



# ADCH

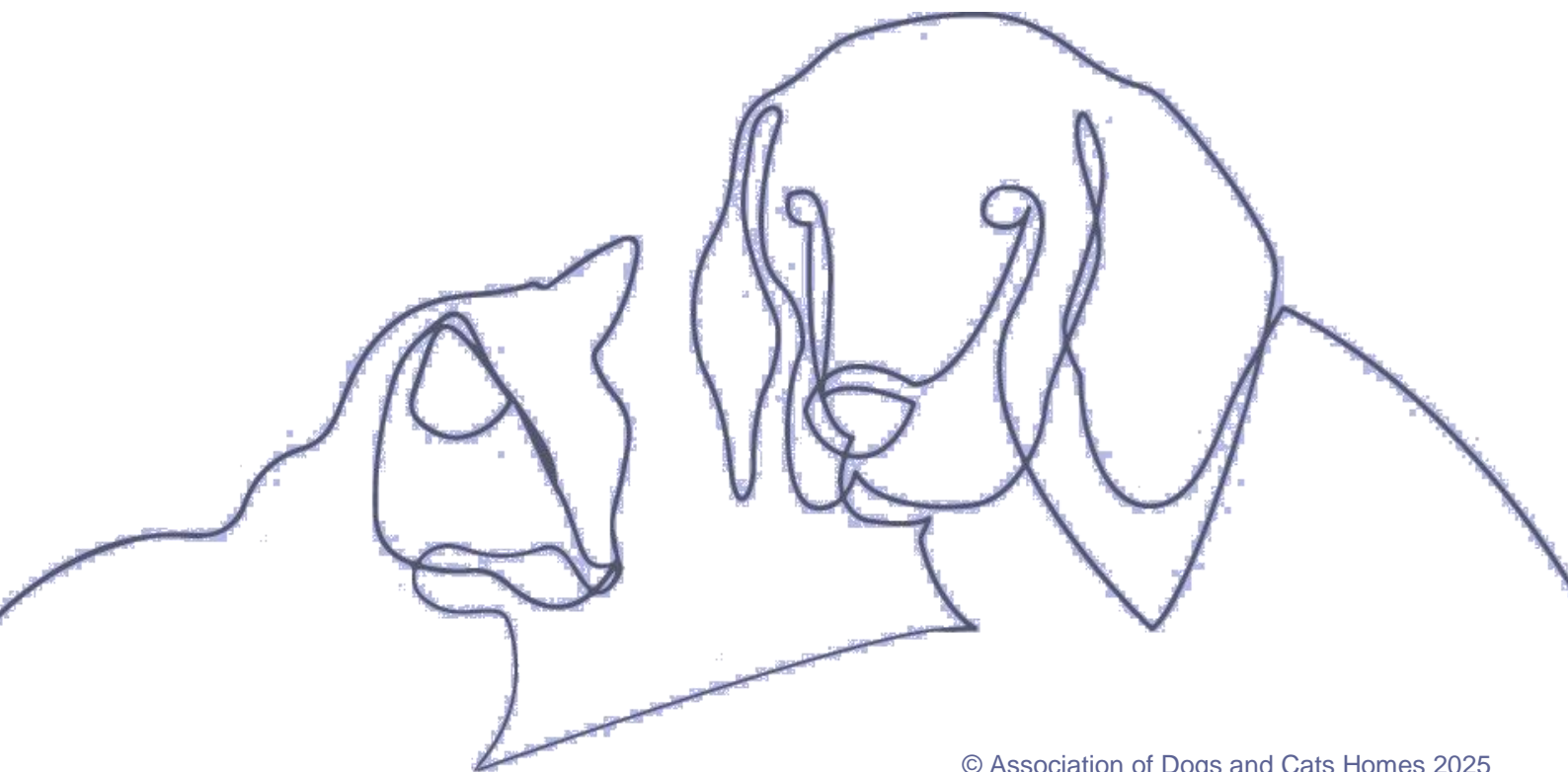
Association of Dogs and Cats Homes

*together for  
dogs + cats*

# Minimum Welfare & Operational Standards

Last Updated December 2022

*Latest clarifications to guidance published in August 2024*



**ADCH is the major force in raising the standards of animal welfare across the sector and ADCH's Members are strongly supportive of this as being a key aim for the Association. One fundamental aspect of this is these Minimum Standards are approved by Trustees and Members. These form the basis of Membership, and hence of decisions on admission of new Members.**

Members and ADCH want their Minimum Standards to:

- Safeguard animal welfare
- Benefit the rescue's reputation
- Improve and maintain good practice in animal welfare
- Assist in preparing for licencing of our sector, and run concurrent to existing legislation in jurisdictions where it is applicable
- Be proportionate and realistically achievable.

