



**COMPASSIONATE**  
**HANDLING FOR LIFE**



# THE EFFECTS OF HANDLING CAN BE PROFOUND AND LASTING



## INHUMANE HANDLING

- is unrelenting and enduring. Its effects are difficult to avoid and last beyond the point of handling: they can accumulate over a lifetime
- causes lasting damage, the psychological and physical effects of which can be difficult to reverse
- prevents the effectiveness of daily care and well-intentioned interventions (for example, veterinary treatment), making it fearful for both animals and humans



## COMPASSIONATE HANDLING

- optimises welfare in challenging environments, it is a powerful and swift way to lessen negative experiences
- enables the effectiveness of other interventions (for example, training, daily care and veterinary treatment)
- is practical and feasible, low-cost, sustainable and can be learned
- can be formative, equipping an animal from an early age with a positive outlook for its whole life

## HANDLING IS UNAVOIDABLE

Handling describes how humans work with, respond to, and interact with animals within their surroundings. It is unavoidable when living and working with animals and can have profound and lasting effects on both animals and humans. Handling varies in both quantity (for example, frequency, duration) and quality (for example, emotional experience, intensity). Often a daily occurrence, its effects – both positive and negative – can accumulate over the animal's lifetime.

## HANDLING SHOULD BE AN ACT OF KINDNESS AND COMPASSION

Inhumane handling describes any interaction between humans and animals that causes unnecessary suffering to an animal by using methods that cause psychological (for example, fear, anxiety) and/or physical (for example, wounds, lameness, poor body condition) harm, and that can lead to lasting damage.

Compassionate handling describes any interaction between humans and animals that avoids or minimises animal suffering and promotes animal wellbeing. Brooke has long championed positive human-animal interactions through compassionate handling techniques because:

- animals are sentient, with the capacity to both suffer and experience pleasure
- good handling contributes to good welfare by creating positive experiences leading to emotional and physical changes that benefit animals
- it lessens the impact of negative, harmful experiences.

## OUR AIM FOR COMPASSIONATE HANDLING

To create lasting and positive change for both animals and people through championing compassionate handling.

## BROOKE'S TEN GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO HANDLING WITH COMPASSION

Our 10 guiding principles are intended to inspire compassionate handling of animals throughout their lifetime. They apply not only to working horses, donkeys and mules but to all animals, including livestock, cats and dogs.

These universal principles help the handler make good decisions given the individual animal and circumstances. They recognise that handling will improve with effective training and a commitment to learning and reflecting on experience.

1

Compassionate handling is the ethical responsibility of every human that interacts with any animal.

2

Regular positive handling helps animals cope with current and future events, and builds good human-animal relationships.

3

Take into account the animal's point of view, which is shaped by its own characteristics and previous experience.

4

Plan ahead based on the animal's welfare state, the local conditions, and your own confidence and abilities.

5

Ensure interaction is safe for animals and humans.

6

Appropriate handling methods depend on their necessity and justification, where the intended benefit outweighs the likely harm to the animal.

7

Use calm, consistent, predictable signals to the animal so they understand what is being requested.

8

Ensure the animal feels secure and comfortable, is provided with choice and control, and finds interactions rewarding.

9

Recognise the impact of your behaviour on how the animal feels, reacts and learns, and be prepared to change to benefit the animal.

10

Create a positive change in human behaviours to handle with compassion through education, training, mentoring and fostering an enabling environment.



## BROOKE'S CONTINUING COMMITMENT

We commit to handling animals with compassion – wherever, whenever and with whomever it takes place – so that all animals experience a positive human-animal relationship throughout their lifetime.

### WE ADVOCATE FOR HANDLING THAT PROMOTES:

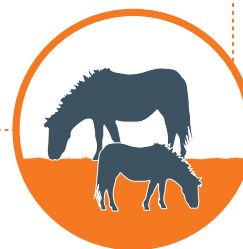
KINDNESS & COMPASSION



POSITIVE HUMAN-ANIMAL RELATIONSHIPS



WELLBEING FOR LIFE



### Brooke

5<sup>th</sup> floor, Friars Bridge Court, 41-45 Blackfriars Road,  
London, SE1 8NZ Tel: +44 20 3012 3456

[www.thebrooke.org](http://www.thebrooke.org)

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Compassionate Handling for Life.  
Brooke Action for Working Horses  
and Donkeys, London, UK.*

For more information:

[thebrooke.org/compassion](http://thebrooke.org/compassion)  
or speak to a Brooke adviser.