



# ADCH

Association of Dogs and Cats Homes

*together for  
dogs + cats*

## Minimum Welfare & Operational Standards



[www.adch.org.uk](http://www.adch.org.uk)

The ADCH Code of Practice was agreed by the membership and published in April 2015. For the first time, it set out welfare and operational best practice applicable to dog and cat rescue and rehoming organisations across the British Isles.

The original Code of Practice is a very comprehensive document that not only includes references to essential requirements to meet basic welfare needs but also recommendations for practices to meet a higher standard as well as guidance and recommendations in respect of legislation and statutory requirements in areas beyond animal welfare.

One of ADCH's Strategic Priorities is to raise standards across the sector. This can be achieved by requiring and supporting all ADCH members to meet a set of Minimum Standards that are essential to: safeguard animal welfare; safeguard the reputation of the member organisation, ADCH and the sector at large; are proportionate and realistically achievable; and are accompanied by guidance on how to comply with and meet the standard.

This document proposes such a set of Minimum Standards along with some Guidance notes to help member organisations interpret the requirements of the standards. Throughout this document, the word "shall" is used within the Minimum Standards to indicate a requirement. The word "should" is used within the Guidance to indicate a recommendation.

## GENERAL GUIDANCE NOTES:

- Members need to be mindful of complying at all times with any relevant legislation within their own jurisdiction.
- It is acknowledged that the requirements herein apply only to animals that are in the legal ownership of the organisation. Members that act as agents on behalf of local authorities may not have legal ownership until the conclusion of the statutory stray day period or equivalent.
- Compliance with these Standards cannot confer immunity from legal obligations



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# ADMISSION AND INTAKE OF ANIMALS

## ADMISSION AND VETERINARY CHECKS

<p><b>1.</b> When animals are received, they shall be thoroughly scanned for a microchip using an ISO-compliant scanner or if the animal has other ID suitable checks shall be carried out.</p> <p>Where a microchip, tag or tattoo is found then reasonable attempts shall be made to trace the registered owner or keeper of any lost animal or ensure the dog warden (or equivalent) has done so.</p>	
<p><b>2.</b> Where no microchip is found, and unless against veterinary advice, all animals shall be microchipped and registered with an appropriate database.</p>	
<p><b>3.</b> All animals accepted into rescue and rehoming centres shall be examined by people competent in the detection of disease and health problems.</p> <p>Animals with perceived health problems shall be seen by a veterinary surgeon as soon as possible.</p>	
<p><b>4.</b> Animals shall be vaccinated on or shortly after arrival into the centre under the direction of the veterinary surgeon.</p>	

## GUIDANCE:

1. Scanning several times increases the chance of finding a microchip. Considering increased international animal travel, this should include reference to Europetnet. If a microchip is found and the animal is not registered to the person who brought in the animal, then attempts should be made to contact the registered keeper. Microchip readers should be regularly checked to ensure they are functioning correctly.
2. Permanent identification need not be carried out on arrival but shall be undertaken prior to rehoming, except for kittens under 12 weeks. Where it has not been possible to microchip an animal before it has been rehomed, a system for ensuring the animal is microchipped should be put in place.
3. The condition of the animal should be determined by an inspection of their eyes, ears, teeth, nails, pads, coat and their general condition.
4. Unless recent evidence of vaccination or vet/behaviourist advises against vaccination.

# CARE OF ANIMALS

## FOOD AND WATER

5.	All animals shall be supplied with an adequate and balanced diet. Clean, potable (fit for human consumption) water shall be available for both cats and dogs at all times and changed daily.	
6.	Cats shall be offered at least two separate meals a day approximately 8 hours apart during the daytime.	
7.	Where animals are being fed together, care shall be taken to ensure that all animals are receiving sufficient food and that no animal is receiving more food than it requires. In communal animal areas, there shall be at least one feeding and water bowl for each animal.	
8.	Eating vessels, which shall be capable of being easily cleansed and disinfected, shall be cleansed or disposed of after each meal and drinking vessels shall be cleaned at least once a day.	
9.	The food preparation area shall be kept clean and vermin free at all times. Suitable precautions shall be taken to minimise risk of contamination by vermin.	

## DISEASE CONTROL AND VACCINATION

10.	Precautions, as advised by the veterinary surgeon, shall be taken to prevent and control the spread of infectious disease and parasites amongst the animals, staff, volunteers and visitors. Particular care shall be given to the precautions taken to minimise the risk of outbreak of disease in all communal animal areas.	
11.	Where any animal shows any sign of disease, injury or illness it shall be kept separate from the other animals and advice shall be sought from a veterinary surgeon. Any instructions for its treatment, which have been given by the veterinary surgeon, shall be strictly followed.	
12.	Adequate isolation facilities for animals with infectious diseases shall be available.	
13.	A first aid kit shall be assembled for use on dogs that is specific to the requirements of the centre.	