With these aims in mind these Minimum Standards are accompanied by guidance notes to help organisations interpret the requirements of the standards. In addition, a glossary is available at the beginning of this document and referred to throughout, to help organisations interpret these standards in a consistent way that they can apply to their organisation.

Throughout this document, the words "must" and "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.

# Contents

Glossary .....	3
Admission and intake of animals .....	5
Admission and veterinary checks .....	5
Care of animals .....	6
Food and water .....	6
Disease control and vaccination .....	7
Cleansing and disinfecting .....	8
Cat litter trays .....	9
Environment and companionship .....	10
Grooming .....	13
Supervision, including staff and volunteer training .....	13
Feral cats .....	14
Veterinary care .....	16
Transportation of animals .....	16
Assessment of animals .....	18
Training and behaviour modification .....	18
Animal assessment .....	18
Animal departures .....	19
Home fostering .....	19
Neutering .....	20
Euthanasia .....	20
Rehoming .....	22
Legal and Administrative .....	24
Annexes A and B - Housing Conditions .....	25
A) Dogs housing conditions .....	26
B) Cats housing conditions .....	28
Annex C – Importation of dogs and cats from outside of the UK and Ireland .....	31

# Glossary

1. **‘Sufficient number of people’** – Numeric ratios are not prescribed in these standards, as the individual animals being cared for can require different levels of care depending on their state of physical health, mental health, history and breeding. In calculating the people to animal ratio at any given time, consideration must be foremost given to ensuring that there is enough capacity between all people to be able to provide the five welfare needs (glossary 4) for every individual animal onsite, and any associated required activities such as cleaning and providing emergency and preventative healthcare within prescribed timescales. In addition to pet care on site there should be enough resource left to adequately support foster carers and the pets in their care as well as any assurance and assessing of pets being directly homed from one home to another. As the animal throughput changes, the organisation must reassess their supervision levels accordingly.

Sufficient people will take account of all the animals and activities undertaken on the entire site, including the supervision of staff involved with other species owned or kept, boarding, and any other activities on the site.

2. **‘People’** (associated with the organisation, does not include the public or adopters) – includes paid staff and volunteers.
3. **‘Competent’** – be able to demonstrate, through training records and work or volunteer experience, the ability to discern how to apply the five welfare needs (glossary 4) to all animals under their care.
4. **‘Welfare needs’** – each individual animal cared for by the organisation must have its five welfare needs met. They are:
  - The need for a suitable environment
  - The need for a suitable diet
  - The need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
  - The need to be housed with, or apart, from other animals
  - The need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.
5. **‘Qualification’** – Organisations can check the legitimacy and qualification levels on the:
  - OFQUAL website in England and Northern Ireland - <https://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>
  - QW website for Wales - <https://qualificationswales.org/>
  - SQCF website in Scotland - <https://scqf.org.uk/>
  - Irish Register of Qualifications in the Republic of Ireland - <https://irq.ie/>
6. **‘Veterinary advice’** – this can be over the telephone where appropriate, as well as appointments in a veterinary clinic or a ‘vet round’ in a centre
7. **‘Virtual’** – the use of video conferencing/calling where the organisation can see in detail and on request, the information required. Examples would be to use Facetime, WhatsApp, Zoom, Skype etc, and supported by Google Earth for satellite imagery.
8. **‘Routinely’** – as part of the organisation’s standard operating procedures. Excludes emergency, one off boarding, which could not have been planned for (up to 72 hours).
9. **‘Feral’** – Feral cats are cats that originate from a free-living lifestyle and typically have no or limited interactions with or dependency on humans. Such cats usually present behaviourally as consistently fearful of humans and are unsociable (i.e. consistently avoid or do not seek out human interaction). Adult feral cats are not suitable to be kept as companion animals. In some

cases, kittens born from feral adults may be suitable to be kept as companion animals, if they are socialised towards humans for the entirety of their socialisation period (i.e. 2-7/8 weeks of age). It may be possible to begin socialising feral kittens older than 2 weeks of age if they do not appear fearful or distressed in the presence of humans and they are still under the age of 8 weeks. The welfare of the individual cat (whether adult or kitten) should not be compromised by attempts to socialise them to humans. If socialisation is attempted in a cat that is already fearful of humans and distressed in their presence, this will compromise their welfare (see standards 59-60).

