



Management Report

for

Battlers Green Farm,

Common Lane

Radlett WD7 8PH

May 2021

Background

Bruce's Doggy Day Care was founded in 2009 by Bruce Casalis, a lifetime dog owner, dog lover and entrepreneur, to provide an experience that enriches and improves a dog's life. Bruce's Doggy Day Care is now a multi award-winning business and the UK's recognised leader in doggy day care.

Bruce has helped shape the future of dog day care and licencing/welfare standards. He has acted as an advisor to the government department DEFRA, Dogs Trust, and the RSPCA, and he sits on the Board of Directors for the Pet Industry Federation. He is now established as an expert and pioneering voice for dog welfare.

Bruce's Doggy Day Care is run by an expert team of dedicated dog day care specialists offering dog day care, dog socialisation and puppy nursery services. Over the last twelve years, the business has grown in size and reputation and currently operates from five day care centres located in Surrey, Kent, Berkshire and South East London. With demand continuing to grow we are rolling out our services to new locations.

How We Operate

Bruce's Doggy Day Care operates like a children's nursery but for dogs. It is NOT a Kennels. We offer a full daycare service for dogs on-site, as well as puppy socialisation. The dogs spend their days socialising and exercising with friends and being cared for in acres of farmland.

The photograph below is of our existing Oxshott centre in Surrey.



Home boarding and holiday boarding is also available, but this is away from the site, staying with staff members in their own homes. No dogs stay overnight at the site at any time.

Our day care centres are divided into separate fields for the dogs depending on the dogs size, age and play style. The centres are secure and fully fenced, with open grassed fields for the dogs to roam and “natural apparatus” for the dogs to play on (e.g. log piles and tree trunks) allowing dogs to be adventurous and to be challenged in their play.



The business is an outdoor model and utilises green, open space to provide the dogs with enjoyment, stimulation and fulfilment. Dogs do have free access to indoor space for resting, sleeping and during inclement weather.

Dog Collection and Timings

We use customised vans “doggy buses” to collect dogs from customers' homes from 7:00am. The dogs are brought to the centre for a day of socialisation and enrichment activities before being dropped home again in the afternoon. The buses arrive at the site around 8:30am and leave the site at around 3pm to drop the dogs back home again.

The doggy buses are air-conditioned and fitted with vet approved crates. Each doggy bus can carry up to 16 dogs at one time. The use of dog buses significantly reduces the number of vehicle movements in and out of the site.



House keys are held securely by our drivers so dogs can be collected and delivered home whilst owners are at work or out, this provides additional flexibility and convenience of the service.

The site would operate on weekdays only, Monday – Friday between 7:30am and 6:00pm. The majority of dogs however will only be on site between 8:30am and 3:00pm.

No dogs or staff remain on-site overnight or at the weekends.

We offer a home boarding service for our customers whereby the dog goes home with a member of our staff for the night and then returns to the day care the next day. The dogs that are home boarding with a member of our staff may remain at the site until 6:00pm when they will go home with the staff member.

Catchment Area

The new site at Battlers Green Farm will accommodate dogs from the surrounding areas including Radlett, Borehamwood, Bushey, St Albans, and Watford. Based on our existing customer profile and a detailed analysis of the demographics in the surrounding areas we have identified that a site in this location would attract sufficient customers to operate a successful day care centre.

Battlers Green Farm is very well located and has good road access to the surrounding areas for the collection of dogs by the doggy buses. The proximity of the site to Radlett, Borehamwood, and Watford will offer new employment opportunities to the local population with good access to their place of employment.

Day Care Centre Design

Our day care centres are designed and built on sound welfare operating procedures and principles. The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 sets out clear guidelines for the space required for dogs in day care. The guidelines recommend a minimum of 6 square meters per dog to meet the standards set out in the legislation. This site will accommodate up to 130 dogs per day offering **over 100 square meters per dog** which provides for a substantial amount of green open space for the dogs to enjoy. We typically operate at an 80% occupancy rate which would be around 100 dogs.

