



ADCH

Association of Dogs and Cats Homes

Our Strategy

2024 - 2030



Together for Dogs & Cats

Our overarching aim by the end of the decade is to have a strong and sustainable Association and sector that is consistently making a real difference enhancing the lives of the dogs and cats in the UK and Ireland.

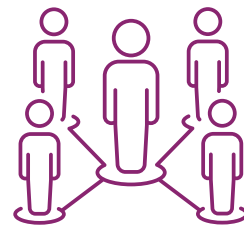
The main ways by which we seek to achieve this are:



To help raise the welfare of more animals by giving support to raise standards across the wider sector,



While also supporting Members with more aspects of what they do.



Positioning both the ADCH and its Members as leaders of the wider animal welfare sector to raise standards for more animals.

We aim to have the biggest impact, and believe that improving the standards of non-members and those who don't currently meet our standards, is the best way to deliver this.

ADCH, often through its Members, has been helping rescues in this way for many years so this is a proven model for success. We support rescues through training and other services, government advocacy, assessments against our standards, and support through mentoring and advice.

Our ambitious target is to establish meaningful support for 600 organisations, or 50% of the welfare sector, by the end of the decade. With our 165 Members and the Association working together we believe that stretching target will be achieved, and the lives of many dogs and cats will be enhanced when we do achieve this. Once we have scaled up we can improve the lives of over a million cats and dogs in the following seven years.

Our Work

1 Membership Services & Engagement

2 Our Standards & Support

3 Advocacy on behalf of our members

The Three Pillars of our work

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Our Charity

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Foundations of our work - how we are run

Our Values

Leadership

Collaboration

Integrity

Professionalism

Support

Our overarching aim by the end of the decade is to have a strong and sustainable Association and sector that are consistently making a real difference enhancing the lives of the dogs and cats in the UK and Ireland.

To achieve this, we will address needs where we can make the most difference. We will create an externally focused peer-community, keen to collaborate to achieve a better future.

Our new strategy focuses on leadership by ADCH and its Members within the wider sector. We will create pathways for organisations to become members, with a target of 50% of the sector being members, or on a pathway to membership, by the end of the decade. The first two years of the strategy will focus on income generation and organisational readiness to allow us to drive this recruitment.

Our services to members will be enhanced with a range of dedicated support to help meet Minimum Welfare and Operational Standards as well as training beyond our traditional areas of welfare. We will seek two-way engagement with our members from all jurisdictions, actively facilitating regional groups.

A key element of our support will be our new mentor and advisor scheme – mentors to give ongoing wider support and advisors who are subject experts.

Our advocacy will be based around our Minimum Welfare and Operational Standards and the need for licencing of the sector and these will be the basis of our responses to consultations by Governments.

Our Standards and assessments will be supportive tools to drive improvements in welfare. We will enhance our training for assessors and provide training to members on self-assessment. We will aim to achieve a 3-year cycle for external assessments.

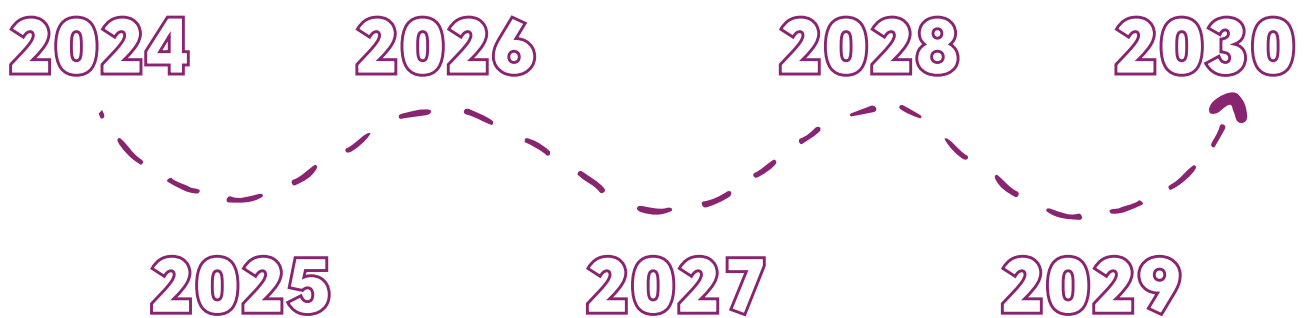
We will aim to meet the Charity Governance Code, and especially to appoint a treasurer or cover that work in other ways. We will develop a financial strategy to plan for sustainability. We will raise the necessary funds before committing to resourcing new activities.

ADCH's income generation streams will be diversified by working with commercial partners and sponsors, as well as our membership where appropriate.