International Cat Care have produced a guide to providing the right care to match the needs of an individual cat <https://icatcare.org/unowned-cats/the-different-needs-of-domestic-cats> and the identification of feral cats.

# Admission and intake of animals

## Admission and veterinary checks

1	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. When a microchip, tag or tattoo is found then reasonable attempts shall be made to trace the registered owner or keeper of any lost animal in line with section 149 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
---	--

Scanning several times increases the chance of finding a microchip, the body should be scanned in case of chip migration. 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.

Organisations should have a procedure of actions to take on discovering a foreign microchip, or history of travel abroad, including interim animal/human health precautions to take. A protocol of non-endemic disease testing must be agreed with their veterinary practice. If the animal has a non-traceable foreign chip and no clinical history, and test results have not been received, isolation and barrier nursing should be put in place and an appropriate anti-parasitic treatment administered until test results are received. Trading Standards are to be alerted where an animal has a non-traceable foreign chip and no history.

The advice on ADCH's website should be followed with regard to the requirements of animals from each country, having noted the country of origin of the chip. Further information is available at <https://adch.org.uk/importation/>

2	Where no microchip is found, unless against veterinary advice (glossary 6), all domestic animals shall be microchipped and registered with an appropriate UK or Irish database as soon as possible, with the organisation listed as keeper until the point of rehoming, and especially prior to being walked off site or placed on foster.
---	--

This should take place at the earliest available veterinary appointment, where in-house microchipping by a suitably competent person (glossary 3) is not an option.

3	The health and welfare of all animals shall be assessed on intake and monitored at least daily. Animals shall be examined by a veterinary professional or a suitably competent (glossary 3) lay person as soon as possible. Animals with perceived health problems must be seen by a veterinary surgeon as soon as possible and monitored as advised by the veterinary surgeon.
---	---

A health check by a vet or a suitably competent (glossary 3) lay person should take place on admission or as close to (no more than 72 hours). A system of recording abnormalities must be maintained. A suitably competent (glossary 3) lay person means someone with sufficient training and skills to be able to carry out such an assessment.

Dogs and cats must be examined by a veterinary surgeon whilst in the care of the Member, unless there is documented evidence of a veterinary check in the last 6 months. When there are difficulties in obtaining veterinary appointments with a vet, this guidance can be waived if a suitably competent person (glossary 3) has undertaken the health check and the rehoming of the animal would be unduly delayed, and welfare impacted, by waiting for an appointment.

4	Animals shall be vaccinated on or shortly after arrival into the centre under the direction of the veterinary surgeon.
---	--

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 appropriate diet, suitable for species, age, life stage and condition. Clean, potable (fit for human consumption) water shall be available for both cats and dogs at all times and changed daily. Feed and drinking water provided to the animals must be unspoilt and free from contamination
---	--

6	Feed and water intake must be monitored, and any problems recorded and addressed.
---	---

Staff and volunteers should be aware how to report concerns, and daily observation records should be kept. Animals must not remain not eating or not drinking for longer than 24 hours without veterinary advice (glossary 6) being sought. If an animal shown signs of significant weight loss or gain, veterinary support must be sought at the point of discovery.

7	Cats shall be offered at least two separate meals a day approximately 8 hours apart during the daytime.
---	---

8	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.
---	--

9	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. Disposable eating dishes may be used.
---	--

10	Where feed is prepared on any premises, there must be hygienic facilities for its preparation, including a working surface, hot and cold running water and storage. Where pre-prepared animal food is served the area shall be kept clean and rodent and insect free at all times. Suitable precautions shall be taken to minimise risk of contamination.
----	---

There should be appropriate disinfectants available to clean the food preparation area immediately following its use. Human and animal food preparation should not take place in shared preparation areas at the same time or using shared utensils. Handwashing facilities should be available.

Ideally cleaning of receptacles used for animal food and soiled equipment such as litter trays should not take place in the same location. If this is not possible, hygiene processes must be in place to prevent cross-contamination.



## Disease control and vaccination

11	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.
----	--

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	Where an animal shows signs of infectious disease or illness advice must be sought from a veterinary surgeon and isolation measures or barrier nursing put in place, as appropriate to the specific disease protocol. Where an animal has suffered an injury veterinary advice (glossary 6) must be sought.
----	---

A documented procedure should be held covering the organisation's plans for infectious and potentially infectious animals.