### GUIDANCE:

10. Guidance on hygiene practises including barrier nursing, washing and gelling hands between animals, the use of protective clothing and other suitable measures to manage cross infection should be available to staff and volunteers
12. This may be on site or at another location, such as a local veterinary practice
13. The contents of this kit should be compiled with the aid of the centre's dedicated veterinarian to best match the potential first aid needs of the dogs under their care. In addition to this, the degree of animal first aid knowledge of the kit's end-users (the centre's staff and volunteers) should also be taken into account when considering how to stock it. The kit may include, but is not limited to, the following items: sterile dressings, cotton wool, medical tape, conforming gauze roll, antiseptic solution or individual-use alcohol wipes, sterile water for flushing and a large blanket.



## CLEANSING AND DISINFECTING

14.	All units, corridors, common areas, kitchens etc. shall be kept clean and free from accumulations of dirt and dust and shall be kept in a condition which will reduce the risk of disease spread.	
15.	Each occupied unit shall be cleaned daily. All excreta and soiled material shall be removed from all areas used by the animals at least daily and more often if necessary.	
16.	All bedding areas shall be kept clean and dry and animals shall have access to a dry area whilst their housing is being cleaned.	
17.	Each unit shall be thoroughly cleaned, disinfected and dried at a change of occupancy.	
18.	Facilities shall be provided for the appropriate storage, treatment and disposal of all classifications of waste including wash down water and particularly 'controlled wastes' generated by member organisations including wash-down water contaminated by faecal matter and litter.	
19.	Care shall be taken with cleaning routines to protect animals from disinfectant poisoning or injury e.g. caustic burns to the skin.	
20.	Chemicals shall be used, handled, and stored strictly in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.	

### GUIDANCE:

**14.** Moveable items should be removed for cleaning at least weekly

**14-15.** Although maintaining a hygienic environment is important, consideration to the comfort and mental welfare of the animals must also be made. Cleaning and husbandry practices need to take into consideration the psychological distress that may be caused by the daily removal of familiar smells and bedding through the use of large amounts of water and disinfectant. Animals can be adversely affected by strong chemical smells, or a constantly damp environment. Housing or bedding that is too rigorously cleaned may remove valuable scent marking. The use of a disinfectant-led spot cleaning approach satisfies the demands of both welfare and hygiene once the animal has gone through the quarantine period. If animals are suspected of carrying an infectious disease, more thorough cleaning and disinfection is necessary.

- 16.** Animals must be removed during high pressure or steam cleaning or other cleaning methods which are likely to be frightening, stressful or potentially harmful.
- 17.** This should be adequate to protect the new occupant from the disease or parasites of its predecessor. If certain diseases have been present, e.g. parvovirus, further actions and precautions may be needed. All bedding, water and feeding utensils should be changed and disinfected. All fittings should also be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected at that time.
- 18.** Controlled wastes such as hazardous waste arising from the treatment and handling of animals with infectious disease require particular care. Guidance on waste legislation and regulations can be obtained from relevant regulatory bodies such as HSE, DEFRA, Department of Health and Environment Agency.

Collection, handling, treatment and disposal of faecal matter, cat litter require careful management. Member organisations must recognise the duty of care they owe to all persons and outside agencies such as private water companies and waste companies involved in the safe management of all types of waste generated at dogs and cats homes.

- 19.** Phenolic disinfectants are toxic to cats and should not be used near dogs.

## CAT LITTER TRAYS

<b>21.</b>	In cat units, suitably sited and sized litter trays, which are easy to clean and impermeable, shall be provided at all times. They shall be placed as far away as possible from the resting, feeding and water areas. In multiple cat units one litter tray shall be provided for each cat.	
<b>22.</b>	Litter trays shall be large enough to allow the cat to move around, dig and cover faeces and urine without feeling restricted. A suitable absorbent material for litter shall be provided and shall be deep enough to absorb the urine and allow the cat to dig and cover.	
<b>23.</b>	Litter trays shall be scooped at least once a day and at any time during the day if found to be unduly soiled. Cleaning shall take place away from food preparation areas or at least at separate times.	

## ENVIRONMENT AND COMPANIONSHIP, INCLUDING GROOMING

Animals need to be able to exhibit normal behavioural patterns and consideration shall be given as to whether it is appropriate to house with or apart from other animals. This applies whether they are in a kennel environment or fostered.

