

## **Performing Animals – Skills for Animal Suppliers and Trainers**

World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England was published by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills last month. This report, which has been welcomed by the Prime Minister, underlines the Government's commitment that the workforce in England has world class skills by 2020. It recommends that by then up to 90% of adults will be qualified to at least Level 2 with over 40% qualified to Level 4. The introduction to the report which was signed by the Prime Minister refers to a requirement on every individual to think about updating their skills and qualifications, to ensure that they are maximising their own potential and giving employers what they really need. It will require a major new investment of time, effort and money by employers and individuals that far exceeds the Government's direct contribution. No matter how advanced their skills are today, we need to see every individual across the nation rising up the skills ladder, reaping financial benefits for themselves, their families, their employers and the community.

The work done by Skillset with Sparsholt College and Performing Animal Welfare Standards International (PAWSI) to develop a NVQ Levels 1,2,3 and 4 for Animal Suppliers and Trainers is therefore particularly timely. Skillset, which is funded by industry and the government to ensure that the audio-visual industry employs the right people with the right skills, strongly recommends that employers and employees recognise that a Level 3 or 4 qualification is essential. Defra fully supports this recommendation, and encourages those working with performing animals to view Levels 3 and 4 not as optional extras, but as a crucial part of their learning. The Regulatory Impact Assessment accompanying the Animal Welfare Act, which came into force in April, makes it clear that those who want to work at a supervisory level in a wide range of activities involving animals are strongly encouraged to have obtained qualifications to at least NVQ Level 3.

The current law relating to performing animals has to be modernised. This will involve moving to a system which positively promotes higher standards – those supplying and training animals will need to provide evidence of their competency to do so. We envisage that it will become the norm for those in charge of supplying and training across the whole spectrum of performance to be asked by their employers to demonstrate their capabilities by possessing an NVQ at Level 3 or 4. Defra therefore strongly recommends that everyone in the industry – at whatever level – should give priority to assessing their personal skills needs as well as the needs of those who they are employing.

**Animal Welfare Act Implementation Team  
Defra**

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[www.dius.gov.uk/publications/publications-leitchreview.htm](http://www.dius.gov.uk/publications/publications-leitchreview.htm)