This should include agreed locations of isolation pens (if not on site) which should be accessible 24 hours a day, and arrangements for the animal's monitoring. Where infectious disease is present in premises, appropriate procedures to mitigate against further spread must be implemented. This includes use of protective clothing and footwear changed between enclosures; separate storage and use of equipment, thorough cleaning of utensils, and segregation of waste. The latest advice on notifiable diseases and their reporting can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/notifiable-diseases-in-animals>

13	Adequate isolation facilities for animals with infectious diseases shall be available. This can be at the organisation's own centre, or a formal documented arrangement with a local provider such as a veterinary practice. It should be clear to all personnel with overall responsibility for any animals' welfare how to contact a local external provider.
----	---

This may be on site or at another location, such as a local veterinary practice.

This may be evidenced by one or more of the following:

- Provision made for stopping blood loss in an animal first-aid situation
- A 24hr vet onsite or nearby
- An animal first-aid kit, with staff trained to use it
- A policy stating that a vet should be contacted immediately in the case of animal first-aid incidents.

14	An animal first aid kit shall be available for use at any animal welfare (rescue) centre or premises with more than 5 pens. The degree of first aid is to keep the animal safe and avoid further harm, while veterinary advice (glossary 6) is sought.
----	--

Veterinary contact details should be kept up-to-date and easily accessible by all staff and volunteers.



## Cleansing and disinfecting

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 15 | 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.<br>Moveable items should be removed for cleaning at least weekly.<br><br>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 | 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.<br><br>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.  |
| 17 | All bedding areas shall be kept clean and dry and animals shall have access to a dry area whilst their housing is being cleaned.<br><br>Animals must be removed during high pressure or steam cleaning or other cleaning methods which are likely to be frightening, stressful or potentially harmful.   |
| 18 | Each unit shall be thoroughly cleaned, disinfected and dried at a change of occupancy.<br><br>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.  |

19	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 organisations including wash-down water contaminated by faecal matter and litter.  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. 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.
20	Care shall be taken with cleaning routines to protect animals from disinfectant poisoning or injury e.g. caustic burns to the skin.  Phenolic disinfectants are toxic to cats and should not be used near dogs.
21	Chemicals shall be used, handled, and stored strictly in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.

## Cat litter trays

22	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 and feeding areas.
23	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.
24	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. In multiple cat units one litter tray shall be provided for each cat.

## Environment and companionship

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.

**25** All animals shall have the opportunity to exercise daily.

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.

**26** All cats and dogs shall have toys and/or feeding enrichment to provide opportunities to perform natural behaviour such as hunting or play.

Individually housed dogs should be given something to chew unless contrary veterinary advice (glossary 6) 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.

**27** The items provided shall be the correct size and type for the individual animal and its behaviour.

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 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. 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.

**28** Both cats and dogs shall have human contact and interaction on a daily basis.

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.

**29** 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.

All kittens and puppies 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 and puppies should have positive interactions with a range of people. They should be gently introduced to handling, grooming, being lifted and touched all over. Kittens and puppies 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.

**30** 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.

**31** Dogs shall be protected from animal company which causes them fear, frustration or distress, but provided with enjoyable animal company where possible.

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** 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. This may be by temporary or permanent means.

They should be able to retreat from view to avoid situations that they find fearful or frustrating. Dogs should be provided with other opportunities to interact with their own species (such as lead walking, training) when this would be beneficial to both dogs. Temporary screens, safely positioned, are adequate and can be constructed using blankets/towels.

**33** Dogs shall be introduced to one another slowly and in a positive way.

Giving due consideration to human safety and animal welfare implications.

**34** Decisions to pair dogs shall be made by competent (glossary 3) persons. They shall not be housed with each other if either tries to avoid the other or appears fearful of them.

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.

**35** Pregnant, whelping, nursing bitches and puppies under seven weeks of age shall be accommodated somewhere safe and quiet.

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.

**36** 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.

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.

**37** In addition to toys and feeding enrichment, cats shall be given facilities for scratching.

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.

**38** Only compatible cats shall be housed together. Decisions to house cats together shall be made by a competent (glossary 3) person.

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.

Groups of feral (glossary 9) 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.

**39** 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 litter tray, bed and hiding place for each cat.

**40** Cats shall not be housed in the same enclosure as other species even if they have come from the same household.

**41** Where cats are housed in the vicinity of other cats, each cat shall be able to hide from every other cat. They must not be overseen by, or be able to view, other animals in the care of the organisation.

