



Welfare First: Developing a Welfare Culture by Caring for the Staff who Care for the Animals

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Delivering great animal welfare depends upon well trained and dedicated individuals who care passionately about animal care and welfare. The Welfare First programme was designed to bring together the key elements that support, maintain and underpin this welfare culture. The Welfare First programme enables this commitment to be clearly expressed by using six key principles. The primary features are expressed below:

Security Assured

Security guidance, advice and training delivered to all staff, annual security screening of staff provides reassurance, signed social media code of conduct and confidentiality agreements clarify and support requirements. Having a secure environment enables technicians to flourish.

Communication

Keen to engage all technicians, a Welfare First e-newsletter, Tech Talk web resources and a defined “Got a Concern” process were developed. A Welfare First brochure for staff and articles explaining the concept was published in staff newsletters.

Recognition

Regular appraisals and reviews identify excellent performance. Agenda quality and Technician of the Year awards in addition to recognition for completion of qualifications and courses lead to career development and promotion. The Hall of fame recognises achievement and inspires technicians to achieve more.



Welfare Contract*

A clear statement of the organisation’s expectations with regards to welfare and expected behaviours, signed by staff to express their commitment. It specifies the organisational position on the use of Animals in research and also requires the immediate reporting of welfare concerns.

Technician Care

The aim of this key principle is to support technicians by providing 24/7 help, advice, training mentors, handbooks, technician care packs and occupational health support amongst other initiatives such as a birthday day off.

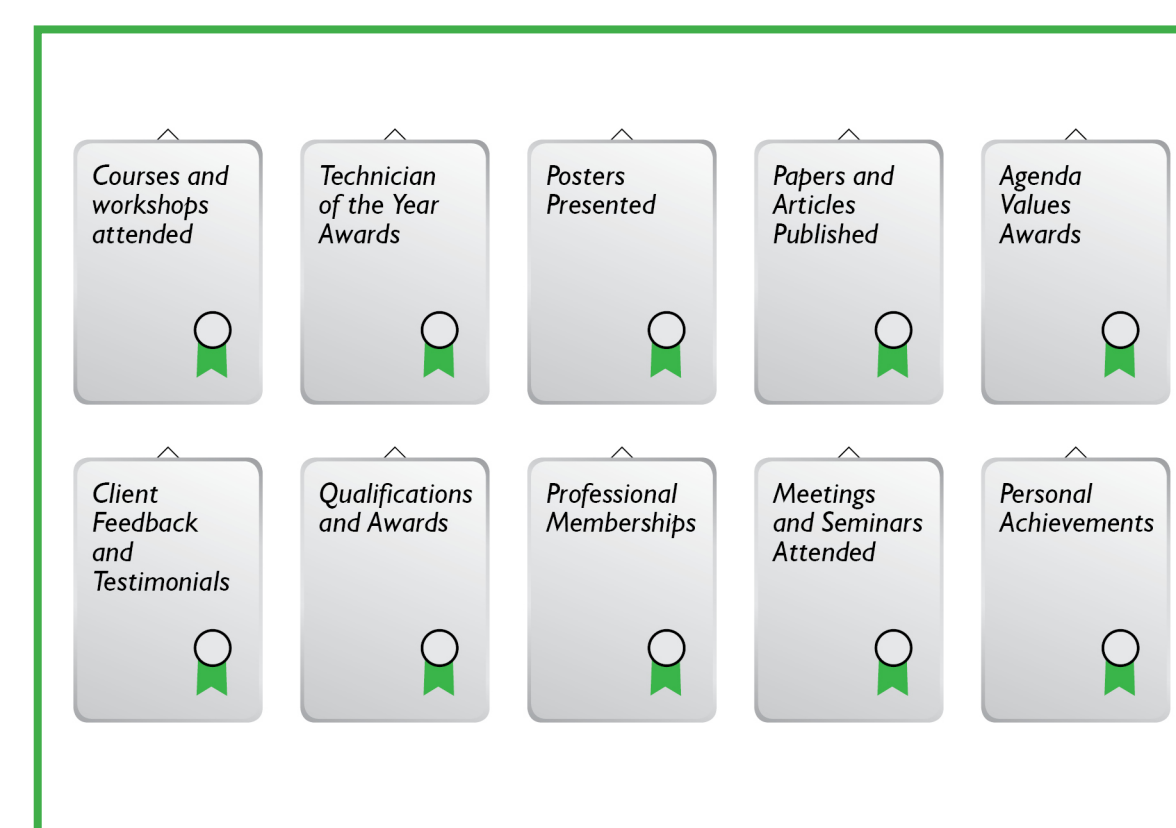
Training and Development

People with animal care qualifications are hired and then supported with CPD and an annual training bank account to continue their development. As an Investor in People, e-learning and professional memberships are also provided. Newsletters and Tech Talk web resource provide training course notifications.

Got a Concern?



Hall of Fame



Staff Brochure



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Conclusion: The **Welfare First** programme has joined up the dots to support those who deliver excellent animal care and welfare.

*The Welfare Contract concept was kindly reviewed by Understanding Animal Research and several other research sector bodies.