



# media *release*

**Monday 28 July 2014**

## **ANIMAL HEALTH TRUST HELPS RSPCA DOG 'BELLA' WALK AGAIN**

Bella, a five-year-old Dachshund, was referred to the Animal Health Trust's (AHT) Small Animal Centre, based in Kentford, Suffolk from the RSPCA's Southend branch at the end of February.

An indoor dog, Bella had lost the movement and feeling in her back legs which was also causing her a lot of pain. She was assessed by Elsa Beltran, our Senior Clinician in Neurology, who gave her a full neurological examination. A lesion in her spinal cord was suspected and so Bella underwent Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) of her spine, which revealed a large slipped disc compressing her spinal cord. Elsa then performed emergency surgery to remove a ruptured spinal disc. The operation went well and Bella quickly regained some feeling in her back legs, although it was too early to determine if and when she could walk again.

Following the operation, Bella seemed happy in herself, eating and drinking and giving all the AHT staff lots of kisses. She started receiving daily physiotherapy, including the use of the AHT's underwater treadmill in its Hydrotherapy Centre, to strengthen and encourage movement in her back legs. Four days after surgery, Elsa and another of the AHT's nurses, Candice, noticed some movement in one of her hind feet and the next day she was able to move her left back leg. She received daily care from the dedicated nursing team and was able to move to a new home with a lovely and very dedicated family on 25 March 2014. Gaining more strength each day, Bella has started moving both legs and is walking unaided.

Elsa said: "It is so rewarding to see lovely Bella walking again and wagging her tail. The hard work of the AHT small animal team has definitely paid off and I am also so pleased that Bella has found a great family that can love her as she deserves. Bella is a real fighter."

Unfortunately for Bella, she had to return to the AHT a few weeks later with another slipped disc. But we are delighted to say that she made a full recovery following more surgery and is now walking even better than before!

### **Ends**

#### **For further information, please contact:**

Farrah Stevens, AHT press office, 01638 555602

#### **Photographs & Videos:**

Images of Bella can be requested from the AHT press office. A short video on Bella's story can be found on the AHT's You Tube channel: [www.youtube.com/ahttv](http://www.youtube.com/ahttv)

#### **Additional notes:**

- The Animal Health Trust (AHT) is an independent charity, employing over 200 scientists, vets and support workers. It aims to improve the health and welfare of horses, dogs and cats through research. It also provides specialist referral services and continuous education to vets. Visit the website at [www.aht.org.uk](http://www.aht.org.uk)