

Wednesday 11 January 2012 – Afternoon

AS GCE CRITICAL THINKING

F501/01/RB Introduction to Critical Thinking

RESOURCE BOOKLET

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes

To be issued with the Question Paper



INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Read all the documents before starting to answer the questions.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

- The information contained in this Resource Booklet was accurate when it went to press, but may subsequently have changed. Questions should be answered on the basis that the information is correct.
- This document consists of 4 pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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This Resource Booklet has been pre-modified for carrier language.

Document 1

Dog licensing or micro-chipping?

There is a growing problem in the UK with stray, stolen and abandoned dogs. To deal with this, local authorities need to be able to identify dogs and their owners. The current law (2010) requires that dogs in public places wear a collar displaying their owner's contact details. However, some owners do not put collars on their dogs and this makes it difficult to identify them. The government and various organisations have therefore been discussing changing this law. Two proposals have been made to ensure that all dogs and their owners are easily identified:

- either **a dog licence** which would involve registration locally and an annual fee;
- or **micro-chipping** which would involve a one-off fee and would be a permanent form of identification. An electronic micro-chip the size of a long grain of rice would be injected under the dog's skin. This micro-chip would contain data about the dog's owner. When scanned, the number would allow the dog's owner to be traced on a national database storing their contact details.

These would be in addition to the present compulsory dog collar with the owner's details.

Document 2

Animal charities clash over the two proposals

March 2010

- **RSPCA**

In a Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) survey, two out of three dog owners said that they would be in favour of "an affordable and well-enforced dog licensing scheme" to tackle dog welfare problems in England and to provide finance for dog related issues which are poorly funded by central and local government. The charity planned to submit the survey results to the government in order to demonstrate strong public support for the introduction of a dog licence. The RSPCA's Head of External Affairs said, "The income from this could be put into services such as effective local dog wardens, which could make a real difference to dogs and their owners at a local level."

- **Dogs Trust**

However the welfare charity, Dogs Trust, responded that the dog licence is simply a tax on dog ownership. "Responsible owners might struggle to pay what is likely to be a punishing annual licence fee." Instead the Trust recommends compulsory micro-chipping as the most effective means of dog identification and registration, as it involves a small one-off fee rather than an annual fee.

The Dogs Trust annual survey in 2009 showed that a shocking 107228 stray and abandoned dogs were picked up by UK local authority dog wardens. This represents an 11% increase since the previous year's survey and is the highest number recorded since their records began in 1997. They commented, "We strongly believe that the 2008 change in stray dog law may explain this sudden increase, as police are no longer responsible for stray dogs. Over 9000 unclaimed stray dogs are now being destroyed by local authorities. So, we're asking the government to introduce compulsory micro-chipping for dogs in the UK."



Document 3

Member of Parliament proposes the compulsory micro-chipping of dogs

In June 2010 an MP tabled a motion in the House of Commons, which has since gained signatures from across all political parties. He argued forcibly that a compulsory micro-chipping scheme for dogs should be adopted as the preferred option to deal with problems of identification. Compulsory micro-chipping would provide a lifetime of security for a one-off payment. It would also have a positive welfare impact, including returning lost dogs to their owners and improved tracing of hereditary health problems in dogs. He congratulated the Dogs Trust, Blue Cross, National Office of Animal Health and the British Veterinary Association on their efforts to raise public awareness of micro-chipping and on their campaigns for a compulsory scheme.

1

Whilst the RSPCA claimed that their popular proposal for a dog licensing scheme would be a better alternative to micro-chipping, the MP responded that this would potentially create unnecessary bureaucracy and expense for local authorities. On the other hand, he added that the introduction of compulsory micro-chipping would not represent a financial barrier to dog ownership for vulnerable groups.

2

Document 4

ChipMeNot

In a 2007 report entitled 'Microchip-Induced Tumours in Laboratory Rodents and Dogs' Dr Albrecht concludes, "The body of research reviewed in this report indicates a clear causal link between microchip implants and cancer in mice and rats. It also appears that microchips can cause cancer in dogs. They have done so in at least one case, and quite likely in two. These findings therefore warn that there are dangers in the continued use of microchips in both animals and human beings."

Dr Albrecht holds a Doctorate in Education. For many years she has campaigned on privacy issues and against identification microchips. She helped create the website ChipMeNot.

Document 5

Loss of liberty

Buried within the good intentions of the compulsory micro-chipping of dogs are provisions which will force dog owners to have their pet's name, breed, age and health along with their own address and phone number stored on a national database. Although the scheme deals with the urgent question of how to reduce the number of stray dogs on Britain's streets, that is not a sufficient reason to accept it.

The Campaign Director of Big Brother Watch claimed this solution would be more dangerous than the initial problem, because the database would give huge numbers of people in local authorities easy access to very personal data. He added that this was yet another example of the state's desire to obtain ever more information on its citizens and their pets.

www.bigbrotherwatch.org.uk

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