

Veterinarian's Statement For Pet Behaviour Centre Clients

Before seeking a behavioural consult or beginning behavioural therapy for your pet, you will need a referral from your regular veterinarian. The referral is required because it is very important your pet first receive a full medical check-up, to rule out the many other medical problems that can also cause behavioural changes (liver disease, neurological disease, chronic pain to name just a few). Sometimes behavioural changes can even be normal for the animal, but never seen by the owner before (female cats in heat generate a fair amount of concern, at times to vet and owner alike!).

The vet consult should involve a short discussion about the development of the behavioural problem, any other changes noticed in health (appetite, energy, etc.) and a clinical exam. Depending on your pet's age and/or the presence of other symptoms, your vet may also request a blood sample be taken from your pet. In some cases, recent vet visits and tests may allow a referral without a further consult; you will need to speak to your vet surgery about this. When you and your vet are satisfied there are no underlying medical problems relevant to the behavioural changes, a referral letter confirming this will be sent to your behaviourist.

Take the time to ensure the behaviourist is accredited by an organisation such as the APBC. First of all, most pet insurance will only cover accredited behaviourists (make sure you check behavioural therapy is covered by your insurer's policy). Also, as behaviourists are not yet nationally regulated, there is nothing to stop absolutely anyone from calling themselves an animal behaviourist. It is entirely up to you and your vet to do your research; accredited animal behaviourists have relevant University degrees and many, many hours of supervised casework. They operate under the most current and ethical behavioural techniques.

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