

**Participant Information Sheet/Information about the research**  
**(Final version 1.0: 10/12/2020)**



**Title of Study:** Pets Can Do Database

**Name of Researcher(s):** University of Lincoln

**Contact Details for the database are given at the end.**

We would like to invite you to join the Pets Can Do Database. Joining the database is entirely up to you. Before you decide, we would like you to understand the purpose of the database and what it would involve for you.

**What is the purpose of the database?**

Within the School of Life Sciences at the University of Lincoln, the Animal Behaviour, Cognition and Welfare Team carries out a wide range of research through staff and student projects. All sorts of animals are involved in this welfare-friendly research and other practical activities on campus - from dogs and cats to fish and reptiles. There are two main ways in which you could help out with our research at the University of Lincoln. Firstly, we often need both pet owners and non-pet owners to complete questionnaires relating to various aspects of pet behaviour and pet ownership.

We are also looking for pets to take part in our pioneering and welfare-friendly research into animal behaviour. We particularly run projects on dog behaviour and welfare, but also work with cats, horses and reptiles. Projects undertaken by the University have worldwide significance in progressing our understanding of dogs and other animals and have featured on programmes such as BBC's Horizon and in the news as far afield as The New York Times.

The type of activities that your dog could get involved in are usually found in one of three categories:

*Observational:*

These projects often involve simply watching your dog in certain situations or circumstances. You might be amazed at what your dog can teach us!

*Behaviour/training tasks:*

These projects typically involve your dog being trained a new skill. Most dogs find these tasks to be great fun and very rewarding!

*Training skills practicals:*

These are student based practicals. Our undergraduate and postgraduate students hone their training skills by handling and teaching dogs various tasks. Your dog could possibly be trained to do some great tricks!

**Who can join?**

There are no restrictions on who can sign up to be part of the on-going, exciting and ground-breaking research. By signing up you are not committing to take part - we will simply contact you to give you the opportunity if a suitable activity comes up. Any amount of time that you can give, small or large is hugely valuable to us. Your details will be securely stored with strictly limited access and you can opt out at any time.

**Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to register on the database. If you do decide to register, you should download and keep a copy of this Participant Information Sheet (PIS) and read the Privacy Notice (PN) which

details how the University will store and handle your data. You will also be asked to complete a consent form as part of the registration process for the database.

If are contacted about participating in a study, it is up to you to decide whether you wish to participate or not. Should you decide to take part you will be given a project specific information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. This would not affect your legal rights.

### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

When you sign up to the database, your details will be stored for the lifetime of your pet(s) or until you request to be removed from the database. You can request that your details are removed at any time by contacting [petscando@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:petscando@lincoln.ac.uk)

The information you provide about your pet(s) will be used to identify whether your pet(s) is suitable for a particular study. Different studies look for different pet attributes or breeds, so your pet may not be needed for every study. If your pet(s) is identified as a potential participant in a study, you will be contacted by Pets Can Do to enquire whether you would like to take part and to request permission to share your contact details with the researcher running the study.

You may be asked to travel to the University of Lincoln with your pet for some studies, whereas other studies may be conducted at your home, by post or via questionnaire. You do not have to take part in every study that is offered to you.

### **Expenses and payments**

You will not be paid to participate in the study. Travel expenses will not be offered for any visits incurred as a result of participation.

### **What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

Once you have signed up to the database your details will be held securely by the University of Lincoln in accordance with data protection policy. We will use the information you provide about your pet(s) to identify suitable animals to participate in research studies. Your personal details will not be shared with researchers without your consent. Signing up to the database does not commit you to participate in any study and you are free to choose if you wish to participate or not should your pet be identified as a suitable participant for a study.

If your pet(s) is selected and you consent to participate in the study, you will most likely be asked to travel to the University of Lincoln to take part in the study. The time investment required by you will vary between studies, but full details will be provided before you agree to participate. You will not be reimbursed for any travel expenses incurred as a result of taking part in a study.

