Resources for a Career in Animal Care / Behaviour

Introduction

The following sources of information will give you more detailed insights into the variety of jobs and occupations found with the animal behaviour / care sectors. Key contacts are given for job searching, further training, current opportunities and sources of very specific careers information.

What jobs are available?

Key roles include the following:

- Agricultural Consultant
- Animal Behaviourist
- Animal Care Assistant – Dogs Home, Country Park etc
- Animal Groomer
- Animal Nutritionist
- Animal Physiotherapist
- Animal Technician
- Animal Trainer
- Animal Welfare Inspector
- Countryside / Wildlife Manager
- Education officer – Wildlife Park
- Equitherapy – equine body worker
- Farm Manager (livestock, fish, bees)
- Farriery
- Feed Tester
- Gamekeeper
- Horseracing Management
- Horse Trainer / Instructor
- Research Assistant – pharmaceutical company, immunology department, wildlife charity
- Sales Representative – animal health products
- Trainee Veterinary Nurse
- University teaching and research
- Veterinary Pathologist
- Veterinary Surgeon
- Zoo Keeper (or Aquariums)

Use the following links to find out more about what each of the above roles actually entail on a day to day basis, entry requirements, sources of job vacancies etc – [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk) and [www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u/index.cfm?pid=23](http://www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u/index.cfm?pid=23). You may have to consider entry into this career area at non-graduate level potentially, in order to gain practical experience initially at least; hence the inclusion of quite a few resources for non-graduate level roles in this guide.

Indirect roles in organisations with an animal care focus may also be available in fundraising, marketing, promotional / public education work, finance, administration, personnel, IT management etc which could act as a useful entry point for more specialised roles. Self employment could also be an option and is common for animal behaviourists.
Work experience

Work experience is often required before entering paid employment in the animal care / behaviour sector but how do you go about obtaining such experience? Here are a few tips.

**Speculative Approaches:**
A number of potential sources of work experience and paid employment are listed on the following pages. This list is by no means exhaustive, so if you are interested in gaining some experience with a particular organisation not mentioned here then check their website for more information first. If ‘a formal’ work experience scheme is not offered, then make enquiries with the employer directly to discuss the possibility of undertaking some work experience with them – if you don’t ask, you don’t get! For instance, catteries and kennels can sometimes offer vacation work and/or work shadowing. Contacts through Animal Rescue centres that re-home or hold animals with behavioural problems can also give a useful insight, as can pet training centres.

You will need to prepare a CV and Covering Letter in order to speculatively approach an organisation for work experience or paid employment – refer to the online CV Creator on www.exeter.ac.uk/employability for example CVs and covering letters to get you started and you can always have a draft version checked by a Careers Adviser.

**Shell Step Programme:**
For second or penultimate year students only, the Shell Step programme can be a useful way to obtain a paid summer placement in a related field and this scheme is available for students to participate in all over the UK. Click on www.shellstep.org.uk for more information.

**Exexpert:**
Exexpert is a scheme run by the University of Exeter who can put you in contact with alumni who have had success in their fields and who are willing to offer advice or an insight into their particular career area. Click on www.ex.ac.uk/alumni/careers.shtml for more information.

**Already graduated?**
If you have already graduated from any University you could also consider the Graduate Business Partnership programme which is a 20 week project based placement which can be started at any time of the year in the Devon or Somerset area. The projects on offer can be viewed at: www.exeter.ac.uk/businessprojects. Graduates on this scheme receive a good salary and it can really help to enhance your CV. Included in the placement is a 10-day business training course which covers subjects such as project management, marketing, presentation skills, human resource management, entrepreneurship plus career management advice. If you don’t see a placement which interests you, we may be able to approach a suitable employer on your behalf. Our contact details are on the web site.

**Postgraduate study**
As the animal care / behaviour field is quite broad, with roles available at a number of different levels (i.e those requiring no formal qualifications to those requiring a PhD), you may need to consider undertaking full or part-time postgraduate study in order to specialise your knowledge further, especially for advanced scientific research and teaching. You can use the following links to search for courses: www.findamasters.com and www.prospects.ac.uk. Postgraduate courses relating to animal behaviour usually require a first degree in a relevant subject such as animal science, biology, zoology, veterinary science or psychology.

