



MEETING VISITORS IN THE HOME

This handout has been designed for dogs that either get very excited when visitors arrive or show fear or anxiety towards them.

NOTE: This is NOT to be done if the dog is aggressive with visitors and this training should only be attempted when the dog is under supervision and under your absolute control.

What to do when visitors call

- 🐾 Do not allow the dog to meet visitors at the door or other boundaries to the property.
- 🐾 If possible pre-empt the visit and have the dog in another room away from the boundary and consider using a [crate](#) (only if they have been trained to use one and have positive associations with it)
- 🐾 If the dog is barking or vocalising when visitors arrive at the door do not shout as this can be interpreted as you joining in with them in order to repel the 'intruder'.
- 🐾 Call the dog away calmly and shut it in another room (work on training a recall every day using the [houeline](#) & avoid pulling/ dragging the dog away).
- 🐾 Use stuffed kongs or other mental activities so the dog has something to do whilst being shut away.
- 🐾 Once the dog is calm and the visitors are in the home and sat down allow the dog to see them.
- 🐾 Remember that frightened dogs can bite so if in any doubt fit a muzzle beforehand ([Follow the Muzzle Training video](#)) & attach a house-line ([Refer to the Houeline training handout](#)).
- 🐾 Tell the visitors to ignore the dog and to only show them mild interest to start with.
- 🐾 Advise visitors to avoid eye contact.
- 🐾 Let the dog approach the visitor rather than the visitor approach them.
- 🐾 Arm the visitors with treats but do not lure the dog – only gently throw a treat to the ground if the dog shows calm behaviour.
- 🐾 Keep interactions positive and calm – If the dog approaches the visitor in a friendly manner or comes for another treat then the visitor can interact more and engage with the dog in a positive manner
- 🐾 Progress VERY slowly, i.e. no sudden movements and keep hands and fingers out of harm's way! Presenting the back of the hand with the fist clenched is less threatening.
- 🐾 Avoid any petting around the head especially from above the dog as this can be perceived as threatening.
- 🐾 Do not allow your dog to jump up onto the sofa with the visitor or be at face height as this is potentially dangerous.
- 🐾 If you know that your dog will react when the visitor leaves, it is advisable to lead your dog away before they stand up
- 🐾 If the dog becomes calm and poses no threat, the visitor can perhaps ask the dog for a sit before giving them a treat but advise against prolonged eye contact.
- 🐾 Make sure your visitor does not try to pick up the dog or restrain it in any way
- 🐾 Once the dog has greeted the visitor ask them to settle.
- 🐾 It is highly recommended that you get the help of a registered and suitably qualified behaviourist if aggression forms any part of your dogs reactions. For recommendations look at the APBC or ABTC websites.