

## YOUR TEAM IS GOING TO RESEARCH

# NHS for animals

and speak **for and against** it being introduced

This brief has been produced as part of the *RSPCA's Animal Welfare: The Great Debate* and is a starting point for the research you will need to do into the subject in order to ensure a successful debate. The points for or against a subject may not be RSPCA policy and represent some of the wider thinking around the subject.

- The National Health Service (NHS) is the UK's national healthcare system which is paid for by people through their taxes. Some people think that an NHS for Animals (NHSA) should be set up to give treatment for free at the point that the animal needs it.
- Currently pet owners either have to pay the cost of treatment or pay for pet insurance to cover the costs.
- Some people think vet costs are unaffordable, especially if they have to pay upfront or the vet practice doesn't let the owner pay over a long period of time.

### FOR

Here are some points **in favour of** creating a NHSA – what other points can you find?

- The cost and lack of out-of-hours vet surgeries means that animals suffer outside of 9am–5pm, an NHSA could be open 24/7.
- An NHSA could help owners meet the needs of their animal under the Animal Welfare Act.
- As a nation of animal lovers, we can all help to look after the UK's animals.

### AGAINST

Here are some reasons why an NHSA **shouldn't** be created – can you find any more?

- If people are worried about money they should get pet insurance to help cover veterinary costs.
- There are many vet practices that have out-of-hours cover for emergency treatment.
- People should think about vet costs before getting a pet – if an owner can't meet the animal's needs, they shouldn't have one.

### Information you may want to find out

- How many vet practices are there and how many people have pet insurance?
- How much does vet treatment cost – how much money would an NHSA need?
- How many people have pets and does that justify setting up an NHSA? Does another organisation currently help animals whose owners can't afford vet treatment?

### Potential sources of information

- RSPCA website: [www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk)
- Political Animal website: [www.politicalanimal.org.uk](http://www.politicalanimal.org.uk)
- RSPCA facts and figures: <http://media.rspca.org.uk/media/facts>
- PDSA: [www.pdsa.org.uk](http://www.pdsa.org.uk)