If you are considering postgraduate study there is a really useful web site available to help you through the process: www.prospects.ac.uk/cms/ShowPage/Home_page/About_postgrad_study/why/pleklFeFX (this is also available as a booklet at the Careers and Employment Service) and it is advisable to speak to a Careers Adviser about your plans too. It will be important to ascertain the destinations of people who have undertaken any masters course you might be interested in, which should be available from the admissions tutor and usually collated by the careers service at the institutions you are considering. It will be useful to know what type of employment people who completed...
the course went into, as this will help you to see how beneficial the course might be, or not, in relation to your career plans.

**Sources of jobs and careers information**

The following websites and resources provide you with more detailed information to help you on your way to a career working with animals (please bear in mind that this list is by no means exhaustive). Also, do make use of any existing contacts you may have in the sector for work shadowing or work experience.

**Animals / Animal Behaviour**

- **Animal Behaviour Society** [www.animalbehaviour.org](http://www.animalbehaviour.org)
  Membership organisation for those interested in animal behaviour (based in America). Useful careers section.

- **Animal Jobs** [www.animal-job.co.uk](http://www.animal-job.co.uk)
  Paid and unpaid positions. Information on working with all types of animals worldwide.

- **Applied Ethology Discussion List** [www.usask.ca/wcvm/herdmed/applied-ethology](http://www.usask.ca/wcvm/herdmed/applied-ethology)
  Applied ethology discussion list – American based but some general information.

- **Army Animal Defence Centre** [www.defenceanimalcentre.co.uk](http://www.defenceanimalcentre.co.uk)
  Canine and equine training.

- **Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors** [www.apbc.org.uk](http://www.apbc.org.uk)
  Lists clinics dealing with problem pets UK-wide. Runs seminars and workshops for members. Useful careers section.

- **Association of the Study of Animal Behaviour** [http://asab.nottingham.ac.uk/](http://asab.nottingham.ac.uk/)

- **British Greyhound Racing Board** [www.thedogs.co.uk](http://www.thedogs.co.uk)
  Job vacancies.

- **British Institute of Professional Dog Trainers** [www.bipdt.org.uk](http://www.bipdt.org.uk)
  Information on courses.


- **Feline Advisory Bureau** [www.fabcats.org](http://www.fabcats.org)
  Useful information on health and welfare of cats.

- **International Society for Applied Ethology (ISAE)** [www.applied-ethology.org](http://www.applied-ethology.org)
  International society devoted to the scientific study of applied animal behaviour.

- **Kennel Club** [www.thekennelclub.org.uk](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk)
  Job vacancies (‘Meet the KC’ section)

- **Pet Care Trust** [www.petcare.org.uk](http://www.petcare.org.uk)
  Job vacancies. Searchable directory of professional pet care and other related services.

- **Puppy School** [www.puppyschool.co.uk](http://www.puppyschool.co.uk)
  Nationwide network of puppy class tutors. Training provided to set up a puppy school in your area.

- **Society for Companion Animal Studies** [www.scas.org.uk](http://www.scas.org.uk)
  UK based membership charity.
The Company of Animals – The Training and Behaviour Specialists
www.companyofanimals.co.uk/abc.php
Animal behaviour centre in Surrey, specialising in the treatment of difficult behavioural problems. Useful careers section and job vacancies.

The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare www.ufaw.org.uk
Job vacancies; animal welfare news; grants and awards and useful publications. Animal Welfare journal.

UK Registry of Canine Behaviourists www.ukrcb.org
Professional body for canine behaviourists in the UK. Contains list of members which could be useful contacts.

Working with Animals www.workingwithanimals.com
Careers information and job vacancies.

Zoos

American Association of Zoos and Aquariums www.aza.org
USA internships and job vacancies.

Association of British Wild Animal Keepers www.abwak.co.uk
Useful article ‘So You Want to be a Zoo Keeper?’ which can be downloaded. Job vacancies.

British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums www.biaza.org.uk
BIAZA represents about 70 of the 350 zoos, safari parks, bird gardens and aquariums open to the public. Jobs and careers pages. Most zoos have a volunteer scheme.