Barriers between cats should be opaque (non-see through) to provide protection from noise and smell as well as sight

**42** 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.

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

**43** 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.

**44** Weaned kittens shall be housed with their littermates.

## Grooming

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 45 | All animals shall be groomed when necessary and steps taken to ensure dogs and cats coats are free of mats. |
|----|---|

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

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 46 | Whilst animals are at the establishment there must be a contactable keyholder within reasonable distance to the premises. |
|----|---|

A designated, competent (glossary 3), keyholder should be aware of the organisation's emergency plan and operational procedures, which must be accessible to anyone on the premises and shared online if necessary. Emergency plans must be reviewed and updated annually

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 47 | The animals must not be left unattended, other than their housing facilities, in any situation or for any period likely to cause them distress |
|----|--|

Examples could include, but are not limited to:

- Left tethered unattended
- Animals kept in overflow crates
- Cats held in carriers beyond what is needed for transportation and/or containment in a veterinary practice.

Animals should be moved outside of their housing facilities for the purposes of their welfare needs (glossary 4), e.g. cleaning, transportation, exercise, socialisation, stimulation, for the shortest amount of time required

**48** Sufficient (glossary 1) numbers of people (glossary 2) who are competent (glossary 3) for the purpose must be available to provide a level of care that ensures that the welfare needs (glossary 4) of all the animals in the organisation are met.

In foster homes, the foster carer must be trained and given guidance by the organisation, relevant to the animals they are caring for.

One of the main ways to ensure the competence of people (glossary 2) is through training. People must be trained to a level of competence suitable to ensure the care and welfare needs (glossary 4) of the animals in their care, depending on the individual's experience and demonstratable skills. This must be demonstrated to be carried out in the following areas:

- animal welfare, including recognising poor welfare,
- animal handling,
- animal behaviour,
- cleanliness and hygiene,
- feeding and food preparation,
- disease control,
- recognition and first aid action for sick animals,
- new information on disease and inherited disease, legislation and behaviour.

People should hold a relevant qualification (glossary 5) and/or be able to clearly evidence knowledge through experience, for example through on the job in-house training (such as shadowing from a qualified and experienced individual).

The training policy should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis and may include:

- annual appraisal for staff,
- planned continued professional development,
- recognition of knowledge gaps,
- use of online courses and literature,
- if no staff are employed the organisation must demonstrate their own knowledge development.

The training policy must be applicable to any members of staff and volunteers and can be evidenced by engagement with courses, written or online learning, keeping up to date with any research or developments for specific species and the documentation of the annual appraisal. Evidence of staff and volunteer attendance or completion of the training should be provided. Training records for individual staff and volunteers should be retained. ADCH can provide signposts to relevant resources for members to achieve this.

If animals cannot be cared for under the five welfare needs (glossary 4), then animal intake is to be correspondingly reduced.





## Feral cats

- 49 Feral (glossary 9) (unsocialised, unowned) cats are not suitable to be kept as companion animals and therefore there shall be no attempt to socialise them to humans. For socialisation to be most effective, it must occur for the whole duration of a cat's sensitive period (i.e. starting from the age of 2 weeks, up until at least 7/8 weeks of age). No attempt should be made to socialise an adult cat or kitten that is consistently (i.e. longer than a few days) fearful or distressed in the presence of humans, even if they are under 8 weeks of age.

See glossary point 9. The welfare of the individual cat should not be compromised by attempts to socialise them, even if this is for a short or fixed duration of time such as prior to being homed. See also guidance for standard 42.

- 50 Adult feral (glossary 9) cats must not be kept in confinement any longer than necessary. They must be provided with any necessary immediate care, neutered and ear-tipped, and then released into a suitable environment as soon as possible. A suitable environment means ideally back to original site where the animal was caught, where possible. An animal that has been under the care of the organisation must only be released, neutered and ear-tipped, in an area that is suitable for its species. It must only be released if it is able to feed and fend for itself.

See glossary point 9. Feral cats must not be kept in confinement any longer than 48 hours, unless immediate veterinary intervention is needed. Pregnant feral queens should not be brought into care (see glossary point 9). If pregnant spays cannot be carried out the queen must be left in situ until kittens are born and weaned, then whole family TNRd. If a pregnant feral queen cannot be left in its existing location, she should be relocated to a different safe space rather than being brought into the rescue environment.

