

THE 'LINK'

A nine-point plan to prevent
abuse of animals AND people

**There is a link between those who abuse animals
and those who commit violence against people.**



With a combined 60 years of specialist policing experience either side of the Atlantic, and now expertise in the 'link', **Teena Stoddart (OTTAWA, CANADA – Violence Link Consulting)** and **Mark Randell (LONDON, UK – Naturewatch Foundation)** have collaborated on a joint project to guide police officers, those engaged in public protection and other decision makers to prevent the abuse of animals and people through understanding this 'link'.

Together, they have conducted training for police officers
and other professionals around the world.

**This toolkit has been designed to be adapted
as required for every community.**

1 When an animal crime is reported to police it should be **recorded**, the Modus Operandi (MO) should be recorded, and the same investigative decision process should be considered, as with all violent crime.

The MO should be reviewed by someone who has received training on the 'link' and a referral should be made to a more experienced investigator if required.

An overview should be kept of all similar offences so that analysis can be carried out to establish any threat to people in the community.



2 When an officer attends an animal 'crime scene', they should consider what other violent crimes may be present, such as domestic, child or elder abuse and make appropriate referrals to specialist departments. (This will be established through officer observations at the scene, forensic work, witness interviews, or interrogations of the suspect/accused.)

Similarly, when an officer attends the scene of human violence, consideration should be given to the welfare of any animals present at the scene.

In the event of either animal abuse or human abuse, violence 'link' questions (based on evidence-based research) should be part of any interview relating to the occurrence.

3 Adequate facilities should be made available for anyone involved in a domestic violence situation to leave to a place of safety **with** their animals, or a place should be provided where pets can be housed until the human victim has a safe place to reside.

Keeping in mind that pets can be farm animals, the housing of animals option must include those that will accept **any** species.



4 Criminal laws (or judicial/sentencing advice linked to the law) should formally recognise how abusers can use animals as part of coercive control in family/domestic relationships.

Given the instances where a pet is not harmed, but threatened, the court brief should be required to disclose if the human victim was coerced, controlled, or intimidated by threat or violence to a pet, and appropriate charges should be laid.



5 Those who abuse animals sexually should be referred to persons qualified to investigate human sexual abuse, and those specialists should receive training in the 'link'.

Consideration should be given to the welfare of the abused children **and** the animals involved.



6 Detectives engaged in investigating online child protection crimes must be trained in the 'link' between animal and human violence.

When animal pornography is revealed, an investigation should take place into whether that online identity is also involved in child pornography.

In countries where there is an appropriate charge for animal pornography, it must be laid.

7 Those that abuse animals intentionally, or recklessly, should be referred to police officers trained in understanding dangerous offender behaviour, and these officers should receive training in the 'link'.

- 8** Police officers/detectives investigating a 'link' case should contact local animal welfare investigators to acquire information regarding whether the suspect has been involved in animal abuse cases previously.

This should be disclosed in the court brief.

Many countries do not have databases that include animal abuse charges and violence 'link' cases. Police would never know if an animal abuse investigator laid a charge.

- 9** Police and animal welfare investigators should receive training in animal fighting.

When a case of animal fighting is uncovered, area animal welfare investigators and police should work together.



Get in touch

For further information, please contact:

Teena Stoddart

stoddatm@violencelinkconsulting.com

violencelinkconsulting.com

Mark Randell

mark@naturewatch.org

naturewatch.org

Violence Link Consulting TMS



naturewatch foundation

ADVANCING ANIMAL WELFARE