European Association of Zoos and Aquariums www.eaza.net

Exmoor Zoo www.exmoorzoo.co.uk

Paignton Zoo www.paigntonzoo.org.uk

World Animal Zoo Association www.waza.org

Zoological Society of London www.zsl.org
Volunteer opportunities at London Zoo or Whipsnade Zoo; plus paid jobs.

Zoos of the World www.zoos.org
Useful contacts for possible employers.

Policy & Civil Service

Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs www.defra.gov.uk

Police Dog Training www.police.uk/forces.htm
Find the website of your nearest police force on this site and search for the Dog Training Unit or Dog Training School. The majority of police forces throughout the country have their own dog training schools. If you want to become a Dog Handler you need to join the police force and opt for this speciality later in your career.

UK Customs and Excise www.hmrc.gov.uk
Has a network of specialist officers called Customs Wildlife & Endangered Species Officers. They also have specialist Customs CITES team based at Heathrow Airport which is believed to be the only one in Europe. They use the latest technology and information to help them
identify accurately the animals and plants they are dealing with. Customs and Excise also use detector dogs (Border Protection function).

**Nutrition**

- Mars group [www.mars.com](http://www.mars.com)  
  Graduate training scheme – pet care products.

- Nestle [www.nestle.com](http://www.nestle.com)  
  Jobs and graduate training scheme. Pet care products e.g Purina [www.purina.com](http://www.purina.com)

- Pet Food Manufacturers Association [www.pfma.org.uk](http://www.pfma.org.uk)  
  Members list in the ‘About Us’ section – useful for speculative approaches.

- The Nutrition Society [www.nutritionsociety.org](http://www.nutritionsociety.org)  
  Information on animal and human nutrition.

- Waltham Centre for Pet Nutrition [www.waltham.com](http://www.waltham.com)  
  Mars research centre for pet nutrition.

**Animal Pharmaceutical Companies**

  Animal Technician careers guide and job-hunting tips.

- Institute of Animal Technology [www.iat.org.uk](http://www.iat.org.uk)  
  Resources of animal technologists and research workers involved in the care and use of laboratory animals. Downloadable careers guide available.

**General**

- Academic posts [www.jobs.ac.uk](http://www.jobs.ac.uk)

- British Society of Animal Science [www.bsas.org.uk](http://www.bsas.org.uk)  
  Contains details of jobs, scholarships, bursaries and prizes. Also runs a summer work project placement scheme (paid) for University students – closing date April.

- International Society for Applied Ethology [www.applied-ethology.org](http://www.applied-ethology.org)  
  Advertises MSc and PhD studentships, mostly in USA.

- Nature jobs website [www.nature.com/naturejobs](http://www.nature.com/naturejobs)

**Charities**

- Battersea Dogs & Cats Home [www.dogshome.org](http://www.dogshome.org)

- Blue Cross [www.bluecross.org.uk](http://www.bluecross.org.uk)  
  Job vacancies and volunteering opportunities. Downloadable careers leaflets – careers at our centres; careers at our hospitals; careers at Head Office; careers in animal behaviour.

- Born Free Foundation [www.bomfree.org.uk](http://www.bomfree.org.uk)  
  Volunteering opportunities.


- Cat Chat [www.catchat.org/adoption/devon](http://www.catchat.org/adoption/devon)  
  Cat and re-homing shelters in the Devon area.

- Cats Protection [www.cats.org.uk](http://www.cats.org.uk)
Charity Jobs www.charityjob.co.uk
Section for animal charities e.g fundraising, marketing, admin.

Devon Wildlife Trust www.devonwildlifetrust.org

Dogs for Disabled www.dogsfordisabled.org
Training of dogs to assist people with disabilities (USA)

Dog Rescue Pages www.dogpages.org.uk/sth-west.htm
List of dog rescue centres in the South West.

Dogs Trust www.dogtrust.org.uk
Recruit for dog behaviour and training advisers.

Donkey Sanctuary www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk
Based in Sidmouth, Devon

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People www.hearing-dogs.co.uk
Job vacancies and volunteering opportunities. Useful links / resources.

