1891 Founded, to protect dogs from ‘torture and ill-usage of every kind’:

A ‘small party of gentlemen’ brought together by Lady Gertrude Stock in a room off the Royal Agricultural Hall in Islington during the first ever Crufts dog show, vowed to campaign for the protection of strays, the provision of proper veterinary care and to campaign against muzzling, prolonged chaining, and experimentation on dogs – a widespread practice at the time.

Vowing never to turn down a reasonable request for help, Dogs Trust began operations funded entirely by donations from members and supporters. In 1902 membership totalled 1000 for the first time and continued to grow steadily to 6,500 members by 1910. Today Dogs Trust has over 550,000 members and supporters.

Early 1900s Campaigning success:

Prevented experiments into the causes and effects of drowning and smallpox using live dogs, presenting a petition with 9,000 signatures to Parliament in support of the Dogs (Protection) Bill.

1903 Campaigning success:

Put an end to the use of dog-lockers in luggage vans on trains, to be replaced by kennels. Railway companies also agreed to provide water for dogs if they had a label attached to them reading ‘please give my dog water’, which Dogs Trust had printed and distributed to members.

1908 Campaigning success:

The Cruelty to Animals (Amendment) Bill, known as the Forfeit Bill was introduced by Dogs Trust in 1908. This was later incorporated into the Protection of Animals Act 1911, which gave magistrates the power to prevent anyone convicted of cruelty from keeping an animal in the future.

1910 Campaigning success:

Right from its formation, Dogs Trust believed that no one who clearly cared for and looked after their dog should be prevented from keeping it, just because they were poor. The Dog Licence Club, founded in 1910, reflected this and until the licence was abolished in 1987, paid for over 20,000 licences. The heaviest demands were made on the fund during the depression. During 1927, 4,600 licences were paid for.
1912  Awards for bravery:

Always keen to recognise kindness to dogs above and beyond the call of duty, Dogs Trust awarded its silver medal from 1912 onwards to those people who rescued dogs from beatings, rivers, fires and other hardships.

Dog heroes were also rewarded with inscribed silver coins, whilst the stories of remarkable courage and devotion are too numerous to mention. One of the most notable recipients, however, was Bob who carried water to the troops under fire throughout the Boer War. He filled the bottles strapped to his body by dashing into a stream and lying down until the bottles were full before returning to the front.

World War I  Dogs Trust at war:

Through both world wars when food became scarce and public opinion began to suggest that maybe dogs should provide food rather than consume it, Dogs Trust stressed the value of dogs as rat catchers, thus saving over 75 million tonnes of food per year. By making personal representations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Dogs Trust persuaded him to reverse his decision to destroy 50% of the dogs in the country.

During World War I Dogs Trust paid for over 12,500 dog licences; a valuable help to families whose bread-winner was away at war.

1920s  Campaigning success:

Dogs Trust was responsible for the almost total abolition of performing dogs from the music hall stage by the 1920’s.

The emergence of the motor car led to the minority of motorists boasting of how many dogs they had run over. Dogs Trust responded by producing three million leaflets and posters and achieved widespread press coverage. The charity also equipped all the new AA road scouts with humane pistols to enable them to put suffering dogs out of their misery.

1922  Campaigning success:

Compulsory muzzling, in force from 1919 following a rabies scare, was ended largely due to the ceaseless campaigning of Dogs Trust, which supported anyone who was prosecuted under the new laws.
1933  Awards for bravery:

In 1933 the Argus medal was awarded for the first time for service to dogs and it was awarded six times until its replacement in 1978 by the Phyllis Meyer Argus Award.

1937  Campaigning success:

Dogs Trust guidelines resulted in the Cinematograph Films (Animals) Act in 1937 preventing cruelty to dogs in the making of films.

World War II  Dogs Trust at war:

The outbreak of World War II led to Dogs Trust issuing instructions for constructing a gas-proof kennel and gas masks for dogs through appeals on the BBC. Numerous leaflets were produced giving advice on coping with anticipated emergencies such as:

- Dogs and the invader
- Poison gas and domestic pets
- Air raid precautions for dogs
- War time dog food

Dogs Trust also collected the combings from members’ dogs’ fur to be knitted into clothing for the troops. This was a very successful operation, which continued for many years.

The services of Dogs Trust were also advertised at military camps in the UK so that dogs who attached themselves could be found homes when camps disbanded. They also found homes for volunteer dogs (messengers, guard dogs, rat catchers) when the war came to an end and helped with quarantine bills for dogs befriended by soldiers at the front and subsequently brought home.

Late 1940s  Campaigning success:

Dogs were no longer being confined for two days at championship dog shows, even if they were only required for one day. Blackpool Dog Show in 1939 was the first to introduce a ban on dogs remaining on the grounds overnight and by the late 1940’s the practice was universally accepted.
1964  **Campaigning success:**

A non-destruction policy was adopted and today, dogs that cannot for some reason be rehomed, can be sponsored and become permanent residents.

1978  **Awards for bravery:**

The Argus medal replaced by the Phyllis Meyer Argus Award

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**Up to 1980**

**Clinics:**

The first Dogs Trust clinic offering free treatment opened in Bethnal Green in 1926 and by 1939 there were nine across London dealing with over 80,000 animal patients a year (the service was not confined to dogs).

The clinic at Hackney was completely destroyed during the war, but was soon reopened nearby. By 1949 there were 13 clinics offering a full hospital service throughout the country. The last clinic closed in 1980.

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1997  **Campaigning success:**

The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 was finally amended in 1997. Dogs Trust acted as the secretariat for the DDA Reform Group, successfully campaigning for changes, including the removal of mandatory destruction of dogs found guilty under the Act.

2008  **Awards for bravery:**

Dogs Trust Honours Awards founded. These annual awards ceremony celebrates the difference dogs make to our lives, by highlighting heart-warming stories of devotion and courage.

2003  **Campaigning success:**

Working as part of the Animal Welfare Fireworks Coalition, we advised the Government on how to limit the distress caused to dogs by fireworks and their harmful effects without introducing a total ban. This successful campaign helped the Fireworks Act become law, controlling the noisiest fireworks and limiting availability to adults and at certain times of the year.

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*See our Dogs Trust today factsheet for information on our recent successes and Campaigns*