24.	All animals shall have the opportunity to exercise daily appropriate to each individual animal's needs.	
25.	All cats and dogs shall be provided with toys and/or feeding enrichment to provide opportunities to perform natural behaviour such as hunting or play.	
26.	The items provided shall be the correct size and type for the individual animal and its behaviour.	
27.	In addition to toys and feeding enrichment, cats shall be given facilities for scratching.	
28.	Both cats and dogs shall have the opportunity for human contact and/or interaction on a daily basis.	
29.	Animals shall never be forced to interact with people, and shall have the facility to avoid people should they wish, i.e. a hiding place or a high vertical resting place.	
30.	All puppies and kittens shall be adequately and appropriately socialised and habituated to prevent fear behaviour towards animals, situations, environments and people. A daily socialisation programme ensuring this shall be followed.	
31.	Dogs shall be protected from animal company which causes them fear, frustration or distress, but shall be provided with enjoyable animal company where possible.	
32.	In kennels where dogs are housed separately and in the vicinity of other dogs, each dog shall be able to control their view of other dogs.	
33.	Dogs shall be introduced to one another slowly and in a positive way.	

34.	Decisions to pair dogs shall be made by competent persons. They shall not be housed with each other if either tries to avoid the other or appears fearful of them.	
35.	Only compatible cats shall be housed together. Decisions to home cats together shall be made by a competent person	
36.	Pair housed or group-housed cats shall have sufficient space and adequate resources to minimise competition and to be able to avoid each other and hide away separately from one another if they choose. This includes provision of a separate bed and hiding place for each cat.	
37.	Cats shall not be housed in the same enclosure as other species even if they have come from the same household.	
38.	Where cats are housed in the vicinity of other cats, each cat shall be able to hide from every other cat.	
39.	Pregnant, whelping, nursing bitches and puppies under seven weeks of age shall be accommodated somewhere safe and quiet.	
40.	Puppies shall not be housed away from the bitch or rehomed until they are at least eight weeks of age, unless this is under veterinary guidance.  Bitches need to be able to spend time away from the puppies as they wean.	
41.	Kittens shall not be housed away from the queen or rehomed until they are at least eight weeks of age, unless this is under veterinary guidance. Queens need to be able to spend time away from kittens as they wean.	
42.	Pregnant, queening or nursing queens and suckling kittens shall be accommodated away from the main cattery units and instead somewhere safe and quiet, ideally in a foster home or a separate maternity unit.	
43.	Weaned kittens and puppies shall be housed with their littermates.	

## GUIDANCE:

- 24.** Staff and volunteers should be encouraged to play and interact with the dogs and cats, taking care to ensure that this contact does not cause the animals, particularly cats, undue stress. Enriching the living environment where cats and dogs are housed is very important to ensure that their mental and behavioural needs are met. This is particularly important where the animals are likely to spend lengthy periods in the animal centre or fostering environment.
- 25.** Individually housed dogs should be given something to chew unless contrary veterinary advice is given. Feeding enrichment can be provided by scatter feeding of dried food or biscuits or food filled play balls or other items can be provided to supplement the normal feeding regime.
- 26.** The animal should be monitored closely when the object is first introduced. Changing the toys or feeding devices on a regular basis will introduce novelty and maintain interest. When adding new enrichment devices, staff should ensure that they do not cause stress to the animal.

The items should be durable, clean and safe and capable of being easily cleaned and disinfected, or disposable. They should be cleaned and dried regularly and disinfected before being given to another animal. They should be checked daily to ensure they are safe and replaced when necessary.

- 27.** Cats prefer vertical surfaces with vertical grain for scratching and suitable materials include corrugated cardboard, bark, hessian-backed carpet or scratching posts. Scratching posts which are provided should be tall enough for the cat to use fully stretched. Scratching posts should be disposable or capable of being disinfected.

Soothing background music, e.g. classical music, can be beneficial and may be provided but loud music may be stressful and should be avoided.

Odours can be used to increase and encourage natural behaviour. For example, scent trails can be laid around exercise areas and treats can be hidden.

- 28.** For dogs and cats which are not fearful, beneficial, and positive contact can include grooming, exercise, playing, petting and training as appropriate for the individual animal. Dogs and cats which appear fearful of people should be introduced to handling gradually and in a positive manner to habituate them to human contact as appropriate for the individual animal.
- 30.** All kittens should be adequately and appropriately socialised and habituated to prevent fear behaviour towards animals, situations, environments and people. A daily socialisation programme should be implemented and followed. Kittens should have positive interactions with a range of people. They should be gently introduced to handling, grooming, being lifted and touched all over. Kittens should be positively exposed to as many sights, sounds, tastes, textures and smells as possible that they are likely later to encounter in a normal domestic home.

