calls.
- 15) To provide the secretariat post and coordinate work on behalf of the science and policy group for the Society's knowledge steering group. Draft, create, approve and publish responses for the Virtual Assistant.
- 16) Explain the work of CAD to other staff including via inductions.

While at work all staff are required to:

- Adhere to the Society's charitable objectives which are to promote kindness and prevent cruelty to animals.
- Understand and comply with the Society Code of Conduct.
- Take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts and omissions.
- Co-operate with Society policies and procedures.

In addition to your normal duties, you may occasionally be required to undertake such other reasonable duties as necessary to meet the needs of the Society.

4. Person Specification

Please see person specification attached (appendix A)

This job description is a statement of the job content required as of September 2017. It should not be seen as precluding future changes.

Appendix A

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Scientific Officer - Companion Animals

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
PROFESSIONAL AND/OR TECHNICAL QUALIFICATIONS	Degree level education or equivalent plus relevant experience.	MSc in relevant subject
EXPERIENCE	<p>Practical experience of companion animal husbandry and behaviour.</p> <p>Experience of working alone and in a team.</p>	<p>Experience influencing policy-makers and opinion formers.</p> <p>Specialist knowledge of the physical and mental needs of companion animals.</p>
SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES	<p>Knowledge of the physical and mental needs of companion animals.</p> <p>Competent IT skills.</p> <p>Excellent oral and written communication skills.</p> <p>Proven commitment to animal welfare and RSPCA's aims and objectives.</p> <p>Independent, analytical thinker.</p> <p>Proven ability to be able to communicate complex scientific information to a broad range of audiences. Experience of completing critical reviews of scientific literature and presenting summarised results.</p> <p>Excellent attention to detail.</p> <p>Ability to prioritise own workload and to manage own time efficiently.</p> <p>Demonstrable commitment to animal welfare and sympathy with the RSPCA's aims and policies.</p>	<p>Familiarity with electronic database management.</p> <p>Ability to deliver presentations.</p>
PERSONAL	Proven commitment to animal	Proven ability to generate new

QUALITIES	<p>welfare.</p> <p>Independent, analytical thinker.</p> <p>Proven ability to be able to communicate complex scientific information to a broad range of audiences.</p> <p>Excellent attention to detail.</p> <p>Ability to prioritise own workload and to manage own time efficiently.</p> <p>Professional, confident manner in meetings / discussions.</p>	<p>ideas and use initiative to identify solutions.</p>
SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES (if any)	<p>Ability to undertake travel in the UK and abroad including overnight stays.</p>	