



Welcome to our annual newsletter!

Welcome to our annual newsletter! Inside you'll find a snapshot of our impact across the calendar year and some important updates, additional resources and charity services that can help you make the most of the RDOC in 2026.

Meet the RDOC team



Gemma, Education Officer



Helen, Education Officer



Jason, Education Officer



Kate, Education Officer



Deanna, Administrator

Those of you that have received these newsletters before may notice that we have had a change in Administrator since the last newsletter, and we now have an extra Education Officer too. Kate has now joined the RDOC team as we are now delivering an RDOC a week.

To contact any of us, please use the dedicated email address RDOC@bluecross.org.uk

Welcome to the RDOC team Deanna and Kate!

Deanna

Hello, I'm Deanna, and I joined Blue Cross as Education Administrator on 1 October – it's lovely to meet you all!

Before starting with Blue Cross, I worked with Thames Valley Police as an Occupational Health and Welfare Administrator, supporting the onboarding of new police recruits.

I very much look forward to contributing to the fantastic work we do here at Blue Cross and working with all of you. My role involves supporting one of our many educational initiatives – RDOC. I'm excited to be part of such a passionate and dedicated team, and I can't wait to collaborate with you all.

I'm always here if you need anything so, please don't hesitate to get in touch at rdoc@bluecross.org.uk

Looking forward to getting to know you all better!



Kate

Hello, I'm Kate and although new to the RDOC team I joined the Blue Cross in 2021 as an Education Officer, working with our Education volunteers and creating content for our work in schools and with fostering agencies and local authorities to support families with pets and children in their care.

I worked at the RSPCA for 12 years before joining Blue Cross and was a teacher in a secondary school before that.

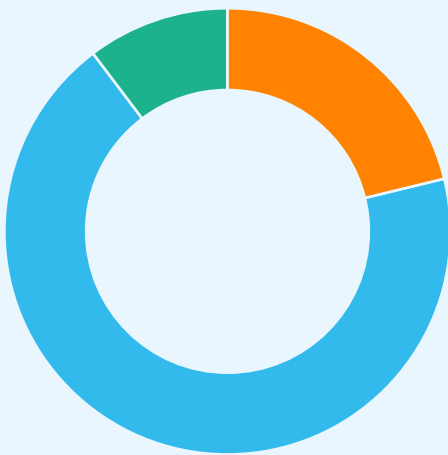
I'm really looking forward to delivering RDOC as a part of my role.



RDOC 2024 statistics

Referrals

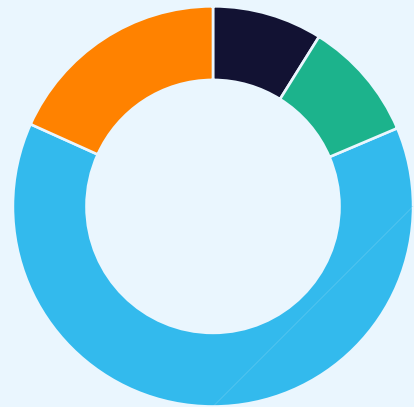
We processed **1,435** referrals in 2025, equivalent to an average of **120** referrals per month.



■ CC ■ CR ■ Other

Compliance rates

Across the last year **73% engaged with us**, although some still need to attend the course because they are booked in for late January or February courses.



■ Didn't attend ■ Attended ■ Booked to attend ■ Not booked

Less than 1% re-offending rate

Top three partners

We are now officially working with 33 police partners with another three 'in progress'. Our top three partners referring to the RDOC over the year include South Yorkshire Police, Sussex Police and Wiltshire Police. Having so many different and varied locations helps widen our reach, positively impacting more owners at times of need.

23% South Yorkshire

13% Sussex

10% Wilts

For a more specific breakdown based on your force or local authority please email us on: RDOC@bluecross.org.uk

Impact measurement

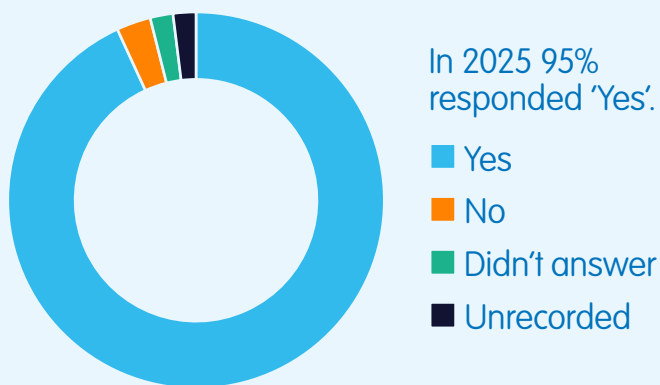
We have three ways of evaluating the impact of RDOC.

