

Code Of Practice

Our Aims

- To promote the use of canine hydrotherapy to dog owners, veterinary surgeons and others to aid greater understanding of the use of hydrotherapy for canine welfare.
- To set and maintain a Code of Practice to ensure members provide a quality service to dog owners.
- To keep abreast of any legislation, and carry out research, which may have relevance to canine hydrotherapy.

The Key Principles

All hydrotherapy centre operators who are members of the CHA must:

- Have expertise in canine hydrotherapy treatment. Every CHA Member Centre will need to have at least one member of staff holding a Certificate in Hydrotherapy for Small Animals accredited on the Qualifications and Credit Framework.
- Ensure any assistants are trained to the same/equivalent high standards.
- Ensure treatment is in the principles of canine welfare.
- Liaise with veterinary surgeons where appropriate.
- Keep detailed records of treatment and progress.
- Ensure water quality is of the highest standard (and recorded).
- Hold a minimum level 3 certificate in canine first aid.
- Comply with all Health & Safety regulations.
- Have public liability, liability to animals and professional indemnity insurance.
- Members shall conduct themselves in such a way as not to undermine public confidence in their profession or the association and shall not practice when physically or psychologically unfit to do so.

Members may accept clients from a variety of referral sources or through direct advertising. Where such advertising refers to a hydrotherapy centre it should not assert or imply endorsement by the association other than to state, where applicable, that all operators are members.

Qualified hydrotherapists who work with unqualified assistants are responsible for ensuring that such assistants act responsibly towards clients and are willing to conform to the spirit of this code.

Obligations

- To agree to accept and abide by this code and to supply the association with a signed statement to that effect.
- To abide by and observe the rules, regulations and pronouncements of the association.
- To acknowledge that membership of the association is solely for individual centres and shall not be used to endorse the activities of any club, society or organization to which they may belong.
- Where acceptance of clients by direct referral from veterinary surgeons shall be part of their practice, to secure and maintain full professional indemnity insurance and to supply referring veterinary surgeons with proof of such insurance, should they request it.
- Full member centres are also required to have public liability and liability to animals and certificates must be displayed.
- Members are to be careful not to make any misleading claims or statements in advertising or otherwise. In their endorsement or commercialisation of any product, not to use their membership to suggest that they are speaking on behalf of the association.
- Members are required to obtain and hold client information and records, which must include consent of clients to treatment and a record of such treatment sessions.
- Members are not to disclose any information about any client which comes to their notice as a result of their professional relationship with the client, or to make public any record, in any form, of their dealings with a client, except where required to do so by rule of law or where the client has consented to the nature and extent of the disclosure.
- Members are required to complete an approved course in animal First Aid and to have the certificate gained on display.

Part 1- Code of Practice

This code applies to the Association of Hydrotherapy Pools. Its purpose is to establish and maintain standards for the practice of Hydrotherapy, to advise and inform veterinary surgeons and members of the public seeking Hydrotherapy and to further the understanding and advancement of good practice among members.

Principles

- I. Members shall practice with integrity and shall recognize their responsibility to clients, client's dogs and society in general. Their actions should never knowingly cause psychological or physical distress or damage to any of these.
- I. The welfare of clients and their dogs shall be paramount and shall not be made subordinate to commercial consideration.
- II. Members shall maintain professional relationships with their clients. They shall not exploit such relationships for improper personal, professional or financial gain, nor seek inappropriately to impose their own values on clients.
- III. Members shall not misrepresent their activities or make unrealistic claims to their clients or in their public statements. It should be made clear whenever they are expressing personal opinion and speculative theories should be stated as above.
- IV. Members shall respect the views and independence of others and shall not publicly denigrate their conduct or opinions.
- V. Members shall not seek to attract business unfairly or unprofessionally or conduct their practice in any way that would discredit the reputation of the association.
- VI. Members are responsible for continuing their personal and professional development by undertaking further training and study and acquiring knowledge of new theory and practice.

Practice

The methods employed and advised by members should be consistent with the principals of kindness and fairness to both clients and dogs. Coercion should only be deemed necessary if it is totally in the interests of the dog's hydrotherapy treatment.

The swimming techniques employed and advised by members are assumed to be the application of scientifically based research and experience gained.