- 31.** Amicable pairs of dogs are likely to engage in behaviours which they find fulfilling and enjoyable such as play and can be achieved through pair or group exercise.
- 32.** They should be able to retreat from view to avoid situations that they find fearful or frustrating or to move within view of other dogs if visual contact is being sought. Temporary screens, safely positioned are adequate.
- 33.** Giving due consideration to human safety and animal welfare implications.
- 34.** Pair-housed dogs should have sufficient space and adequate resources to minimise competition and to be able to move away from one another if they choose.

Where facilities prevent the pair housing of dogs, where appropriate, dogs should be provided with regular opportunities to exercise with other dogs and alternative means of enrichment should be provided.

Groups of feral cats may come together naturally and by choice around a source of food. This is different to the way we make cats live together in our homes. Putting together unrelated or incompatible cats can put pet cats under pressure and cause stress.

Single housing is the best choice for cats unless they have been living together harmoniously in a home previously.

- 35.** Cats from the same household may be compatible and may benefit from each other's company. However, even cats from the same household may be incompatible and should be monitored for signs of fear, stress or persistent aggression. In the event of these instances the cats should be separated either into individual housing, or into amicable groups, dependent on the individual case.
- 39.** Bitches with puppies should be placed in a foster home and if not possible, alternatives within the centre should be sought e.g. a maternity wing or unit.
- 40.** A bench or sanctuary table that she can jump on would be ideal. Weaned puppies should be housed with littermates or with other puppies of a similar age and size. Whilst pups should not be kept as singletons, mixing should be done under veterinary and/or behaviour expert supervision, taking into account the disease status and/or behaviour of the individuals.

Puppies should remain as a group until their behaviour dictates otherwise and if their needs can be met, e.g. housing of a suitable size for all dogs can be provided.

- 41.** A high platform for her to jump on to would be ideal.

## GROOMING

<b>45.</b>	All animals shall be groomed when necessary and steps taken to ensure dogs' and cats' coats are free of mats.	
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### GUIDANCE:

**45.** Regular grooming, if introduced gradually and in a positive way, will also allow the animals to get used to human handling.

## SUPERVISION, INCLUDING STAFF AND VOLUNTEER TRAINING

<b>46.</b>	Whilst animals are at the establishment there shall, whenever practical, be a competent person in close proximity to the premises.	
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### GUIDANCE:

**47.** Animals should, so far as is practicable, be visited at suitable intervals, taking care not to disturb them when sleeping. A suitable interval is taken to be not more than 4 hours between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Animals requiring veterinary supervision should be visited more frequently.

## FERAL CATS

<b>47.</b>	Feral cats are wild animals and therefore there shall be no attempt to socialise or tame adult feral cats or kittens that are older than 8 weeks.	
<b>48.</b>	Adult feral cats shall not be kept in confinement any longer than necessary. They shall be provided with immediate care for the animal, where necessary, neutered and ear tipped, and then released into a suitable environment as soon as possible (ideally back to where it was caught if appropriate).	

## GUIDANCE:

**47.** Some organisations will accept feral cats but neither re-homing nor long term care is appropriate for these cats.

**48.** Ear tipping is required so that if the cat is recaptured or presented at the centre it can be easily identified that it has already been neutered.

True feral cats (as opposed to strays) are highly unlikely to ever become socialised to humans and being kept in an enclosed shelter environment is likely to cause significant distress and it will be difficult or impossible to meet the animals' welfare needs. Feral cats should not be kept captive except for veterinary treatment. Only one off treatments are appropriate and long term treatment and confinement are not. For chronic conditions, euthanasia should be considered. It is possible for a colony of feral or semi-feral cats to live quite successfully in an animal shelter but it is essential that they have free access to the outside and thus can choose to leave the sanctuary should they wish to do so. Confined 'feral gardens' are unlikely to be suitable on a long-term basis.



## VETERINARY CARE

50.	Each member organisation shall register with one or more veterinary practices or veterinary surgeons who can advise on the health of animals entering and resident within the organisation. 
51.	All veterinary products shall be stored, used and disposed of as required by the product datasheet and in the case of prescription medicines shall be used only in accordance with the prescription. 

## TRANSPORTATION OF ANIMALS

Vehicles used to transport animals shall be roadworthy and regularly serviced. The organisation transporting shall ensure compliance with relevant legislation pertaining to the transport of animals. A satisfactory method of ventilation is required, adequate for the size of the vehicle and the number of animals being transported.

