

YOUR TEAM IS GOING TO RESEARCH

Electronic training collars (e-collars)

and speak **for and against** pet owners being allowed to use them

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.

- E-collars are primarily put on dogs, but also on cats, to stop unwanted behaviour. They deliver an electrical stimulus either on demand by remote control or automatically in response to when a dog barks or approaches a boundary line.
- Owners use them to help train their pet and some people have 'invisible fence' systems to contain their dog or cat within their garden.
- E-collars and fencing systems have been banned in Wales since 2008, and the UK Government has pledged to ban e-collars, but not fencing systems, in England.

FOR

Here are some points **in favour of** allowing pet owners to use e-collars – what other points can you find?

- E-collars can help to stop dogs or cats from running across a road and getting run over.
- Some people think it is quicker and easier to train a dog with an e-collar than using reward-based techniques.
- E-collars can stop dogs off the lead from worrying or killing livestock.

AGAINST

Here are some reasons why owners **shouldn't be** allowed to use e-collars – can you find any more?

- E-collars can worsen underlying behavioural problems, cause anxiety and aggressive behaviour.
- It is difficult to predict the level of stimulus needed to stop the behaviour and how the cat or dog will experience it, so causing them pain and distress.
- Behaviour can be changed using reward-based training such as using treats and toys.

Information you may want to find out

- Why does the UK Government want to bring in a ban on e-collars?
- What's the difference between using an e-collar for training and using one for invisible fencing? Why is fencing allowed in England but not in Wales?
- What evidence is there to prove that e-collars work more or less effectively than reward-based training?

Potential sources of information

- RSPCA website: www.rspca.org.uk
- Political Animal website: www.politicalanimal.org.uk
- RSPCA facts and figures: <http://media.rspca.org.uk/media/facts>
- The Kennel Club: www.thekennelclub.org.uk

