

Guide to dog ownership in North Somerset



Owning a dog

A dog is a human's best friend and being a dog owner brings with it a series of responsibilities to ensure a happy life for your faithful friend and the community around you.

This short guide sets out the main responsibilities that every dog owner should be aware of.

Exercise your dog every day

Dogs need to be exercised to remain healthy, stimulated and socialised. Dog walking also benefits dog owners in similar ways.

Train your dog

Correctly training a dog is essential as dog owners are responsible for ensuring that they have control of their dogs and that they are socialised correctly. Training and socialisation helps to promote a good relationship between owner and dog as well as other people and animals.

Not everyone likes dogs and not all dogs get on well with other dogs. If you are approaching another dog that's on a lead it's good practice to make sure that your dog is also on its lead. Be aware that a dog with a yellow lead and collar could indicate that it's a nervous dog.



REMEMBER!

If your dog does something wrong, you are responsible for its actions.

Clean up after your dog

Dog mess in our open spaces and streets is unpleasant and can cause a risk to health.

A **Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)**

covering the whole of North Somerset is in place meaning that, when walking a dog, owners must pick up after their dog in a public place and also carry a suitable receptacle for picking up dog mess.

If you witness someone not picking up after their dog this should be reported to the council and could result in a fine or prosecution.

It's also important to ensure that private gardens are kept clear of dog mess to maintain a healthy environment for dogs, their owners and neighbours.

Identify your dog

It's a legal requirement for dogs to wear a collar with a tag or badge showing the owner's details, and for all dogs to be microchipped and the owner's details to be kept up to date with the relevant microchip database. **This means that all dogs in public places in North Somerset should have a collar, tag and microchip.**



Know where you are allowed to walk your dog

Other PSPOs across North Somerset mean there are areas where dogs are not allowed, including children's play areas, some beaches and sports fields and in and around marine lakes. There are also other areas where dogs must be kept on leads at all times. Failure to comply with the requirements of these areas could result in a fixed penalty notice or prosecution.

As a dog owner in North Somerset it is recommended that you familiarise yourself with the areas where dog restrictions apply by visiting www.n-somerset.gov.uk/pspo or take notice of signage in the area where you wish to walk your dog.



Take care of your dog's health and wellbeing

A responsible dog owner should always ensure that their dog is healthy and happy.

Dogs must:

- Have access to fresh, clean water and be fed the right amount of food to keep them fit and healthy
- Have access to shelter to protect them from poor weather, extreme temperatures or humidity.
- Have access to a clean and dry bedding area and never be left in a vehicle in warm weather.
- Be free from pain, suffering or disease - if your dog is ill or injured it should be treated without delay by a vet.
- Be regularly and sufficiently exercised and socialised and have enough space in suitable conditions to allow it to behave normally.
- Be free from fear or distress.



Ensure that your dog does not stray

Private gardens and enclosures where dogs are allowed to roam should be secure so that they cannot escape. When exercising a dog, owners should ensure that they are able to recall it if it's off the lead.

If a dog is found to be straying it can be seized by the council, resulting in a fee for its safe return or the dog being rehomed if it is not claimed within seven days.



Make sure you know what your dog is doing while you are out.

If a dog is unhappy when being left alone at home, it could be causing noise issues for neighbours. If you become aware that your dog is anxious or is causing noise problems for a neighbour, it may be suffering from separation anxiety.

There are steps you can take to deal with these issues including teaching the dog not to worry about you leaving them and not leaving them alone for an excessive amount of time. There are many sources online that provide advice on how to deal with separation anxiety or you could ask the advice of your vet.



Useful contacts for reporting any incidents that you witness:

RSPCA

www.rspca.org.uk or **0300 1234 999**

- Cruelty to an animal

North Somerset Council

www.n-somerset.gov.uk/connect or
01275 888 802

- Noise nuisance (for example, dog barking)
- Dog fouling
- Missing or stray dogs
- A dog attacking another dog

Avon and Somerset Police

www.avonandsomerset.police.uk or **101**

- A dog attacking a person or assistance dog
- A dog dangerously out of control
- A dog on a main road or motorway