52.	<p>When transporting dogs, steps shall be taken to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dogs are suitably restrained (using a seat belt harness, dog cage or dog guard)</li><li>• Cages are of adequate size, are clean, designed to provide good ventilation and firmly secured, out of direct sunlight and away from heating vents.</li><li>• Dogs are not left in a vehicle where the temperature may pose a risk nor transported when the temperature poses a risk.</li></ul> <p>On long journeys dogs shall be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offered food at regular intervals of not more than 8 hours and given water at intervals of not more than 4 hours or as frequently as individual needs require</li><li>• Given the opportunity to relieve themselves</li><li>• Not left unattended in vehicles for unreasonable periods</li></ul> 
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<b>53.</b>	<p>When transporting cats, steps shall be taken to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Carriers are of adequate size, are clean, are designed to provide good ventilation and firmly secured, out of direct sunlight and away from heating vents.</li><li>• Cats are not transported when the temperature poses risk to the animal.</li><li>• Cats are not left in a vehicle where the temperature may pose a risk nor transported when the temperature poses a risk.</li></ul> <p>On long journeys cats shall be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offered food at regular intervals of not more than 8 hours and given water at intervals of not more than 4 hours or as frequently as individual needs require.</li><li>• Offered a litter tray.</li><li>• Not left unattended in vehicles for unreasonable periods</li></ul> 
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## GUIDANCE:

**52.** The use of a dog cage is recommended and care taken to avoid escape.

**53.** Generally there should be one cat per carrier except for a litter of kittens. Ideally a queen and her kittens less than 8 weeks of age should be transported carefully together. Dogs and cats should ideally not be transported together in the same vehicle

# ASSESSMENT OF ANIMALS

## TRAINING AND BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION

<b>54.</b>	Each member organisation shall be able to seek the assistance of a suitably trained and experienced individual (internally or externally) who can evaluate and recommend appropriate positive behavioural modification programmes for dogs and cats that exhibit unwanted behaviour or rehabilitation requirements.	
<b>55.</b>	All training and behaviour modification shall be done through positive reinforcement methods without the use of coercive or punitive techniques and/or equipment.	

### GUIDANCE:

- 54.** The individual can be an employee, a volunteer or an external consultant. They should either hold a recognised qualification in training and behaviour, or be able to demonstrate through recommendation that they have sufficient experience and knowledge to provide advice. All behaviour modification programmes should be based on positive reinforcement and tailored to the individual requirements of the animal.
- 55.** This precludes the use of intimidation, physical punishment and fear as well as the use of any equipment that may cause pain and fear which will compromise the welfare of the animal.

## ANIMAL ASSESSMENT

<b>56.</b>	The characteristics of each particular animal shall be assessed in order to identify the most suitable type of home. When matching an animal to an adopter, consideration shall be given the animal's health and meeting its welfare and behavioural needs.	
<b>57.</b>	Particular care shall be taken when considering rehoming a dog in a new home with young children or vulnerable adults.	

## GUIDANCE:

- 56.** A number of factors should be considered including: the temperament of the animal; its age; how it reacts with people and other animals; how it reacts to physical contact and grooming; the location of the home available; exercise opportunities and the experience of the potential adopter.
- 57.** Before such an arrangement is agreed the rehoming organisation should take all reasonable steps to ensure that the dog has the temperament required to live safely with young children and/or vulnerable adults and that members of the family understand how to interact safely with the dog. However, members are encouraged to consider rehoming suitable pets with families where possible.



# ANIMAL DEPARTURES

## HOME FOSTERING

A number of dog and cat rescue and rehoming organisations use “foster” homes to care for animals on a temporary basis until a permanent new home can be found. This can be in addition to traditional kennel and cattery units or can be the only way the organisation arranges to home and care for the animals. These foster homes are normally provided by volunteers where rescue animals are cared for in the volunteers’ own homes or in small animal housing units.

58.	Each home which is used to provide foster care shall be visited, assessed and approved by a suitably knowledgeable member of the organisation’s staff or volunteers before it is used for fostering animals to ensure home environment is suitable and foster carer competent. 
59.	An assessment shall be made, and steps in place, to avoid the risk of over-crowding and hoarding and agreement reached with the foster carer. 
60.	Extreme care shall be taken when fostering cats together from the same household, as close confinement with each other may be stressful. Cats from different sources shall not be mixed. Cats shall also not be mixed with resident cats. 
61.	Dogs shall not be fostered in homes where they are likely to be left on their own long enough for them to become distressed. 
62.	Assurances shall be given that the foster homes will make arrangements for each dog to be given exercise sufficient for the size and breed of the dog and to meet its welfare needs. 