The centre's outside space will be split into three separate fields which includes a designated area for puppies, a field for small dogs and a field for medium to large dogs. There will also be a sensory field where carers can take small groups of dogs to do additional interaction and enrichment activities.

The inside space of the building will be split into three segregated areas ensuring that dogs in each of the three separate fields have direct and free-flow access to their own dedicated indoor space. The indoor space will provide a heated and comfortable environment where dogs can sleep, rest and interact with their carers indoors.

Dedicated staff welfare facilities will be provided within the building in accordance with the UK health, safety, and welfare legislation. Staff will also have access to the wider Battlers Green shopping village facilities. From experience, many staff choose to spend their breaks in the company of the dogs in their indoor spaces or fields.

A Normal Day At Day Care

When the dog arrives at the site on the doggy bus, the driver will take the dog on a lead to its designated field, which will be the same field each day. The dog will spend the day socialising with its dog friends and interacting with the carers. As well as socialisation, each week the carers implement an enrichment activity programme with the dogs which stimulates the dogs in a different way to ensure they are getting the most from their day care experience. A large number of our existing customers now use our service for the stimulation, enrichment, and socialisation of their dog rather than just the convenience of dog day care.

Prior to accepting a new customer, we carry out an interview process where we meet the owner and dog to assess the dog's character and play style to understand if it will be suited to the day care environment. Based on over a decade's experience of responsible day care we have strict acceptance criteria for dog enrolment. This ensures responsible and safe standards of care and interaction for both dogs and humans.

Managing The Day Care Dynamic

In order to ensure a safe and calm dynamic for the dogs, human customers and employees we adopt some key principles upon which the business is built. These are:

1. Every dog must attend an enrolment meeting prior to becoming a customer so we can assess the dog's character and play style and understand if the day care environment is suitable for that dog.
2. Every dog must have a minimum booking of 2 days per week, on an ongoing basis on the same day each week. This means that all the dogs attending are familiar with the environment, the staff and the other dogs attending on that day. This ensures that the dogs are comfortable and relaxed in the day care setting.
3. The dogs are constantly supervised and engaged and never left unattended. We operate to a minimum ratio of 1 carer to 10 dogs.

4. The dogs are socialised in groups rather than being segregated on their own.
5. Each week the carers will implement a different enrichment programme to engage with the dogs. This keeps the dogs engaged and stimulated to ensure they are having a fulfilled experience at day care.
6. If a dog is disrupting the day care dynamic by being over energetic or barking incessantly then the human customer will be notified that the day care environment is not suitable for that dog and the dog will no longer be able to attend day care. We implement a Noise Management Plan at all our centres and this is strictly adhered to and monitored.
7. Every site will have a “Sensory Area” where dogs can be taken by the carers to engage in different activities to manage energy levels and stimulate a dog in a different way.
8. Our employees must love dogs and go out of their way to provide every dog with an amazing experience at every visit

Vehicle Movements and Parking Requirements

When at full capacity we will operate 8 dog buses which will collect dogs from their homes and deliver them to the site in the morning and return them home later in the afternoon.

All the drivers keep the van at their own home overnight meaning there are no vehicles on site overnight and this ensures that none of the drivers require parking for their own vehicle on site.

For the staff members that do not drive a dog bus, often the job is one of their first jobs after school and as a result many are not yet in a position to afford a car. Therefore, whilst some of them drive to work, others either car pool, use public transport or cycle to get to work.

There will be up to 15 staff/company vehicles on site per day which includes up to 8 dog buses and one car per other member of staff, assuming that every member of staff has a car which, in practice, isn't the reality.

Staffing Levels

As with the number of dogs above, the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 sets out clear guidelines and a minimum ratio of 1 staff member for every 10 dogs.

The site will be managed by a site manager and deputy site manager and the remainder of the staff will be carers and carer drivers who will collect and bring the dogs to the site in the doggy buses and look after them whilst they are on site. If the site is operating at full capacity, there will be 15 members of staff on site at peak times.