Guide Dogs for the Blind www.guidedogs.org.uk
Information on jobs and volunteering.

Mammal Society www.abdn.ac.uk/mammal

Mayhew Animal Home www.mayhewanimalhome.org
Based in London. Job vacancies (recruit animal therapists) and volunteering opportunities.

Monkey World www.monkeyworld.org
Based in Dorset.

People’s Dispensary for Sick Animals www.pdsa.org.uk
News, links and location of animal hospitals. Job vacancies and volunteering opportunities.

Pets as Therapy www.petsastherapy.org
Therapeutic visits to hospitals, hospices, special needs schools etc. Job vacancies and volunteering opportunities.

Useful careers section / job profiles. Job vacancies and volunteering opportunities.

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds www.rspb.org.uk
Job vacancies and volunteering opportunities.

Search and Rescue Dog Association (England) www.sardaengland.org.uk

Wildlife Trusts www.wildlifetrusts.org

World Animal Net www.worldanimal.net
Worldwide network of societies campaigning to improve the status and welfare of animals.

World Society for the Protection of Animals www.wspa.org.uk

World Wide Fund for Nature www.panda.org
Job vacancies and volunteering opportunities.
NB ‘The Voluntary Agencies Yearbook’ or ‘Charities Digest’ are additional sources of information on charities too, so do undertake your own research as this list is by no means comprehensive (reference copies available at the Careers and Employment Service, Reed Mews).

**Equine**

- Association of British Riding Schools [www.abrs-info.org](http://www.abrs-info.org)  
  Includes factsheet on working with horses and information about qualifications and tests.

- British Horse Racing Authority [www.britishhorseracing.com](http://www.britishhorseracing.com)  
  Guide to careers in British racing industry, vacancies at the British Horse Racing Authority (including their Graduate Development Programme – [www.britishhorseracing.com/careersinracing/html/graduate_placement.htm](http://www.britishhorseracing.com/careersinracing/html/graduate_placement.htm))

- British Horse Society [www.bhs.org.uk](http://www.bhs.org.uk)  
  Useful guide to working with horses. Job vacancies.

- British Racing School [www.brs.org.uk](http://www.brs.org.uk)  
  Careers in racing section. Information on courses.

- Darley Flying Start [www.darleyflyingstart.com](http://www.darleyflyingstart.com)  
  Darley Flying start is a 2 year graduate training scheme in horse racing / breeding taking place in UK, Ireland, Dubai and Australia.

- Equinet [www.equinet.com](http://www.equinet.com)  
  Useful equestrian related links.

- Equine Online [www.equine-online.net](http://www.equine-online.net)  
  Links and job vacancies.

- Equiworld.net [www.equiworld.net](http://www.equiworld.net)  
  Wide range of links to everything equestrian.

- Horse and Hound Online [www.horseandhound.co.uk](http://www.horseandhound.co.uk)  
  Job vacancies.

- Horseweb – UK [www.horseweb-uk.com](http://www.horseweb-uk.com)  
  UK Stud Directory of Riding Schools, Livery Yards and Trekking Centres.

- International League for the Protection of Horses [www.ilph.org](http://www.ilph.org)

- Met Mounted Police [www.met.police.uk/mountedbranch](http://www.met.police.uk/mountedbranch)  
  8 stables across London. Need to join as a Police Officer first and then specialise in mounted branches.

- Redwings Horse Sanctuary [www.redwings.org.uk](http://www.redwings.org.uk)  
  Job vacancies.

- The Brooke Equine Hospital [www.thebrooke.org](http://www.thebrooke.org)  
  (Horses, donkeys, mules). Job vacancies and volunteering opportunities.

- The Jockey Club [www.thejockeyclub.co.uk](http://www.thejockeyclub.co.uk)

- The National Trainers Federation [www.racehorsetrainers.org](http://www.racehorsetrainers.org)

- Weatherbys [www.weatherbys.co.uk](http://www.weatherbys.co.uk)  
  Central administration for British horse racing. Job vacancies.

**Health**

March 2008 (GN)
Animal Health Trust [www.aht.org.uk](http://www.aht.org.uk)  
Lists job vacancies – has a centre for equine studies and one for small animals.

Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Animal Therapy [www.acpat.org](http://www.acpat.org)

British Equine Veterinary Association [www.beva.org.uk](http://www.beva.org.uk)

British Veterinary Association [www.bva.co.uk](http://www.bva.co.uk)  
Careers information – Vet / Veterinary Nursing.

British Veterinary Nursing Association [www.bvna.org.uk](http://www.bvna.org.uk)  
Careers information and job vacancies.

Institute of Animal Health [www.iah.bbsrc.ac.uk](http://www.iah.bbsrc.ac.uk)  
Largest research institute in the UK dedicated to the health of farm animals. Job vacancies.

National Office of Animal Health [www.noah.co.uk](http://www.noah.co.uk)  
Job vacancies and useful links.

Pet Health Council [www.pethealthcouncil.co.uk](http://www.pethealthcouncil.co.uk)  
Promotes, informs and advises on health and welfare of pet animals. Useful list of contacts.

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons [www.rcvs.org.uk](http://www.rcvs.org.uk)  
Includes veterinary nursing and useful links.

**Farming**

ADAS [www.adas.co.uk](http://www.adas.co.uk)  
Science based rural and environmental consultancy. Graduate vacancies and current vacancies.

Compassion in World Farming [www.ciwf.org.uk](http://www.ciwf.org.uk)

Farm Animal Welfare Council [www.fawc.org.uk](http://www.fawc.org.uk)

Farmers Guardian [www.farmersguardian.com](http://www.farmersguardian.com)

Farmers Weekly Interactive [www.fwi.co.uk](http://www.fwi.co.uk)

Lantra [www.lantra.co.uk](http://www.lantra.co.uk)  
National training organisation for the land based sector.

National Farmers Union (NFU) [www.nfu.org.uk](http://www.nfu.org.uk)  
Lists job vacancies.

**Job-hunting tactics**

- Gain relevant and credible work experience.
- Join a relevant local group or organisation.
- Tailor project work or dissertation towards an animal care/behaviour theme.
- Develop relevant skills e.g practical animal care skills through volunteering with an animal shelter or cattery/kennel.
- Research jobs and employers carefully.
- Keep up to date with current developments in the animal care/behaviour field.
- Network effectively (useful video entitled ‘Can I have a moment of your time’ is available to view at the Careers and Employment Service plus refer to [www.exeter.ac.uk/employability](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/employability) for a briefing sheet called ‘Effective networking’ under the ‘Improve your job hunting skills’ section).
Start early! For instance, start volunteering and researching different career options that interest you in your first and second year of an undergraduate degree or in the first semester of your Masters programme.

**Need more help?**

If you need further help to decide on a way forward then it would be a good idea to make an appointment to see a Careers Adviser to discuss your options. Telephone (01392) 264493 or call into the Careers and Employment Service in Reed Mews (opposite the student health centre) or The Works (Devonshire House) to make an appointment with a Careers Adviser.

The following sections of these websites are also worth looking at:

- [www.ex.ac.uk/employability](http://www.ex.ac.uk/employability) - ‘I want to work in……Environment’
- Wider Options Careers Fair
- Jobsurfing database (Job vacancies, work placements & internships)
- Online CV Creator – example CVs (you will need a CV for some job vacancies or for speculative approaches).

- [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk) - Occupational profiles for the following careers: Animal Breeder, Agricultural Consultant, Animal Nutritionist, Environmental Education Officer, Farm Manager, Nature Conservation Officer, Conservation Adviser (landscape & wildlife), Fish Farm Manager, Fisheries Officer, Fisheries Research Scientist, Information Scientist, Marine Scientist, Veterinary Nurse, Veterinary Surgeon, Zoo Keeper.
- Sector briefings
- Prospects Planner (useful if you are unsure of your career ideas)


If in doubt, come and ask us at the Careers & Employment Service.

Careers and Employment Service
Reed Mews
Streatham Drive
Exeter EX4 4QP
Tel: (01392) 264493
Email: careers@exeter.ac.uk
[www.exeter.ac.uk/employability](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/employability)