Motivation for a new strategy

The world has changed and many indicators that tell us that more and greater change is coming. ADCH members and the wider sector are positioning their plans and activities to best meet and take advantage of these changes, as they work for dogs and cats.

ADCH itself has, under its former strategy, made huge strides in its professionalisation agenda, leading governments and members as they worked to improve standards of dog and cat welfare, while developing an extensive range of support offerings to members.



Our members have also professionalised their work, raising standards and extending their offerings, whether they operate via staff, volunteers or a combination. Members' new strategies often address their sustainability, collaboration and responsible pet ownership.

Our members have had great success in challenges like microchipping and neutering with support from ADCH. We now face new challenges like the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and the post-covid dog and cat crisis, where ADCH can provide leadership and support, and the future will bring new and ever more complex challenges. And yet there remain many (mainly small) rescue organisations which have not yet achieved the welfare standards of our members while, in contrast, some new ones are still joining ADCH and displaying impressive welfare for the animals they support.

The Association has identified this wider sector as where its expertise will have most impact in improving dog and cat welfare. And for our core members, we can give leadership and support both in core welfare standards and also other areas key to sustainability – animal focused and wider.



We have a unique understanding of our sector and beyond, and ADCH's voice is collective and authoritative. We will develop relationships with members, some of whom feel disenfranchised, and beyond our membership with a wide range of partners, professional, commercial and charitable.

We will be inclusive and brave in challenging times, generating collective support and joint action where it adds value with members supporting ADCH, and ADCH supporting members. In the dog and cat ecosystem we will build on each other's strengths and leverages. We recognise that the changes we seek will be built on and driven by human behaviour change, which therefore will be a foundation of our work.

Impact Assessment

The growth from our current 170 members to 50% of the sector implies an additional 430 rescues by 2030. These will largely be the smaller rescues which, typically, home an impressive 166 animals each year and additionally help a similar number by trap, neuter and release schemes, lost and found schemes, programmes of neutering of owned animals etc. Which brings the average numbers helped up to 332.

Thus, from 2030 the number of additional animals helped will be almost 150,000 each year, or a million extra animals over the following 7 years.

Our Vision

A positive life for all dogs and cats.

Our Mission

ADCH is an umbrella organisation which works on behalf of its members to create a professional and sustainable sector which improves the lives of dogs and cats.



Our Values

The Association of Dog and Cat Homes (ADCH) is the umbrella organisation which works on behalf of its Members to create a professional and sustainable sector which improves the lives of dogs and cats. We are committed to our values:



Leadership

ADCH and its Members leading the sector and proactively tackling future issues and facilitating solutions while listening to all involved



Collaboration

We all share knowledge, expertise and actions for excellence



Integrity

High standards including transparency, respect and inclusion



Professionalism

Innovative experts with ambition for the sector



Support

Helping members to grow and develop together for dogs, cats and people too

About ADCH

The ADCH is a small charity focused on dog and cat welfare, currently in 8 nations / jurisdictions. We are a membership body, and our focus is on creating a network of charities, leading and organising the cat and dog sector, including those individuals and organisations who support us.

Our relationship with individual people is restricted to:

Volunteers or staff of dog and cat charities

Signposting the public to our members

People who wish to support our work

Members of the public who might have a complaint about ADCH or our members

We aim to offer the same level of support to animal welfare organisations and members across our eight jurisdictions. Where this is not possible, we will look for equivalent opportunities, and we will be open about the challenges in delivering against this aim.

We recognise that there are additional challenges facing some groups of our members. Action Plans will be implemented to focus our support for groups facing particular challenges.