Where swimming techniques are experimental the client and if applicable the referring veterinary surgeon must be so informed. Members shall keep the clients fully informed about the nature of and reasons for their actions and any possible risk or drawback that might arise from them. They shall not lead their clients to form unrealistic expectation of the outcome of any action or intervention.

Members are required to ensure that their water quality is of the highest possible standard and that they keep records of checks made. A water sample must be available at the request of the committee.

Members are required to comply with Health and Safety regulations and such regulations need to be displayed.

Complaints procedure:

Any formal complaint about a member of the association should in the first instance, be made in writing to the head office or in the initial absence of such the chairman of the association. All board members must be notified of the complaint within 28 days. If not successfully dealt with by the chairman to the satisfaction of both parties, a formal hearing will take place before three of the board; here both parties will have the opportunity to state their case. At least 28 days' notice of this meeting must be given. Either party may bring to the hearing witnesses or representatives if they so wish. If, after such a meeting, the complaint is upheld by the board, then the member shall be informed of the result in writing.

Right of Appeal:

If the accused member does not accept the findings of the hearing then he/she has the right to make an appeal to the Board as a whole, whose findings shall be binding. At least 28 days' notice must be given of any such hearing. All members of the board must attend this hearing.

Sanctions may vary from a written warning as to further conduct, a period of time as an associate member without voting rights, expulsion from the association or any sanction deemed necessary by the board at the hearing.

Annual Subscriptions:

Where such member fails or refuses to pay their annual fee, then such member shall be required to surrender their membership certificate and their membership terminated. Such member must remove or cease to use any paper work, advertising and such like which indicates any membership or affiliation to the association.

Hydrotherapy fees:

Members shall not charge exorbitant fees for hydrotherapy, and will be guided by scales proposed by the association.

Expulsion of members:

If the conduct of any member who, in the opinion of the association board members, does any act likely to be injurious to the association, then such member shall be informed of the complaint and advised of a time and date he/she may attend to give a verbal explanation. If after such meeting the complaint is upheld, then such member shall be expelled and their membership terminated. Such member will be required to surrender their association

certificate and remove or cease to use any paperwork, advertising, logo and such like which indicates any membership or affiliation to the association.

If a member is found guilty by a court of law of cruelty to any animal, then such member shall be expelled and their membership terminated. Such member will be required to surrender their association certificate and remove or cease to use any paperwork, advertising, logo and such like which indicates any membership or affiliation to the association.

Use of Association logo:

Once accepted in to the association members shall be entitled to use the Association's logo on personal and business stationary, and to advertise that they are such members.

Adjudication

The committee of the association shall advise and give directions on all matters of principle and of conduct of members and any complaint of dispute arising there from shall be dealt with by reference to the constitution of the association.

Alteration

The committee of the association may alter this code provided that the proposed alteration is notified to all members and their comments requested and duly considered by the committee.

Part 2- The Code of Ethics for the Hydrotherapist

This sets out the ethical obligations of all hydrotherapists within the Canine Hydrotherapy Association. The purposes of this Code of ethics are to:

1. Define the ethical principles that form the foundation of Hydrotherapist practice in patient/client management, consultation, education, research and administration.
2. Provide standards of performance and behaviour that form the basis of professional accountability to the public.
3. Provide guidance for hydrotherapists facing ethical challenges, regardless of their professional roles and responsibilities.
4. Educate Hydrotherapists, students, other health care professionals and the public regarding the core values, ethical principles and standards that guide the professional conduct of the Hydrotherapist.
5. Establish the standards by which the Canine Hydrotherapy Association can determine if a Hydrotherapist has engaged in unethical conduct.

It must be stated that no code of ethics is exhaustive nor can it address every conceivable situation. Hydrotherapists are encouraged to seek additional advice if they are unsure. They are expected to adhere to these principles and promote ethical conduct in other professionals/paraprofessionals or other practitioners.

This Code of ethics is based upon the five primary areas that hydrotherapists are involved in (providing Hydrotherapy to patients, consultation, education, research and administration), the core values, quality standards and Code of Practice.

Hydrotherapists practice is guided by a set of core values: accountability, altruism, compassion/caring, excellence, integrity, professional duty and social responsibility.

Fundamental to the Code of Ethics is the special obligation of Hydrotherapists to their patients' welfare and to help them improve/maintain functional levels, health or enhanced quality of life, they should, in all essence act as an advocate for the patient.

