

What are the 'links' and why should we care?

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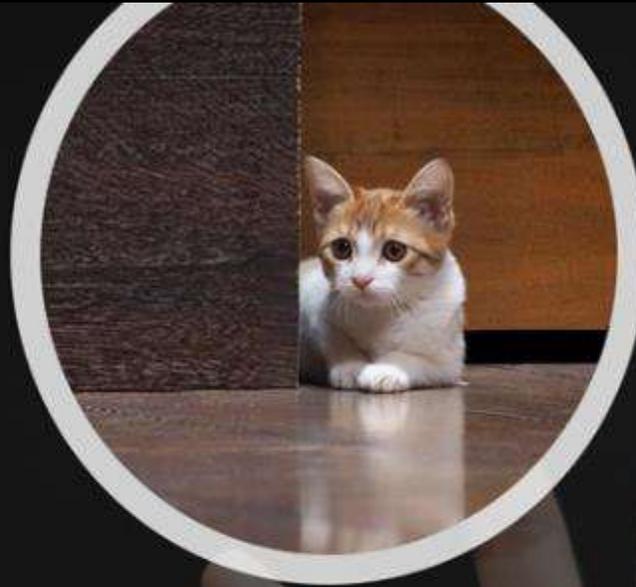
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Session Overview

- **Content Warning...**
- **Key Messages:**
 - Animal abuse does not occur in isolation.
 - Animal abuse repeats and escalates.
 - When animals are abused, people are at risk (and vice versa).
 - Importance (and difficulty) of multi-agency working.
- **Current Status:**
 - Recognised '**links**' between animal and human abuse.
 - Global changes to animal welfare legislation.
 - Relevance to the forensic community:
 - **Thank you to FCN for inviting us today.**

The 'Links'



When **animals** are abused,
people are at risk.

When **people** are abused,
animals are at risk.

Source: Phil Arkow (1994), National Link Coalition (USA)

The First Stage of Cruelty



The Second Stage of Cruelty

Cruelty in Perfection



The Reward of Cruelty

Animal → Human Abuse

Albert DeSalvo	Fred West	Luka Magnotta
Aaron Campbell	Ian Brady	Mary Bell
Brenda Spencer	Ian Huntley	Michael Vick
David Berkowitz	Jeffrey Dahmer	Nikolas Cruz
Dennis Nilsen	John Taylor	Raoul Moat
Dennis Rader	John Wayne Gacy	Robert Thompson
Dylan Klebold	Jon Venables	Steven Barker
Earl Kenneth Shriner	Kip Kinkel	Ted Bundy
Eric Harris	Lance Hart	Thomas Hamilton

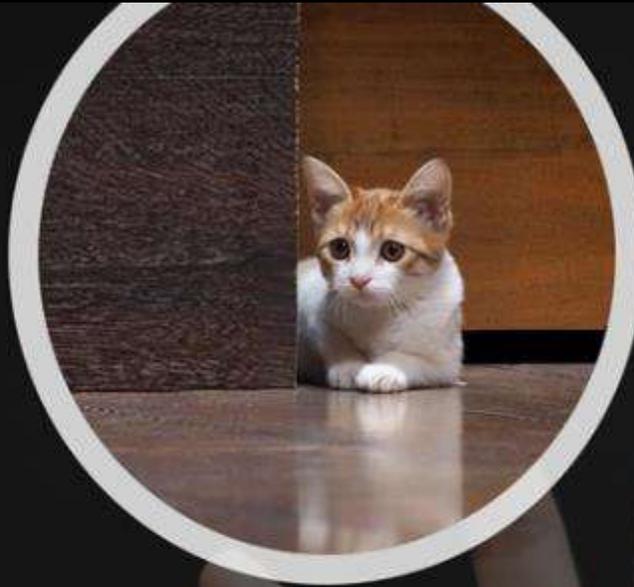


Human + Animal Offenders

Table 1: Offenders who previously had one or more convictions or cautions for animal cruelty, before committing human offences.

Offence Type	No. of Offenders
Violence against the person	1437
Sexual offences	202
Theft offences	5557
Criminal damage & arson	326
Public order offences	926
Misc. crimes against society	1643
Drugs offences	2761
Possession of weapons	551

Relevance?



Offences are recurring and escalating **behind the closed door** of the family home.

Our work gives us an insight into these **'hidden crimes'**...

Case Examples



Squalor and neglect cases.

Generally of the young or elderly.

Pets in the home.

Removed prior to forensic examinations.



Domestic Abuse + Animal Abuse



The Human - Animal Bond





Case Example

Murdered by her
abusive ex-partner.
She would not go into
a refuge shelter...

Did not want to leave
her dog behind.



Case Example

Father killed his three month old son by throwing him down the stairs...

Animal 'warning signs' were ignored.

Domestic Abuse

- **Statistics:**

- 2.3 million adults (16 to 59 yrs) likely to have experienced abuse.
- 600,000 domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by Police.
- 180 related homicides last year (c. 3 per week).
- 11,000 suicide attempts (c. 30 per day, c. 3 per week 'successful').

- **Research Data:**

- Animal abuse **11x more likely** in violent households.
- Abusers **5x more likely** to commit further crimes.
- Children are **60x more likely** to be abused with partner + pet abuse.

- **Other Victims:**

- **50%** of households have 'family' pets.
- **60-80%** of domestic abuse cases include harm or threats to pets.

Animal Roles



Overlooked

→ **More than just a source of traditional forensic evidence.**

Legislation Updates

- **Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018:**
 - Acts of pet abuse are now illegal:
 - Also includes **threats** of abuse.
 - **Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture Act 2019:**
 - Unanimously passed by U.S. Senate:
 - The first-ever general **federal** animal cruelty bill.
 - **Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act 2021:**
 - Royal Assent in UK Government on 29th April.
 - A new maximum penalty of **5 years** imprisonment.
- **Do take a look into national and global changes.**

What Do These Changes Mean?

- **Changes in Law:**
 - Taking animal abuse more seriously.
 - Acknowledgment of the links.
 - **Casework Impact:**
 - More robust cases and evidential requirements.
 - Greater awareness of the links and cross-communication.
 - **Scene Attenders:**
 - Consider the links and **make others aware**.
 - Signs of controlling and coercive behaviour (current or past)?
- **You don't have to go to crime scenes or conduct casework to make a difference...**



Case Example

Couple convicted of cruelty to 4 cats.

As a direct result, their 'at risk' child was placed in a permanent foster home.

To say nothing.

To do nothing.

Stops nothing.



What Can Be Done?

- **Raise Awareness:**
 - Relevant to veterinary, policing, forensic and legal communities.
 - Individual and organisation level.
 - Seek and cascade information:
 - www.thelinksgroup.org.uk
 - www.hiddeninsight.org
- **Think 'Link':**
 - Research, review or refresh your legislation knowledge.
 - Cross-refer to other departments and agencies.
- **Caseworkers, Trainers, Educators, Students...**
 - Ask for or incorporate this topic in your programmes.
 - Rarely covered in curricula or training...



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Key Messages

- **Animal Crimes:**

- Do not occur in isolation.
- Offences repeat and escalate.
- Occur at the hands of humans.
- Occurs concurrently with human abuse.

➤ **Preventative aspect.**

- **Legislative Changes:**

- Taking animal offences more seriously.
- Impact on in investigations.
- 'Think Link'.
- Seek and cascade knowledge.

➤ **Break the links to end the cycle of abuse.**



Thank You For Your Attention

Any Questions?

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