## GUIDANCE:

**61.** If indoors, there should be a room to which the cat is confined, which should be easily cleanable, e.g. if the cat had ringworm and had free access to a whole house with soft furnishings, this could be quite problematic.

In the UK no dog registered under Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 can be fostered in domestic premises. Knowingly keeping a banned breed may be illegal.

**62.** The time any dog can be left shall be appropriate for the age and breed of dog, and appropriate for the individual dog's welfare needs.

## NEUTERING

<b>64.</b>	The organisation shall have all cats and dogs neutered, unless this is against veterinary advice. Where it has not been possible to neuter an animal before it has been rehomed, a system for ensuring the animal is neutered shall be put in place. 
<b>65.</b>	Unless against veterinary advice, healthy kittens shall be neutered before they become sexually mature (by 4 months) and shall be neutered before they are rehomed wherever possible. 

## GUIDANCE:

**64.** This could be an arrangement for the animal to be returned to the organisation for the procedure to be undertaken or for an arrangement made with a veterinary surgeon. If a voucher is issued for the procedure to be undertaken by a local veterinary surgeon, it is important that a robust follow-up system is in place.

**65.** Neutering kittens a few days after their first vaccination is ideal and there is a great deal of scientific evidence to demonstrate that this is safe and does not adversely affect their development.

## EUTHANASIA

Every animal shall have a life worth living, not purely that its physical needs are met. Euthanasia can be a response to circumstances in which health and/or welfare are irreversibly and severely compromised and when it is not possible to meet an animal's needs.

67.	Any decision to euthanise an animal shall be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the individual animal. In most cases, except for adult feral cats, this decision shall only be made after rehabilitation has been explored and a full and thorough examination carried out to determine the facts surrounding each individual case.	
68.	Euthanasia shall only be carried out by or under the direction of a veterinary surgeon using an approved humane method and, where appropriate, using pre-euthanasia sedation.	
69.	Each member organisation shall have a written policy on euthanasia.	

## GUIDANCE:

Euthanasia is an extremely controversial topic and there are those who sincerely believe that no apparently healthy animal should ever be euthanised and, where rehoming is not an option, then the animal should be allowed to live its life in the animal welfare establishment. The ADCH fully accepts that there are circumstances where particular animals can enjoy a high standard of welfare and a good quality of life at an establishment over a long period. However, it is important to remember that animal welfare is more than just physical health and freedom from disease. Other factors, particularly the animal's behavioural needs, which include the expression of social behaviour, have a profound effect on its welfare. The World Health Organisation defines "health" as: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

Organisations which intend to keep animals on a long term basis need to consider whether the environment is capable of meeting the behavioural and psychological needs of the animal. Long term confinement of cats, especially feral cats, is not appropriate.

However, no decision to euthanise an animal should be taken without serious consideration and only if it is judged to be absolutely necessary. Before a decision is made to euthanise an animal a consultation should take place with the individual or individuals who have full knowledge of the animal concerned. Intravenous injection is the recommended method. The key factors in deciding whether euthanasia shall be considered include:

- To prevent pain or suffering (including mental and emotional).
- If an animal poses an unacceptable risk to people or to other animals.
- If quality of life for the animal is compromised to an unacceptable degree, with no realistic prospect of improvement.



## REHOMING

71.	<p>Information about the prospective new owner/keeper and their family shall to be obtained to ensure their circumstances and facilities fit the requirements of the particular animal they wish to rehome. Proof of address shall always be obtained, plus a letter of consent from landlord/housing association if applicable.</p> 
72.	<p>Prospective adopters and any dogs they have shall meet the dog they are considering adopting. Cats shall also meet their prospective adopters.</p> 
73.	<p>The prospective new owner shall be given specific advice and relevant details about their particular new pet and its future care, both behavioural and veterinary. Any previous or ongoing health issues shall always be disclosed to the prospective owner.</p> 
74.	<p>The new pet shall be vaccinated and treated for parasites (see disease control and vaccination above)</p> <p>Where necessary, dogs shall be bathed in warm water and groomed. All animals shall be fully examined before departure, if not by a veterinary surgeon then by a suitably skilled and competent person</p> <p>A vaccination record shall be given to the new owner.</p> 
75.	<p>It shall be made clear to the new owner that they are welcome to contact the organisation if they wish advice or information on any issue with their new pet.</p> 

## GUIDANCE:

The organisation should be committed to a high standard of responsible Rehoming Practices. The following procedures should be followed to ensure the responsible rehoming of a rescue animal.