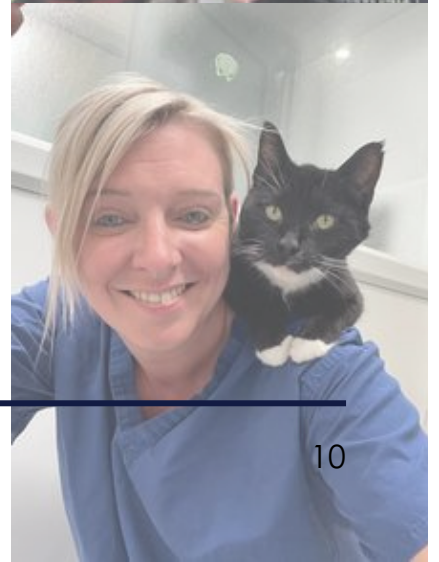
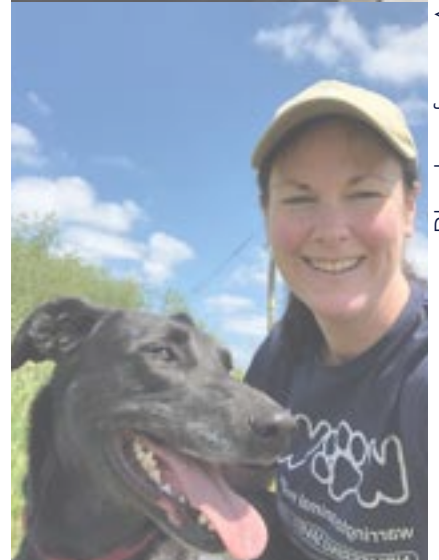
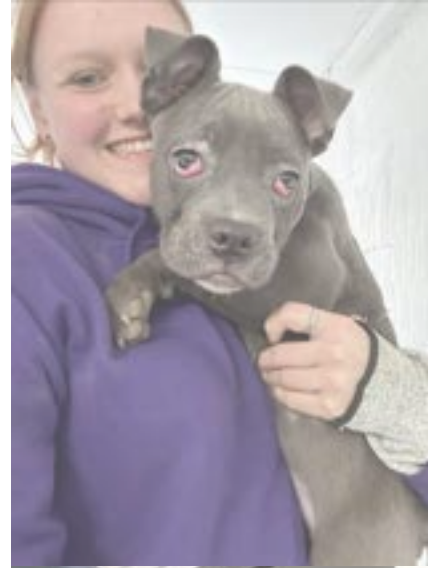
We will continue to give our support to dog and cat organisations, rather than wider animal welfare, but will provide opportunities for those caring for other domestic species to come together (but not as part of ADCH).

Members' strategies

As part of our preparation and thinking for ADCH's new strategy we contacted a range of members, including the national SPCAs in all nations in which we operate.

Areas of synergy with ADCH's new strategy include:

-  Creating an externally-focused community that is keen to collaborate to achieve a better future for dogs and cats
-  Addressing needs where we can make the most difference
-  Facilitating and/or delivering training in areas other than our core work of welfare, such as education and advice for owners, to deliver sustainability and quality
-  ADCH being better known across the dog and cat sector
-  Supporting collaboration and professionalism, including training in finance, fundraising, people, dog training and behaviour, etc.
-  Giving members the support and tools they need to succeed



Photos from ADCH Members

PESTLE Summary

Every organisation operates within a world which can be analysed using a PESTLE analysis (the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental outlook).

For ADCH's strategy this analysis includes:

Political Outlook

We operate in multiple jurisdictions whose politics can be different and move at different speeds. Conflict is a major threat to the world and displacement of people and animals affects priorities.

Economic Outlook

Cost of living and the rising costs of vet care. Labour shortages affecting vets and vet staff, animal welfare and other charity jobs and volunteering.

Social & Cultural Outlook

Dietary changes might affect people's views of animals. Increased importation brings associated welfare and zoonotic disease risks. Increased animal behavioural issues, so our sector becomes mainly a safety net of difficult animals.

Technological Outlook

Tech powered tests (AI-based) to determine animal welfare and behaviour modification training.

Legal Outlook

Legal demands are becoming more onerous on charities, and environmental legislation is increasing. And for animal welfare: Licencing of Animal Welfare Establishments and rehoming activities.

Environmental Outlook

Increased exotic / zoonotic disease risk.

Together for Dogs & Cats

The Three Pillars of our work

Membership Services & Engagement

1

Our Standards & Support

2

Advocacy on behalf of our members

3

Our target is to have 50% of the sector as members or on a pathway to membership by the end of the strategy. The first two years of the strategy will focus on setup and income generation to allow us to drive this recruitment.

We will seek two-way engagement with our members from all jurisdictions and take into consideration how relevant topics and information are to each type of Member (based on geography, size or setup). We will aim to identify any barriers to engagement (e.g. finance, technology, time) and target our offers of support. We will aim for increased numbers of Member organisations attending ADCH events, both in person and online.

We will actively facilitate the setting up of regional groups and will roll out our new scheme of mentors (for broad support) and advisors (topic expert support).

We aim to hear about problems before they become a crisis, and ensure welfare standards do not slip, so that the animals in our Members' care have a good life.

We need more information on the wider sector, beyond our membership. We want to understand what dog and cat welfare organisations are operating, what services they provide, where they provide them, and how. This will better enable us to shape our relationship with them and work towards improvement in the sector, as well as future-proofing our membership model.

We will also work to keep abreast of technological developments in our sector that may support our members.

We will increase our visibility to our members and the wider sector, working towards getting information and resources to the members in greatest need, and throughout Member organisations.

We will articulate more fully what being an ADCH Member means, the value of our Standards and why these are important to legislators, rescues and the population of dogs and cats.

We will assess the financial value of engaging with ADCH – what do we spend on services, and what would these services cost a Member to buy?

We will expand the range of our toolkits to support members in meeting Standards.