Some projects may require videos or photographs to be collected so that they can be reviewed later, as this helps with data collection. Occasionally we like to use photos or videos of our activities as teaching material, or to promote our courses, the work that we do and also to encourage other people to get involved. However, you will always be asked permission for us to use photos or videos for any of these purposes, via a consent form at the start of every project.

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

There are a number of ways in which you may benefit from being involved in our research:

- Opportunities to further your knowledge and understanding of your own pet, building on your relationship and learning new training techniques.

- Opportunities to ask questions and learn more about training and behaviour from leading professionals in the field of animal behaviour and training.
- At the end of the day, you can probably be assured a tired and very happy pet having been involved in fun, mentally stimulating activities!
- The option to receive an overview of each project you have taken part in once it is completed.

Examples of previous projects include:

- Can dogs be taught self-control?
- Do dogs behave differently when they see unfamiliar people or dogs versus familiar people or dogs?
- Is yawning contagious in dogs?
- Do dogs pay more attention to hand signals or verbal cues in training?
- The effects of pheromones on firework fears.
- How attached are cats to their owners?
- How does owner personality relate to cat behaviour and wellbeing?

### **Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

We will follow ethical and legal practice and all information about you will be handled in confidence.

### **Privacy notice**

The University of Lincoln is the lead organisation for this study and will be the data controller for this study. This means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The [Participant Privacy Notice](#) for the database will explain how we will be using information from you in order to undertake this study.

We will keep identifiable information (e.g., contact details) about you for the duration of the lifetime of your pet (typically 15 years) or until you request your details to be removed from the database. You will be contacted about whether you want to participate in a particular study and before your information is passed on to anyone else. You will be asked to provide your consent if this is the case.

### **What will happen if I don't want to continue being registered on the database?**

Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without your legal rights being affected. If you withdraw from the database, we will securely destroy any personal data collected from you that is contained in the database. However, information collected about your pet through participation in research studies will be retained unless you withdrew from that study.

### **Where will my data be stored?**

The data contained in the database will be stored securely on the University servers and will be password protected. Only the Database Technician will have access to your personal information contained in the database. If you agree to take part in a study, you will be asked to give your consent to share your contact details with the study researcher. The data from any study you participate in *may* be put in an Open Access repository. If so, any personal data (e.g., contact details) will be removed. You will be asked separately for additional consent if you participate in any research studies.

### **What will happen to the results of the research study?**

When you sign up to the Pets Can Do database, your details and that of your pet(s) will be kept for the lifetime of your pet or until you ask to be removed from the database. We will

treat this information confidentially. We will use the information relating to your pet(s) to identify suitable animals to participate in research studies and/or teaching activities.

Data collected through participation in research studies will be treated confidentially and any publication resulting from a study will report only data that does not identify individual participants (unless you have agreed to be identified). Participants' anonymised responses, however, may be shared with other researchers or made available in online data repositories.

### **Who is organising and funding the research?**

This database is being organised and funded by the University of Lincoln.

### **Who has reviewed the study?**

All research conducted by the University of Lincoln is looked at by an independent group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your interests.

### **What if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of registering on the database, you should contact Pets Can Do, who will do their best to answer your questions. The Pets Can Do contact details are given at the end of this information sheet. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this by contacting [ethics@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@lincoln.ac.uk).

If you feel that we have let you down in relation to your information rights, then please contact the Information Compliance team by email on [compliance@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:compliance@lincoln.ac.uk) or by post at Information Compliance, Secretariat, University of Lincoln, Brayford Pool, Lincoln, LN6 7TS.

You can also make complaints directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO is the independent authority upholding information rights for the UK. Their website is [ico.org.uk](http://ico.org.uk) and their telephone helpline number is 0303 123 1113.

### **Further information and contact details**

Contact Pets Can Do by email on [petscando@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:petscando@lincoln.ac.uk), by post at Pet Can Do, Minster House, University of Lincoln, Green Lane, LN6 7DL, or call 01522 835435.