- 71. It is good practice to interview the prospective new keeper and complete a re-homing application form which should request information about previous experience of animal ownership, the lifestyle of the family and the facilities which would be on offer at the new home.

**72.** This meeting should be under supervision of the organisation’s staff or volunteers. The prospective new owners should be offered the opportunity to interact with the animal. This could include taking the dog for a short walk within the organisation’s grounds.

Visits to the prospective new home are not always necessary but they may be required if the animal has specific needs.

Animals should not normally be given to a new owner or keeper without that new owner or keeper making a financial contribution to the organisation. The size of the financial contribution should be sufficient to deter the “impulse buyer”. Caring for a dog or a cat is a long term financial commitment and the organisation would be correct to have concern where a prospective new owner states that they are unable to make a financial contribution.

The health certificate, if given, is complementary rather than an alternative, to the veterinary examination.

## LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE CENTRE

<b>76.</b>	The organisation shall keep records of all animals for which it is responsible, including a description of all animals received into the establishment, noting date of arrival and departure, and the name and address of the new owner/keeper. The organisation shall ensure new keepers’ details are recorded on the microchip database. It is acceptable for details of the rescue centre to be recorded as well.
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## HOUSING CONDITIONS

Under the provisions of the Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963, which applies in England, Wales and Scotland, all premises (including domestic premises) where accommodation for other people's dogs and cats is provided as a commercial activity need to be licensed by the local authority.

The provisions of the 1963 Act do not apply to animal rescue or rehoming centres unless they are carrying on a business of providing accommodation for other people's animals.

Apart from the above, there is no statutory requirement for rescue or rehoming centres to be licensed by the local authority. In the Republic of Ireland any establishment, including welfare kennels, at which bitches are kept, not less than 6 of which are, a) more than 6 months old, and b) capable of being used for breeding purposes must be registered with the local authority.



## A) DOGS

<b>A1.</b>	Kennels shall be structurally sound, constructed of materials that are robust and safe and can be well maintained.
<b>A2.</b>	Fences shall be secure and safe and the units constructed in a way which will ensure that all dogs are secured. Where metal bars and frames are used, they shall be of a suitable gauge with spacing adequate to prevent dogs escaping, becoming trapped or biting each other.
<b>A3.</b>	All kennels shall be secure to prevent escape.
<b>A4.</b>	Ventilation shall be provided to all interior areas.
<b>A5.</b>	Units shall have a sleeping area. All dogs shall be provided with a bedding area or bench, large and suitable enough to allow the dog to lie comfortably. Sleeping areas shall be adequate for the size and breed of the dog. The space shall be sufficient for the dog to stand up, sit fully erect, turn around and lie down in a natural position and wag tail without touching sides of kennel area. Sleeping areas of units shall be sufficiently insulated and/or heated to prevent extremes of temperature.
<b>A6.</b>	There shall be adequate lighting in the kennel. Kennels must have sufficient lighting to enable dogs to be examined and the kennel to be cleaned
<b>A7.</b>	The sleeping accommodation shall be capable of being maintained at an ambient temperature appropriate for species and breed. There shall be some part of the sleeping area where animals are able to enjoy a temperature of at least 10°C. Normally the maximum temperature should be no more than 26°C. However, the individual needs of dogs shall be catered for, e.g. short haired dogs with little body fat, underweight or old dogs.
<b>A8.</b>	Heaters shall not be sited in a manner or location where they present a risk of burning or electrocution, or a risk of fire. Open flame appliances shall not be used.
<b>A9.</b>	Dogs shall always have the option to move to a cooler, shady area in hot weather.
<b>A10.</b>	All beds, sleeping platforms and bedding provided shall be durable, safe, and capable of being easily cleaned and disinfected.

<b>A11.</b>	Suitable and appropriate bedding which allows the animal to be comfortable and which is capable of being easily cleaned and disinfected (or disposed of after use) shall be provided. Bedding shall be sited out of draughts and shall be checked daily and maintained in a clean, parasite free and dry condition.
<b>A12.</b>	Where raised beds are provided, they shall be appropriate to the age of the dog regards size and height, and materials used shall not be toxic to dogs.
<b>A13.</b>	<p>Crating shall only be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In an emergency and for a maximum of 48 hours</li> </ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under veterinary advice for recovery</li> </ul> <p>Crating shall not be used as a permanent solution or as an alternative to suitable kennels.</p>
<b>A14.</b>	Crates, when used, shall be large enough to allow the dog to stand, turn around normally while standing up, sit erect and lie down in a natural position. The dog shall have regular opportunities to toilet and shall not be left inside so long that it becomes distressed, or generally for more than four hours at a time.

