**Fact Sheet 1**

**Methods of control:**

The most important first step is to work out why your dog is barking. Once you know the symptom, you can find the cure.

* Avoid conditioning: Do not reward your dog if it barks for the response alone
* Companionship: Before leaving home turn on a radio, give your dog an old coat or box of shoes belonging to you
* Never call your dog after it has stopped barking and then punish it
* Regular exercise: Where possible, walk your dog twice a day
* Access to the house: If you can let the dog inside the house, provide your dog with a single room where odours relating to you relax the dog (denning principal)
* Obedience training: A dog can be trained to be alone, and bark only on command
* Avoid stimulus: Distract your dog with another form of reward at the time it usually barks at the postman
* Fence design: A fence correctly designed to restrict your dog's vision will reduce barking
* Anti-barking devices: These can be used in conjunction with obedience training
* Discipline: Show your dog that you are the head of the house. Dogs are pack animals and need to be shown where they stand in relation to the family unit Remember barking dog problems can be cured.

**How to recognise and treat your dog's behavioural problems**

* Do I have good control over the dog?
* What is my relationship with my dog? Emotional, over-attached?
* How much do I value my dog?
* What amount of time and investment have I put into my dog?
* What is my attitude to my dog's behavioural problems?
* How much time do I spend with my dog?
* Does my dog understand that I am the pack leader?

**Assess and define your dog**

* What sex is my dog. Is it de-sexed?
* What is my dog's breed? Look for typical problems - fearfulness, dominance, aggression or arousal in working breeds
* What is my dog's temperament? Is it timid, confident, unresponsive, intrusive, attention seeking or easily bored?
* Is my dog obedient? Try "come, sit, drop, stay".
* Is my dog responsive to my commands? Look for responsiveness and enthusiasm.
* Who is the boss? Me or my dog?
* Determine your dog's willingness to comply with obedience commands.
* Reactiveness. Assess your dog's arousal point
* What is my dog's history? Where was he/she purchased (pound, refugee, pet shop) and what is its previous experience and influences.
* What is my dog's home environment like? Does it have an uninteresting yard, high fences, no outlook, boring?

**Assess your problem**

* What makes my dog bark?
* When, where and why does my dog bark day/night, when I'm not home?
* What happens after my dog barks?
* Does there appear to be any form of stress release for the dog?
* Is the behaviour normal for my dog? (Talk to the Animal Health Officers or your local veterinarian)
* Is my dog's behaviour learned or conditioned?
* How long has my dog been barking?
* How did the behaviour problem start? What were the circumstances? Look at the length of times this behaviour has been going on. Has it been gradual, occasional or progressive?
* What have I tried? Assess your attempts to prevent the barking and look at the results. Once you have assessed yourself, your problem and defined the dog, use the information to determine what you can do, or who you can ask for assistance in preventing your dog from barking and becoming the neighbourhood nuisance.