

JUNE 2021

CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS & ANIMALS RESEARCH

Newsletter: Issue 1



CONTENTS

- New study on pet ownership challenges
- A new Human Animal Empathy Project
- Supporting practitioners to evaluate interventions
- Papers published in the journal 'Animal Welfare'
- Evaluation of 'Rabbit Rescuers' accepted for publication
- Current student projects

WELCOME TO OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER

Dr Janine Muldoon
Professor Jo Williams

We are delighted to bring this newsletter to you. It is something we have been planning for some time, and it is great to finally bring it to fruition. The aim of the newsletter is to provide a brief update of our current research and share information about our team, student projects, and events we are involved with.

It is exciting that there is growing recognition of the significance of our relationships and interactions with animals. Events over the past 15 months or so have highlighted the importance of 'One Health' and 'One Welfare' approaches that centre on the inextricable link between humans, animals, plants and the wider environment.



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NEW STUDY ON PET OWNERSHIP CHALLENGES

"Welcome to our new project - a collaborative study with the Scottish SPCA and Blue Cross. The charities are keen to hear about the whole range of challenges that pet owners experience in order to develop new support services for people living in Scotland. Taking part in our online survey will help more people receive the support they need"

Janine & Jo, May 2021

Our survey '**Supporting People & Pets in Scotland**' is currently underway and will run until the 22nd June.

We aim to identify:

- where support is most needed,
- the extent and types of challenges experienced,
- the impact of these challenges on owners and their families,
- which support/services have been accessed and if they were helpful,
- the type of support that pet owners feel would be most useful to them, and
- issues involved when deciding to give up a pet.

We would especially like to hear from those who are experiencing challenges with their pets and may not be receiving or seeking support, and those who may be thinking about giving up/rehoming their pet.

[BIT.LY/PEOPLE-AND-PETS-IN-SCOTLAND](https://bit.ly/People-and-Pets)

We would be most grateful if you could share the link for this survey in your networks of family, friends and colleagues. It is important that we gather as many perspectives on the challenges as possible. Please share our Facebook/ Twitter posts too

bit.ly/People-and-Pets

Supporting people and pets in Scotland

Looking after pets can be challenging

- > Help us to understand those challenges so we can provide the best support

Take part in our survey @ bit.ly/People-and-Pets & enter our prize draw to win a £50 Amazon voucher



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If you would like to support this project, we would be grateful if you could help us promote the survey. We need to reach a wide range of people - pet owners and non-pet owners alike

https://edinburgh.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8dp4YT_x8hWZUQtw

THE NEW HUMAN ANIMAL EMPATHY PROJECT

"We are excited to announce a new project which aims to develop a universal measure of empathy that can be used with children, adolescents, and adults to simultaneously investigate human-directed and animal-directed empathy"

Laura Wauthier (PhD student) and Jo, June 2021

It is really important that we have an accurate method of measuring both human-directed and animal-directed empathy. Therefore, for the first stage of this study, we are examining how people respond to a range of picture-based measures in an on-line survey. This survey has just launched and can be completed by any adult over 18 who speaks fluent English. Please follow the link on the left to our Qualtrics survey if you are interested in taking part.

You can follow the progress of the project on our website and via our social media channels:



[@humananimalempathyproject](https://www.facebook.com/humananimalempathyproject)



[@empathy_UOE](https://twitter.com/empathy_UOE)

INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT @ [HTTPS://HUMANANIMALEMPATHYPROJECT.WORDPRESS.COM/](https://humananimalempathyproject.wordpress.com/)





SUPPORTING PRACTITIONERS TO EVALUATE THEIR INTERVENTIONS

Until now there has been no guidance for those seeking to design, develop and evaluate interventions that aim to educate children and young people about animals and their welfare, prevent harm, and promote positive relationships through their interactions. This toolkit provides a framework for understanding the purpose of evaluation and how it might be approached - from the intervention planning stage right through to reporting and sharing the findings. It will be most useful for those who are new to evaluation or wish to gather stronger evidence of impact. It is also highly relevant to those working within humane education.

The core aim of the toolkit is to support practitioners to develop strong evidence-based practice. Based on the findings from our Delphi study of animal welfare education professionals, it provides some simple guidance on how to plan, evaluate, adapt, and report on, their intervention work. There is both a online interactive version with templates, and a pdf to save or print out. The toolkit also provides links to a range of resources that have been developed to support practitioners with their evaluation activities. Importantly, It highlights the processes involved, providing a step-by-step guide to ensuring high quality evaluation and, consequently, a comprehensive understanding of an intervention's impact. This work has been funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and has been undertaken in partnership with the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Scottish SPCA).

"Aesthetically impressive, well researched, unique, much needed"

"I think it's an incredibly useful document and explains very well how to create robust evaluation processes that I personally knew little about when I began in my role"

Feedback from participants in our Delphi study

bit.ly/Animal-Welfare-Education-Toolkit

PAPERS PUBLISHED IN 'ANIMAL WELFARE'

We are delighted that our two papers have now been published. These sit side-by-side in Volume 30, Issue 2 (May 2021) of the journal 'Animal Welfare'.

The papers present the findings from our Delphi study of 31 animal welfare education professionals, 27 of whom were UK-based. The study highlighted areas of practitioner consensus with respect to the goals and important components of successful interventions, and this forms the basis for the first paper. The second paper takes a closer look at the qualitative data. We highlight participants' reflections on the promise of animal welfare education but also the key challenges facing educators. It draws attention to differing views and some of the tensions that were apparent in the data. These represent challenges that need to be overcome in order to progress the field.



Links to the abstracts

<https://www.ufaw.org.uk/download/s/muldoon-30-issue-2.pdf>

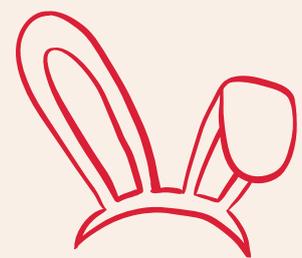
<https://www.ufaw.org.uk/download/s/muldoon-30-paper-2.pdf>

EVALUATION OF 'RABBIT RESCUERS' ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION

Our evaluation study of 'Rabbit Rescuers' (Jo & Monja Knoll) with the Scottish SPCA has been accepted for publication in Anthrozoös, and will be published later this year so watch this space! The study compared the effectiveness of a rabbit welfare education intervention for 5 to 7 year-olds. There were three intervention conditions:

- (1) with mechanical rabbits,
- (2) with toy fluffy rabbits, and
- (3) a control group who did not receive the intervention.

Children in the intervention conditions showed improved understanding of animal welfare and attitudes towards cruelty, and the mechanical rabbit condition showed most gains.





CURRENT STUDENT PROJECTS

Here are some of our current student project titles with their contact details should you wish to find out more

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Exploring the impact of 'Reading to Dogs' on children's wellbeing and reading outcomes

Jill Steel
Jill.Steel@ed.ac.uk

Evaluation of 'Animal Guardians': Psychological risk factors for childhood animal harm

Laura Wauthier
s1575158@sms.ed.ac.uk

Promoting positive relationships between vulnerable children and animals: Pet effects and animal-assisted interventions

Unaiza Iqbal
U.Iqbal@sms.ed.ac.uk

Pet ownership and pet effects on mental health among adolescents in China

Xiaoshan (Sylph) Yin
s1716195@sms.ed.ac.uk

Congratulations to Jillian Bradfield who has now completed her studies and is looking to publish her thesis

'The effects of animals on student mental health and stress: A systematic review and survey study'

j.bradfield@sms.ed.ac.uk

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