## GUIDANCE:

- A4.** This should be sufficient to ensure an adequate number of air changes, without the creation of excessive, localised draughts in the sleeping area.
- A6.** 1.90 sq. m is recommended for one dog.
- A10.** Additional methods can be in the form of extra bedding, heated pads, and correctly fitted, suitable coats or similar, however these should not be the main source of heat for the dog.
- A17.** Crating can be useful to aid recovery following an injury or operation, during transportation or for habituating puppies at an appropriate stage of growth and development to be left alone.

## B) CATS

<b>B1.</b>	The cattery shall be structurally sound, constructed of materials that are robust and safe and be well maintained.
<b>B2.</b>	Full length and width sneeze barriers shall be provided where the gap between units is less than 62.5cm.
<b>B3.</b>	Waste water shall not run off into adjacent pens.
<b>B4.</b>	There shall be an escape-proof area (safety corridor/entrance lobby) at the exit of each cat unit.
<b>B5.</b>	There shall be a safe, secure, waterproof roof over all of the cat units (sleeping accommodation and run) and the safety corridor. For the run, materials used shall be capable of filtering UV light and providing adequate shade.
<b>B6.</b>	There shall be adequate lighting in the cat unit.
<b>B7.</b>	Ventilation shall be appropriate all year round (both cool in hot weather and avoiding cold draughts in winter). Localised draughts in the sleeping accommodation shall be avoided.
<b>B8.</b>	Cats shall always have the option to move to a cooler, shady area in hot weather.
<b>B9.</b>	Cats need separate sleeping accommodation which provide somewhere for the cats to hide. All cats shall be provided with a bedding area or bench, large and suitable enough to allow the animal to lie comfortably.
<b>B10.</b>	Shelves or raised areas shall be provided to allow cats to rest high up.
<b>B11.</b>	Heating facilities shall be available in the unit (and any isolation facility) and used according to the requirements of the individual animal.

<b>B12.</b>	The sleeping accommodation shall be capable of being maintained at an ambient temperature appropriate for species and breed.
<b>B13.</b>	Cats shall be able to remove themselves from any additional source of heat.
<b>B14.</b>	Heaters shall not be sited in a manner or location where they present a risk of burning or electrocution, or a risk of fire. Open flame appliances shall not be used.
<b>B15.</b>	Suitable bedding shall be provided which allows the animal to be comfortable and which is capable of being easily and adequately cleaned and disinfected. Bedding shall be sited out of draughts and shall be checked daily and maintained in a clean, parasite free and dry condition.
<b>B16.</b>	A cat shall have space for safe play and exercise.
<b>B17.</b>	Cats shall be provided with a place to hide which shall be large enough to provide concealment.

## GUIDANCE:

- B7.** The aims of appropriate ventilation are to reduce shared air between animals to minimise risk of infectious disease spread, to reduce noxious odours and gases, and to improve cooling by convection of heat away from the body. Mechanical ventilation systems (fans etc.) should be custom-built to suit the facility but should broadly aim to force air flow from the centre of a facility to the outside environment in such a way as to limit the potential for mixing of air between animals.
- B9.** Units should be provided with a sleeping area of 0.85 sq. m for one cat, 1.1 sq. m for two cats, and 1.7 sq. m for up to four cats.
- B10.** The height of cat sleeping areas should be between 75cm and 1.5m.
- B10.** The raised areas should be easily accessible and ramps or steps may need to be used for elderly, ill, very young or disabled cats.
- B12.** Normally this should be no less than 10°C, and there should be some part of the sleeping area where animals are able to enjoy a temperature of at least 15°C. If necessary this additional heat may be supplied in the form of a heated bed or pad. Normally the maximum temperature should be no more than 26°C.

- B16.** In some catteries that are completely indoors, it is not necessary to have completely separate sleeping and exercise areas. The floor area should be equal to the sum of the above sleeping and exercise areas and the cat needs a unit to sleep on, e.g. feline fort.
- B16.** Cat exercise areas should be 1.65 m<sup>2</sup> for single cats; 2.2 m<sup>2</sup> for two cats and 2.8 m<sup>2</sup> for up to 4 cats.
- B16.** Shelves or raised areas should be provided in the exercise area and steps or a ramp should be provided to allow easy and safe access for elderly, ill, very young or disabled cats.
- B17.** Suitable structures include cardboard boxes or igloo type beds. Even a curtain, blanket or towel can be used if it can be used to shield the cat. In multiple cat units there should be a separate hiding place for each cat.



# ADCH

Association of Dogs and Cats Homes

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dogs + cats*

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