We are aware of good work already being carried out by members on their environmental engagement. We will develop an ADCH environmental policy including seeking to source appropriate support to members keen to develop their environmental sustainability and reduce their environmental impact.

ADCH will work to improve animal welfare across the sector. Our Minimum Welfare and Operational Standards exist not as rules, but as a way to drive this improvement in animal welfare.

We will provide a differentiated offering of services to 3 levels of dog and cat welfare organisations:

1. Those who rehome and care for dogs and cats but are at an early stage of a pathway to fully meet our standards but are not currently seeking ADCH membership
2. Those who are working to achieve membership and need help to meet ADCH's Minimum Welfare and Operational Standards (including any who have a temporary period of non-membership before returning)
3. Our core membership who will enjoy the full range of Member benefits.

We will continue with our Minimum Welfare and Operational Standards and the associated assessment programme. Where existing or potential members do not currently meet these, we will offer a pathway as a means of engagement to help them achieve these. This will include access to mentors (general) or topic-specific advisors who are experienced professionals, normally from our membership, willing to volunteer their time and knowledge, often with support from their employer, to help other organisations provide for dogs' and cats' needs.

Where existing or new members do not fully meet our Standards, we will better monitor and follow up on their action plans to make sure that animal welfare standards are raised across our membership.

We will understand better how our Standards apply in different settings and, where relevant, show the science-based reasons behind standards. We will respond to new science in our standards updates.

We will ensure that our Assessors carrying out assessments against Standards are trained and experts in their role, and we will provide training to members for self-assessments.

We will aim to achieve a 3-year cycle for external assessments after the disruption of the pandemic period.

3

Advocacy on behalf of our members

The Three Pillars of our Work



We will take positions on animal welfare topics that align with our Minimum Welfare and Operational Standards, since our Standards are agreed by our members as a foundation of the ADCH.

We will use these positions to form the basis of government consultation responses where appropriate.

We will encourage governments to adopt ADCH Minimum Welfare and Operational Standards for their own licencing of animal welfare establishments and rehoming activities. We will actively engage with legislators to improve legislation in Scotland and Jersey which already have licencing, and to secure this licencing elsewhere. Our aim is that governments in the 8 jurisdictions refer to ADCH standards in their licencing.

We will not be trying to mobilise public campaigns, but instead work through our members on these key issues in animal welfare that align with our Standards, and we will issue statements about these.

We will keep members updated and informed about relevant legislative matters in their jurisdictions.

We will raise our profile, based on information from members' annual returns, by issuing a 'State of the Nations' report for the rescue sector and an impact report for ADCH.

Together for Dogs & Cats

The Foundations of our Work

How we are run

Trustees, Committees & Membership Model **1**

Finance & Funding **2**

People & independence **3**

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Trustees, Committees & Membership Model

The Foundations of our Work -
How we are run

We will aim to meet the Charities Governance Code, reviewing our governance including committees and task-and-finish groups, especially as we strengthen our executive team.

We will re-establish a Nominations Committee from within the Governance Committee which will carry out interviews of potential Trustees to ensure our board is balanced and fit for purpose, including looking at the representation from different sizes of organisation. We will look at putting other safeguards in place around board composition, such as managing conflicts when we might have multiple trustees from one organisation.

We will ensure that we appoint a Treasurer or cover that work in other ways.

We will actively pursue affiliate relationships with a wide range of relevant organisations to find mutually beneficial opportunities that add value to our members and the wider sector.

We will develop a financial strategy to plan for sustainability.

ADCH's income generation streams will be diversified by working with commercial partners and sponsors, as well as our membership where appropriate.

We will have a soft launch, having planned carefully our proposed Friends category of affiliation. We will look to raise funds from a wider pool of grant-funders and will enable people to leave us gifts in their wills.

We will examine charging, and grant support, to fund services to those not in membership.

We will define our operating model and cost this in the case for support. Part of the added value of our strategy is that it can be expected to attract income into the sector.

Our priorities will include:

Year 1

Catch up on the backlog of assessments, and undertake necessary fundraising

Years 2 and 3

Enhance services to members, develop services for the pathway to membership

Years 3 to 5

Grow membership up to 50% of the sector organisations in membership or on the pathway to membership.

We will raise the necessary funds before committing to resourcing new activities.

6

People & independence

The Foundations of our Work - How we are run

As our independence task-and-finish group's work progresses we will look at re-establishing a People and Culture Committee so that these topics get focused oversight from Trustees, to include diversity and inclusion.

We will complete the work on securing a diverse range of activity support from Member organisations and commercially, so that ADCH can develop its own identity and voice, and not be over-reliant on a single source of support





ADCH

Association of Dogs and Cats Homes

Registered charity no. 1180574