- An initial yes/no question at the end of each session
- A satisfaction feedback form sent the next day regarding initial impressions and ease of booking on/attending course
- A more qualitative, longer-term piece of research into behaviour changes

Satisfaction summary

At the end of each RDOC we use a poll to ask:

Do you now feel more confident understanding and managing your dog's behaviour having completed the RDOC?



The Satisfaction Feedback Form tells us:

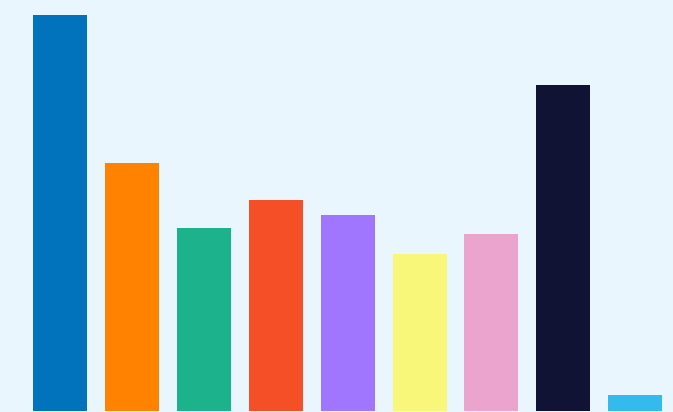
93% had no concerns when booking a place, which is the same as last year.

77% felt that the price was acceptable. (One person even said that the price was too low!)

87% are very satisfied or satisfied with the course overall.

The below graph represents what each attendee found most beneficial to them on the course with, once again, **dog legislation**, **signposting** and **recognising dog body language** scoring the highest votes overall.

- Dog law/legislation
- Dog body language
- Training dogs positively
- Muzzle training
- Choices of leads and muzzles
- Options for enjoyable lead walking
- Keeping children safe around dogs
- Where to get extra help
- None of the above



Qualitative research

Over the last two years we have been looking closely at quantitative and qualitative feedback on the course.

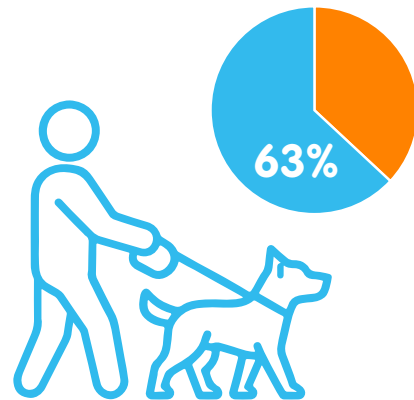
2024

Interviews were conducted with RDOC attendees two to three months post session. The aim was to measure knowledge and behaviour change. The results were very encouraging and can be found [here](#).

2025

We adapted how we evaluate and monitor behaviour change by introducing a second, optional follow-up feedback form issued eight weeks after course completion. The evaluation of this eight-week post-course RDOC survey is currently underway focusing on real-world behaviour change following referral and completion of the course.

