

Foreword by Clarissa Baldwin OBE

Chief Executive of Dogs Trust

At Dogs Trust we are changing the way kennels look and feel forever.

This is why I am so delighted to introduce you to a book that will inspire and encourage you, and show you the many benefits that good kennel design has for you and the dogs in your care.



We have proved beyond doubt that a modern, inviting kennel facility has many more advantages than you may at first imagine.

There are enormous benefits to the dogs of course, but also to the visitors. Our facilities make them feel welcome, inspiring them to return for future visits and to tell their friends about us!

Our new purpose-built state-of-the-art rehoming centres are light, bright and designed to be as dogfriendly as possible.

For example at our West London Rehoming Centre at Harefield (which you can read about on page 274), we have some of the best rehoming facilities to be seen anywhere in the world.



A Dog is for Life, Not Just for Christmas

It was 30 years ago that our Trustees asked me, as Head of Public Relations, to devise a slogan that would prevent the impulse buying of dogs as presents. Out of the dozen or so suggestions offered, they seemed to like one in particular, and "A dog is for life, not just for Christmas" was born.

Over the years, it has been hi-jacked by a number of different people. I've seen "God is for life, not just for Christmas", "Brussels sprouts are for life...", "A no claims bonus is for life..." and even one involving a product sold by a chain of adult shops that I won't explain here. It has been spotted in various different languages and I must say that both "Un cane e per la vita, non solo per Natale" and "Un perro es para la vida, no justa para Navidad" do have a certain ring to them.

It's such a simple message but perhaps that's the secret of its success.

I'm looking forward to the day when it's no longer necessary to use the slogan. But I fear that the day when everybody understands the full responsibilities of dog ownership is still some way off.

So Dogs Trust will keep pushing the slogan to get the message across that our four-legged friends are not disposable objects. Rather they are the most wonderful companions, bringing great joy to our lives and giving us unconditional loyalty. In return, all we have to do is to take our responsibilities seriously and treat them with the love and attention that they deserve – through good times and bad. That seems like a fair deal to me.

If you want to help spread the word, go to www.dogstrust.org.uk/information/ourpublications and order your free "A dog is for life, not just for Christmas" car sticker.

Dogs Trust is dedicated to rescuing abandoned dogs, finding them new, loving homes as quickly as possible. At any one time Dogs Trust looks after more than 1,400 dogs of all shapes, sizes, ages and temperaments. We run 17 rehoming centres in the UK that care for over 15,000 dogs every year. In every one of them you'll find dogs that are looking for a 'forever' home.

We continue to modernise our older sites, so all of our Rehoming Centres offer the best facilities for the dogs. Each development builds on experience gained in previous projects, creating an even happier environment for dogs.

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Change the Way Kennels Look & Feel

Some years ago, we commissioned market research to find out the public's view of animal rescue facilities. The results were not encouraging. Interviewees were afraid to visit rehoming centres, describing them as dark, dingy places – the phrase 'death camps' was used on more than one occasion. That research has always been in our minds when designing our centres and we've tried our utmost to ensure that visiting a Dogs Trust property is a happy experience.

The same negative feelings are generated by many kennels - no wonder people are reacting so positively to new facilities!

If the public do not visit us, we simply won't be able to find homes for our dogs and if our dogs aren't happy, then the visiting public will not adopt them. So, each new centre design aims to do everything possible to keep our canine guests happy and healthy.

And finally, as well as happy customers and happy dogs, we want happy staff! Some of our longer-serving staff will remember having to take tea breaks in dilapidated garden sheds and queuing to use a portaloos for their 'comfort' breaks. I'm pleased to report that their dedication is now rewarded with more acceptable amenities.

I'm desperately proud of the Dogs Trust facilities you'll see in this book. But I know that we've yet to build the completely perfect centre – no-one has. But each time we build, we get a bit closer to the ideal.

Whatever type of dog facility you're looking to build, I am certain this book will help you create a first class kennels facility for your customers, both two and four legged.

Clarissa Baldwin

For further information please:

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Clarissa Baldwin OBE is the Chief Executive of Dogs Trust (formerly the National Canine Defence League), a post she has held for 18 years. prior to this post she was head of Public Relations at the NCDL, joining the charity in 1974. Before joining the charity, Clarissa worked in a public relations consultancy.