

## Client expectations – What does the client want?



This is sometimes not an easy question to ask, because what the client wants is not always what we feel will be the best outcome.

After all, we have the animal's welfare as the priority. But this question and its connotations are so important!

It's one of the questions I ask on my 'questionnaire' and I'm quite upfront about the expected outcomes. I've lived my life being told not to be honest but quite simply, as above, animal welfare is my main priority...

As a result, we need to be mindful of the way we phrase things. The client may have unrealistic goals, expectations, or timeframes in mind. Our job isn't to belittle, rather to guide. So, look out for situations where the client may be: -

- ☹️ *Only wanting one pet visit a day, when you know that two would be better.*
- ☹️ *Thinking that one session will 'cure' their dog.*
- ☹️ *Claiming that "He wants group walks" (when you can clearly tell that he doesn't!)*
- ☹️ *Saying "She needs to be socialised" (when the dog is obviously anxious).*
- ☹️ *Believing that the right enrichment toy will solve their separation anxiety.*

In response, we need to be open and honest to clients, and we need to do this in a way that they understand and take note. Education is key but remember to walk in their shoes first.

***I often relate to previous scenarios; how I've helped in the past and give human examples. I also refer to my own pets and my own personal experiences.***

Again, we always try to not pass judgement. But remember that the welfare of the animal is the main priority. Sometimes the client just isn't right for us... and that's okay! We must have some challenging conversations, which we may initially find uncomfortable, but it does get easier in the long run.

***Be honest, be clear, be open, and try walk in their shoes.***