Principles

Principle 1: Hydrotherapists shall clearly demonstrate their integrity in all relationships with patients/clients, colleagues and any others they come into contact with.

- a) Hydrotherapists shall provide truthful, accurate, and relevant information and shall not make misleading statements or misrepresent their activities.
- b) Hydrotherapists shall not make unrealistic, fraudulent, misleading or deceptive claims to their clients/others or in their public statements. It should be made clear whenever they are expressing personal opinion and speculative theories.
- c) Hydrotherapists shall not exploit persons over whom they have supervisory, evaluative or other authority (e.g. patients/clients, students, supervisees, research participants, or employees).
- d) Hydrotherapists shall discourage misconduct by practitioners/others and report illegal or unethical acts to the relevant authority/authorities, when appropriate.
- e) Hydrotherapists shall report suspect cases of abuse of patients/animals to the relevant authority/authorities, when appropriate.
- f) Hydrotherapists shall not engage in any sexual relationship with any of their clients, supervisees or students whilst a professional relationship exists
- g) Hydrotherapists shall not harass anyone verbally, physically, emotionally or sexually.

Principle 2: Hydrotherapists shall be trustworthy and compassionate in addressing the rights and needs of patients/clients.

- a) Hydrotherapists shall adhere to the core values of the profession and shall act in the best interests of patients/clients over the interests of the Hydrotherapist.
- b) Hydrotherapists shall provide Hydrotherapy services with compassion that incorporate the individual and cultural differences of patients/clients.
- c) Hydrotherapists shall provide the information necessary to allow patients or their surrogates to make informed decisions about physical therapy care or participation in clinical research.
- d) Hydrotherapists shall collaborate with patients/clients to empower them in decisions about their health care.
- e) Hydrotherapists shall protect confidential patient/ client information and may disclose confidential information to appropriate authorities only when allowed or as required by UK law.

Principle 3: Hydrotherapists shall be accountable for making sound professional judgments.

- a) Hydrotherapists shall demonstrate independent and objective professional judgment in the patient's/clients' best interest in all practice settings.
- b) Hydrotherapists shall demonstrate professional judgment informed by professional standards, evidence (including current literature and established best practice), practitioner experience, and patient/client values.
- c) Hydrotherapists shall make judgments within their scope of practice and level of expertise and shall communicate with, collaborate with, or refer to peers or other health care professionals when necessary.
- d) Physical therapists shall not engage in conflicts of interest that interfere with professional judgment.
- e) Hydrotherapists shall provide appropriate direction and communication with physical therapist assistants and support personnel.

Principle 4: Hydrotherapists shall respect the dignity and rights of their patients and their owners.

- a) Hydrotherapists shall act in a respectful manner toward clients regardless of age, gender, race, nationality, religion, ethnicity, social or economic status, sexual orientation, health condition or disability.
- b) Hydrotherapists shall recognise their personal biases and shall not discriminate against others in practice, consultation, education, research and administration.
- c) Hydrotherapists shall respect a clients' right to choose where to have hydrotherapy treatment.

Principle 5: Hydrotherapists shall fulfil their legal and professional obligations.

- a) Hydrotherapists shall comply with any applicable UK legislation, Data Protection, CHA Code of Practice, Quality Standards and ethical/moral obligations.
- b) Hydrotherapists will obtain both informed consent from the patients' veterinarian and the owner. Which should include what is involved in the therapy, any risks therein, goals.
- c) Hydrotherapists should also refer the patient back to the veterinarian if there is a deterioration in the patient and potentially cease treatment until they have been seen if the situation warrants it.
- d) Hydrotherapists should not delegate tasks to subordinates that have not been trained and their competence checked to carry out such tasks.

- e) Hydrotherapists shall not treat any patient whilst under the effects of any drug/substance that may impair their ability to provide a quality, safe and effective level of care.
- f) Conflicts of interest should be avoided where possible. If, however such a situation becomes apparent the Hydrotherapist should actively try to resolve them as soon as possible. At the very least they should be made clear with a full disclosure to any involved parties.
- g) Hydrotherapists shall accept the responsibility to protect the public and the association from illegal, unethical, negligent, and incompetent or any conduct unbecoming of a member of this association that may in any way bring the association into disrepute.

Adapted from APTA "*guide to Physical Therapist Practice*".