



## **Minimum Standards – Questions and Answers**

### **Why has ADCH published Minimum Standards?**

A key strategic aim of ADCH is to raise welfare standards across the dog and cat rescue and rehoming sector. The ADCH membership has agreed that the Minimum Standards provides sensible, proportionate and realistic standards that all responsible dog and cat rescue and rehoming organisations should work to in order to meet their animals' welfare needs.

### **How did you decide what to include as a Minimum Standard?**

The ADCH membership was consulted and agreed that the Minimum Standards should focus on the five welfare needs of animals, along with some additional elements that are either a legal requirement, or constitute agreed, sector best practice. In addition, legislation for animal welfare establishments that applies to any of the jurisdictions ADCH covers has been incorporated.

### **Are the Minimum Standards be mandatory?**

Yes. Under the new ADCH Constitution that the membership approved and adopted in November 2017, all existing and new members of ADCH will be required to meet the Minimum Standards within an agreed, reasonable timeframe, and then work to or exceed those standards on an ongoing basis.

### **What support will be provided to help my organisation meet the Minimum Standards?**

ADCH is committed to supporting its members to meet the Minimum Standards.

Through the assessment process, members will be asked to identify any areas in which they don't currently meet the Minimum Standards. Following that, members will be invited to develop an improvement plan setting out how they expect to meet the Minimum Standards and over what time frame. Depending on the extent and nature of any improvements required, ADCH will provide direct support (e.g. advice) or signpost members to sources of grant funding and other support.

### **By when must my organisation be fully compliant?**

For members that are not compliant with all Minimum Standards the time allowed for compliance will depend on the scale of work and funding required, and the plan for completion. However, we would expect that the majority of members will be compliant with the new Minimum Standards within 12 months of their assessment.

## **What happens if we don't or aren't able to comply?**

If you are unable to comply with the Minimum Standards within an agreed, reasonable timescale, it is unlikely that you will be able to remain a member of ADCH. However, the purpose of the Minimum Standards is to be inclusive, facilitate membership and ensure appropriate, minimum welfare and operational standards in our sector. If the Minimum Standards are going to have impact within the sector, there has to be a point at which we agree that if a member is unable or unwilling to comply then they would not be able to remain a member of ADCH.

## **How will members be assessed against the Minimum Standards?**

Every member will be asked to self-assess their centre/s every two years.

Additionally, a member can expect to be externally assessed approximately once every three to five years. External assessments will be carried out by one of our trained volunteer Assessors.

## **My organisation is responsible for animals in multiple locations. Do all sites need to be assessed?**

A Standard Operating Procedure relating specifically to the assessment of multi-site rescues is available [here](#). This will advise what ratio of sites should be assessed.

## **Do the Minimum Standards apply only to members that own their centres? What about foster homes and members that use rented kennels?**

Where a member organisation operates only through multiple volunteer foster homes, relevant sections of the Minimum Standards still apply and should be assessed. The online assessment form will sort these for you depending on the arrangements for your rescue.

Where a member organisation operates only from commercial or other non-owned animal boarding facilities, the member organisation is still responsible for the welfare of the animals under their care in these locations and so these facilities and the processes in place at these facilities need to be assessed against the Minimum Standards in the usual way.

## **I am struggling to open or use the Assessment Form or have other questions**

Please don't hesitate to contact Clare Radlett ([clare@adch.org.uk](mailto:clare@adch.org.uk)).