



UNIVERSITIES FEDERATION FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

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PRESS RELEASE

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Why are Dog Owners not Heeding the Message about Flat-Faced Dogs?

A new multidisciplinary project funded by [The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare \(UFAW\)](http://www.ufaw.org.uk) will bring together animal welfare experts, psychologists, and academics with expertise in marketing from select Universities.

The University of Lincoln, UK, will be working alongside Universities of York and Nottingham on a project that aims to understand why some companion animal welfare campaigns seem to fail, despite sending powerful messages about the problems faced by certain animals, such as the link between breathing problems, eye disorders, skin and ear disease in brachycephalic (flat-faced) dogs.

A series of interviews and a survey will be used to explore people's perceptions and test ideas around the way information is processed by potential and current owners of brachycephalic dogs and non-brachycephalic dog owners.

It is hoped that the project findings will help to lay the foundation for more effective educational material and campaign strategies to promote responsible dog breeding, and to reduce buyer preference for brachycephalic dog breeds.

Daniel Mills, Professor of Veterinary Behavioural Medicine at the University of Lincoln and project lead, said: *"Typically animal welfare campaigns promote and inform owners about best practice in the care of their animals."*

"Despite campaigns highlighting the problems faced by certain breeds such as the short nosed "brachycephalic" dogs, we are still seeing an increasing number of registrations for this type of dog. This is a serious problem for those hoping to promote better animal welfare."

"The new project will look at the factors influencing people's decision-making when faced with factual information that conflicts with their personal feelings about these dogs."

Dr Huw Golledge, UFAW's Chief Executive and Scientific Director, concluded: *"The increasing popularity of brachycephalic dog breeds despite the large and increasing body of scientific evidence demonstrating the problems that these dogs are facing indicates that knowledge sharing is not enough to protect the welfare of these dogs."*

"We are delighted to be supporting this important work and look forward to making use of its findings in our efforts to persuade potential dog owners to prioritise welfare when choosing a dog breed."

To hear more about the project as it develops, can contact the research team via email on dogwelfare@lincoln.ac.uk.

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Images Attached: Bulldog © Heidi Hudson and The Kennel Club

Notes to Editors:

For media enquiries, including interview requests, please contact Hanna Gamble in the University of Lincoln Press Office on 01522 886244 or at pressoffice@lincoln.ac.uk.

About the University of Lincoln:

[The University of Lincoln](#) UK, is rated among the UK's top 20 universities for student satisfaction in the Guardian University Guide 2022 and the Complete University Guide 2022 and in the top 30 UK universities overall in the WhatUni Student Choice Awards 2020. We hold a top five-star rating in the QS Stars ratings system of global universities and are placed among the world's top 130 young universities in The Times Higher Education Young University Rankings 2021. The University is known for a pioneering approach to working with employers, which has been recognised with a Lord Stafford Award and Times Higher Education Award. More than half of our research is judged to be internationally excellent or world leading (Research Excellence Framework).

About the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare:

The [Universities Federation for Animal Welfare](#) (UFAW) is an international independent scientific and educational animal welfare charity and membership organisation. UFAW's vision is a world where the welfare of all animals affected by humans is maximised through a scientific understanding of their needs and how to meet them. UFAW promotes an evidence-based approach to animal welfare by funding scientific research, supporting the careers of animal welfare scientists and by disseminating animal welfare science knowledge both to experts and the wider public.

UFAW's work relies on the support of members, subscribers, and donors. To learn more about our work, to become a member of UFAW, or to donate, please visit www.ufaw.org.uk/

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