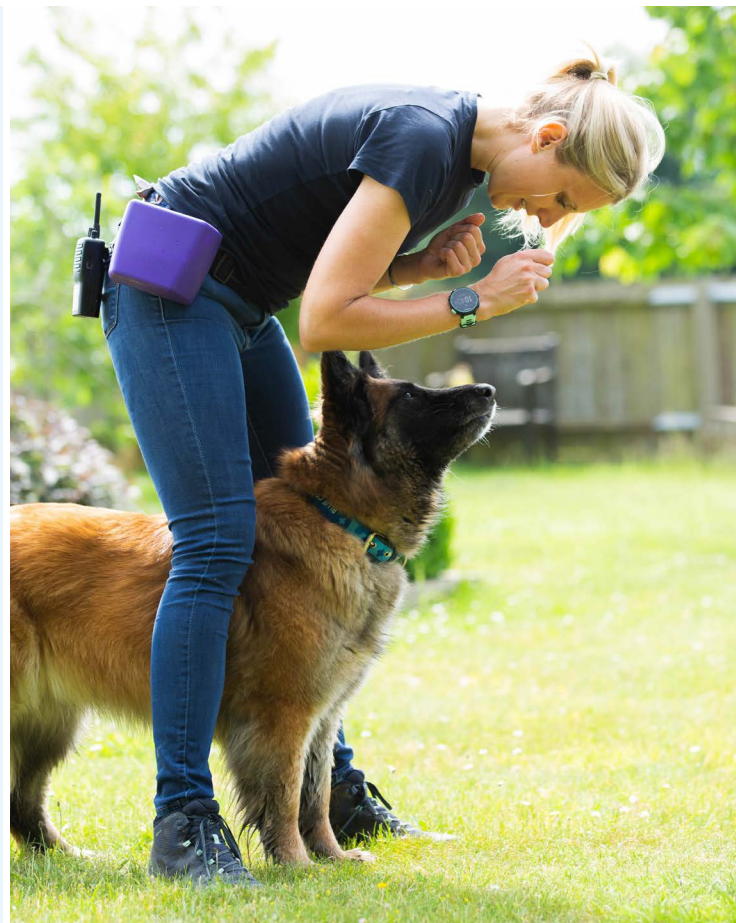
Early findings show that 63% of participants regularly or always use techniques taught on the course eight weeks after completion; supporting RDOC's role as a preventative intervention that delivers credible and sustained behaviour change. Full findings will be shared shortly.



Exciting news on the horizon - coming soon Power Bi

We are currently in the final stages of designing our measurement metrics for Power Bi.

This is exciting, as we will be able to report accurate statistics from referral stage all the way to completion for each and every force. We will be measuring compliance rates, type of resolution, incident place, and breed of dog to name a few. Not only will this benefit your force, as you will be able to request information relevant to you at any time, but it will also allow us to see general trends across the board to know where our education resources are most useful.



RDOC Recognised with an award

At the end of the summer, Blue Cross received an outstanding award from the Welsh Government – Wales Rural Project of the Year. The award recognised our educational efforts around responsible dog ownership and livestock incident prevention.

Jason collected the award on Blue Cross's behalf from Deputy Chief Constable Nigel Harrison, North Wales Police & UK NPCC Wildlife & Rural Crime Lead, and Huw Irranca Davies, Wales Deputy First Minister.

Jason said: "We are delighted that our educational activities to prevent dog attacks on livestock in Wales has been recognised with this award. Our work with the Welsh Government has strengthened the livestock worrying and countryside safety content within RDOC. It now forms part of a wider, fully integrated course covering legislation, responsible ownership,

training, and support for dog owners involved in incidents. It saves costs, time and avoids court and prosecution where education and support is the most effective path to take."

As a Team we were thrilled to be given this award, even if Jason doesn't look that comfortable in this picture!



Difficulties for Deanna

Deanna now has an incredible number of referrals each month to process. In the last few months of 2025, we were averaging over 120 referrals a month. Only two years ago, when we first employed an administrator to help us with the heavy RDOC admin, we were averaging 50 referrals a month. Deanna is in a constant whirl helping referrals get booked on, answering queries, chasing those that don't book on promptly and keeping our referral partners updated on each referral's progress. This isn't to moan about the workload though – we are just hoping that you will be able to help us make this task slightly easier for her.

Simple things you can do to speed up the process and cut down Deanna's workload:

1. Please always fill in the email address. If the referral doesn't have an email address, then it is probably safe to assume that they have no experience with technology at all and are therefore not suitable to do the course.
2. Please check that phone numbers and email addresses are correct. We have had several cases recently where neither are correct or are missing, and chasing this up is unnecessarily time consuming.
3. Please let us know who you want the main person we contact to be. For some forces it is the referring officer, for some it will be the Out of Court Disposal Team. There is a box on the form that asks: 'Email you would like all updates sent to'.

New Protecting Your Postie dates

Working in partnership with Royal Mail, Blue Cross are once again offering free, hour-long webinars that anyone can book onto who has any concerns about their dog when they are accepting deliveries or post. If you feel that a member of the public could benefit from attending one of these webinars, please ask them to type 'Protecting Your Postie' into Google, and it will take them to a page on our website where they can book their place and have the Zoom link emailed to them. The next date is in March.

To find out more please visit:
bluecross.org.uk/protecting-your-postie



Training advice

Many owners are asked to keep their dogs muzzled or on a lead after a Section three incident but lack the knowledge of how to successfully train their dog.

At Blue Cross we have some excellent advice on muzzle training, including a video, which can be found [here](#).