Our Centre Managers and Deputies have lots of dog experience and we develop our teams in accordance with our visions and values and in line with The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018.

Employment

We are an employer of choice for people wanting to learn about day care and improve their experience with dogs and in particular learning about the socialising and mixing of dogs.

We provide employment for local residents around the site who either have previous experience working with animals, are dedicated dog enthusiasts, or those looking for a career change. As we are an outdoor business that promotes employee wellbeing; this is very appealing to candidates looking to work with dogs in the outdoors.

Our Managers have animal management and specialist canine behaviour qualifications plus managerial experience. They typically live in the local area to ensure close proximity to the site.

Our Carer Drivers, who drive the dog buses, live close to their designated collection routes to ensure that their commute is as short as possible to the first dog pick collection in the morning. We would be looking to recruit employees from in and around the local area. We do this to reduce drive time, congestion on the roads and our carbon footprint. Our Carer Drivers come from a variety of backgrounds and previous experiences and enjoy the mixture of driving and caring for dogs that the role has to offer.

Every employee goes through our trial process to assess their driving skills, customer service skills and affiliation for the dogs. As our employees are going into customers' homes to collect their dogs and have a set of house keys, each employee is required to have a clean driving licence and have passed a DBS check.

Training and Development

We provide continued learning and professional development through our regular internal and external training programs. We know that with the right tools and training to succeed, our employees can genuinely build a fulfilling career while being valued and appreciated through a programme of rewards and recognition. We also provide career progression for employees that want to move into more managerial roles.

We like to position ourselves in the heart of the local community and encourage schools and colleges to visit our sites. We offer tours and talks to students giving them the opportunity to get hands-on practical knowledge of a potential career path that they previously may not have had the opportunity to do so. We also offer work experience to students. Apprenticeships are very popular and successful and we offer placements at all levels within the business.

One of our most successful projects to date has been working with the Department of Education on educating business owners of the advantages of taking on work placement students when the new T-Level curriculums are introduced. We as a business have always been advocates of educating and developing younger generations.

As well as educating and encouraging younger students about possible careers in dog day care, we develop and upskill our own employees. We work with a number of external trainers such as the Institute for Modern Dog Trainers (IMDT), Craig Ogilvie and Dogs Trust, who come to our sites and deliver practical training courses to the team. We also have an internal suite of professional training videos which range from first day inductions, customer service, dog management and Health and Safety. These give every employee the right tools to carry out their roles and also strive to develop their skills for the future.

Environmental Impact

When developing a new site we look closely at how we can keep our carbon footprint to a minimum. We do this by:

1. *Reducing car journeys (doggy buses)* - we monitor our doggy buses regularly and on a monthly basis we issue our drivers with reports that detail their driving style. We focus on accelerating, braking and cornering. By maintaining a good driving style we reduce fuel consumption. On a monthly basis we review our doggy bus routes with the objective to minimise miles and travel time for the dogs.
2. *Biodegradable poo bags* - we only use biodegradable poo bags and we dispose of all dog poo via a dedicated pet waste contractor who collects weekly.
3. *Play equipment for dogs* - our fields include a variety of equipment for the dogs. Our strategy is to use natural materials for the dogs to play with. This includes logs, willow tunnels, trees and hay bales.
Where possible we contact local contractors, like tree surgeons, landscapers and gardeners, who generate lots of natural waste and offer them to drop off the waste for our dogs to play with or on - this could be small trees, logs, bark, wood chips and other natural items. Our commitment is to not have play equipment manufactured specifically for our purpose.
4. *Fence posts* - we use wooden fence posts throughout the site to fit in with the rural environment and reduce the carbon impact of the centre.
5. *Dog buses credentials* - All our dog buses meet EU emissions standards and are the most environmentally friendly for our use. We review our fleet every two years to understand what else is on the market that could support in reducing our carbon footprint.
6. *Rainwater goods* – our new day care centres harvest rainwater in water butts and we use this to wash our doggy buses and irrigate our planting areas.
7. *Garbage and Recycling* - each of our centres have general waste and dry mixed recycling services.