

Help **Ban** Electric Shock Collars NOW!

Campaign Briefing



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Briefing - Electric Shock Collars and Other Training Devices

What Electric Shock Collars and Other Devices are:

Electric shock collars -

Worn around a dog's neck, these work either via a remote control with various settings which, when pressed, deliver an electric shock to the neck of a dog or deliver an electric shock to a dog automatically when a dog barks.

Electric shock mats -

There are two types of electric mats: one is known as a 'wireless crate' and emits electric shocks to the dog when it steps off the mat and the other is called a 'scat mat' and emits an electric shock to the dog when it steps on it.

Electric shock leads -

These emit electric shocks to a dog if it exerts more pressure on the lead than is considered 'normal' for its size.

Why Electric Training Devices are not Effective:

Scientific learning theory -

This dictates that if a dog has a strong desire to indulge in pleasurable natural behaviour, any negative training method employed to prevent this has to be far more unpleasant for them than their natural behaviour is pleasant (i.e. be extremely aversive). Therefore if an action brings about a positive outcome, that action will be repeated, as it is beneficial.

Failure to address underlying behavioural problems -

Electric training devices alter behaviour due to fear of further punishment rather than a natural willingness to obey. Any change in behaviour would result from the dog perceiving the shock as painful. "An electric shock collar hurts. It has to. If it didn't, it wouldn't work" (Carolyn Menteith, Dog Trainer, Association of Pet Dog Trainers).

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Cause of further behavioural problems -

Dogs have a natural inbuilt flight or fight response when put in a situation that causes pain and fear, meaning the dog either does anything it can to get away from the source of pain (flight), or becomes aggressive in response (fight). This means shock collars can cause further behavioural problems in addition to the one(s) being 'treated'. As a dog will have no idea what caused the pain, it is far more likely to associate it with something in its immediate environment than with its behaviour at that time. This is why cases of dogs attacking other dogs, their owner or another animal close by at the time of the shock are quite common, as is the dog developing 'superstitious' fears to things in the environment that were heard or seen at the time of the shock.



Why Electric Shock Collars are used:

The most common defence for using electric shock collars (which does not apply to the other devices, for which, the Kennel Club has not heard a defence) is that they train dogs to stop chasing sheep. However it is important to note that it is virtually impossible to use an electric shock collar to train a dog to not chase sheep – the theory behind the training method is that the dog will believe the sheep gave it an electric shock and not chase sheep again. However:



- Professional dog trainers claim that the success of this would be based on luck rather than judgement, as it is impossible to know at which level the collar should be set when the dog is near the sheep. In order for the dog to think the sheep 'shocked' it, the trainer would have to wait until the dog was very near the sheep or else, the dog would think the shock came from something in its immediate environment.
- If the trainer did wait until the dog was very near the sheep and the setting of the collar was too low, there is a high chance that the shock would not prevent the dog from worrying the sheep. Similarly, the collar could be set at the highest setting but have no effect on the dog's behaviour because the dog is already so aroused by chasing the sheep that it will continue no matter what.
- Under the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 a person in control of a dog worrying livestock on agricultural land will be guilty of an offence. Under this Act dogs must be kept on leads or under close control. Dogs exercised near livestock should be kept on leads - it's that simple!

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Positive Alternative Training Methods and Devices:

There are other, positive, training tools and methods that can produce dogs that are trained just as (if not more) quickly and reliably, with absolutely no fear, pain, or potential damage to the relationship between dog and handler. Police dogs, armed forces dogs and assistance dogs are never trained using electric shock training devices. Similarly the two largest German Shepherd Dog clubs in the country have banned the use of electric shock collars from their training grounds.

Research on Electric Shock Training Devices:

Existing Research

The Kennel Club has obtained peer reviewed scientific evidence which proves that the use of electronic training products is 'not only unpleasant but also painful and frightening' and 'may influence the dog's well being in the long term in a negative way'.

Defra Research

In 2006, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in England (Defra) issued an open tender call for scientific research but received only one response which could not be followed up because it was a proposal for a non-invasive study (i.e. a study that would not have involved actually testing shock collars on dogs).

The Kennel Club contacted universities and academics to find out why they had not responded to the open call

and were informed that Defra's proposal would not get past their universities' respective ethics committees given that enough research already existed to prove electric shock training devices were cruel.

YouGov Survey

A YouGov survey commissioned by the Kennel Club to find out views on the use of electric shock collars found that from a cross section of 1,000 people across Wales, 70% disapproved of the use of electric shock collars on dogs, with only 9% of people approving their use. 64% of those polled agree that the Welsh Assembly was right to move ahead with its plan to ban their use. The results also concluded that 60% of respondents agreed the use of electric shock collars has a negative effect on the dogs physical and psychological health and welfare.

Going Forward:

After years of campaigning by the Kennel Club, the National Assembly for Wales voted unanimously in favour of regulations to ban the use of electric shock training devices. The Animal Welfare (Electric Collars) (Wales) Regulations 2010 came into force at 00.01 on Wednesday 24th March 2010. The ban is the first of its kind in the UK, and is the first secondary regulation that will be introduced in Wales under the Animal Welfare Act which differs from the one in place at Westminster.

In November 2010 the Royal Courts of Justice quashed the Electric Collar Manufacturers Associations judicial review against the ban on electric shock training devices in Wales proving legislating against these devices was legitimate and further paving the way for all UK governments to ban them.

Research is still being finalised at the request of Defra regarding shock collars after being delayed by a further 18 months, which has almost certainly led to additional expenditure and dogs continue to suffer despite the fact that so much peer reviewed research already exists.

Wales has proven that it is truly leading the way and the Kennel Club continues to lobby for the rest of the UK to follow by example to outlaw these cruel and unnecessary devices.

If you want to help, please get involved today and visit: www.thekennelclub.org.uk/banshockcollars



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