Or you can download and print off some advice to give to members of the public should you feel, it would benefit them.

Create a seven day enrichment calendar

Step 1: Jot down some activity ideas, keeping in mind the five key enrichment types: food, cognitive, sensory, social environment, and physical environment/enrichment. Any idea is a good idea at this stage!
 Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Puzzle toys filled with food
- Garden sniff-puzzle adventure
- Play and training session
- Hide-and-seek with favourite treat
- Dog sport or activity (eg. 'muzzleball', or scent work)
- Lead walk somewhere new
- Rubbing massage or grooming session

Step 2: Think about your dog's needs – their likes, dislikes, age, energy level, and behaviour. Then use your list from Step 1 to narrow down enrichment activities that meet these needs and interests.

Step 3: Write out your ideas on the calendar to the right to plan your week.

Step 4: Rotate your activities each week, changing the days, the toys you use, the way you play and where you walk. Use your calendar to help you plan.

Congratulations!
 You've successfully designed a personalised enrichment schedule for your dog. By providing a variety of stimulating activities every week, you're helping them lead a happy and fulfilling life.

MUZZLE TRAINING YOUR DOG

If your dog needs to wear a muzzle, it's important that they are comfortable wearing one. With some patience, lots of lovely food and the right training approach, your dog will soon learn that their lead and muzzle mean it's time for a walk!

STEP 1:

- Put something tasty like squeeze cheese paste in the muzzle. Let your dog see you do this.
- Don't do the muzzle up at this stage. Let your dog eat the food and get used to the feel.
- If your dog is worried about putting their face in, let them lick the outside until it feels more confident.
- Do this in various places – in the kitchen watching telly or when you're in the garden.
- Always let your dog come 'knock-knock' the muzzle, rather than you reaching towards them.

Tip: Keep an eye out for that tail wag – or your dog associates their muzzle with lots of tasty treats, you'll know they're onto it!

STEP 2:

- Help keep their nose in the muzzle for longer by posting treats through.
- Before you move to closing the muzzle up, get them used to the sound by doing the clip up while the muzzle is off and giving them a treat.

Worry-free Walks

Tips to keep livestock and your dog safe in the countryside

Did you know you can break the law by allowing your dog to worry livestock?

This includes:

- Attacking livestock
- Chasing livestock
- Being off-lead – roaming freely and out of control

Taking your dog on regular walks is an important part of keeping them happy and healthy. However, it is your responsibility to make sure your dog is walked safely where livestock are, or may be present.

Dog attacks are not the only problem
 Chasing or intimidating livestock can cause extreme stress for the animals causing abortions and ill health. A long-term upset for farmers as well as affecting their livelihood.

Top Tips ... for responsible walking in the countryside

Plan ahead

- **Check walking routes** – to see if there are alternative routes to avoid areas with livestock.
- **Check** – that your dog's walking equipment is in good order and the property, including their collar / harness and lead.
- **Identification** – check your dog's chip details are up to date and they are wearing a collar ID.
- **Watch** – for signs that livestock are present. Call your dog back to you if you are entering a new area.

Walking near livestock

- **Lead length** – keep dogs on short leads or muzzled with livestock, or when entering unsecured areas. Livestock are less likely to panic if your dog is closer to you, so this is the safest option.
- **Keep your distance** – give livestock as much space as you can. They will feel safer if further you are away from them.
- **If you are approached** – remain calm and walk slowly in the direction you are chased. It may be safer to drop your dog's lead.

Remember

- Dogs who come back when called in the park may well do so in the countryside. The interesting smells, sights and sounds will be very exciting, and your dog may behave differently.
- Even if you do have close control of your dog, livestock will still be more worried by a dog off-lead than one on-lead – even always wearing a short lead.
- Dogs have an incredible sense of smell and will be able to detect livestock for miles before you can see them – be aware of changes to their behaviour that may indicate livestock are near.
- Most livestock wearing collars have when dogs stray from farms. Ensure you secure your property so they are not able to escape.
- Farmers are allowed to shoot dogs who worry their animals so a lost lead can be dangerous.

For more pet advice please visit bluecross.org.uk

We want to hear from you!

This newsletter is written to be as helpful and as insightful to you as possible. As such, we welcome feedback and requests for further information or additions.

We would love to know what you find interesting or want to know about more. Please email RDOC@bluecross.org.uk with any feedback or ideas.



Thank you for reading!

bluecross.org.uk