Ear tipping should enable identification of neutering from a distance to avoid recapture, unlike microchipping. True feral (glossary 9) cats (as opposed to stray cats that have previously lived, and are comfortable, around humans), over the socialisation period, are highly unlikely to ever become socialised to humans and being kept in an enclosed shelter environment is likely to cause significant stress and it will be difficult or impossible to meet the animals' welfare needs (glossary 4). Feral cats over the socialisation period should not be kept captive except for veterinary treatment, up to 48 hours maximum. For chronic conditions, euthanasia should be considered.

Relocation of cats to another site should only be considered as a last resort when all other options to enable the cats to stay in their original site are exhausted and the cats are no longer safe to remain where they are. The organisation should take into account the availability of shelter, available territory, food and water at the proposed site, weather conditions at time of release, landowner's permission and relevant wildlife legislation. A rescue must evidence that they have a contingency plan for releasing feral queens that have been accidentally brought into care. Organisations in Scotland should refer to Nature Scotland regarding the release of feral cats: <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/protected-areas-and-species/licensing/species-licensing-z-guide/wildcats-and-licensing>

## Veterinary care

51	Each organisation shall nominate one or more veterinary practices or veterinary surgeons who can advise on the health of animals entering and resident within the organisation.
----	---

52	<p>All veterinary products shall be stored, used and disposed of as required by the product datasheet and Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) legislation, or relevant local legislation.</p> <p>If an organisation has a veterinary clinic on site where drugs are stored before being prescribed, the clinic must be legally registered as a Registered Practice Premises with the RCVS.</p> <p>Unnecessary access to medicines should be prevented by storing medicines in a lockable location.</p>
----	--

A designated, competent (glossary 3), keyholder should be aware of the organisation's emergency plan and operational procedures, which must be accessible to anyone on the premises and shared online if necessary. Emergency plans must be reviewed and updated annually.

## 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.

The EU Regulation on welfare of animals during transport applies to the transport of all live vertebrate animals for the purposes of economic activity (i.e. a business or trade) and is implemented in England by The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006 and by parallel legislation in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In the Republic of Ireland transporters must comply with the Guidelines on animal welfare (non-farming) during transport. Some organisations may be required to obtain vehicle authorisation or training and certificates of competence under the relevant Orders but others may not – local enquiries should therefore be made. All dogs and cats transported from the Republic of Ireland to the UK, including those transiting Northern Ireland, are regarded as a “commercial movement” and must comply with the requirements of Balai Directive (92/65/EEC).

53	<p>With regard to transportation of 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, designed to provide good ventilation and firmly secured, out of direct sunlight and away from heating vents. The dog must be able to stand, move around and lie down with a form of absorbent material in the carrier to prevent urine/faeces/vomit soaking the animal</li><li>• Not transported when the temperature poses risk to the animal.</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><li>• Not left in a vehicle where the temperature may pose a risk. No dogs should be moved in a red level heatwave, even with the presence of air-conditioning.</li></ul>
----	--

Journeys over 6 hours should not be undertaken unless by exception. A 1 hour stop to enable toileting and water should be taken. After this a further 6 more hours with an 11-hour rest period before transport can commence again for a maximum of 2 days.

The dog should be assessed as fit to travel for over 6 hours with a vet check being undertaken before the decision to make the journey. Pregnant bitches should not be transported unless for veterinary purposes/advice or to move them to accommodation better suited for their welfare.

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

**54** With regard to transportation of cats, steps shall be taken to ensure that:

- Carriers are of adequate size, designed to provide good ventilation and firmly secured, out of direct sunlight and away from heating vents. The cat must be able to stand, move around and lie down
- Not transported when the temperature poses risk to the animal.
- On long journeys cats shall be:
- 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.
- Provided with a litter tray, or absorbent material included
- Not left unattended in vehicles for unreasonable periods
- Not left in a vehicle where the temperature may pose a risk.
- Journeys over 6 hours should not be undertaken unless by exception. A 1 hour stop to enable toileting and water should be taken. After this a further 6 more hours with an 11-hour rest period before transport can commence again for a maximum of 2 days.
- The cat should be assessed as fit to travel for over 6 hours with a vet check being undertaken before the decision to make the journey. Pregnant queens in their last trimester of pregnancy should not be transported unless for veterinary purposes or to move them to accommodation better suited for their welfare
- Cats should always be transported singly, unless it is a mother and her kittens or a litter of kittens under 12 weeks. These journeys should be minimal to allow for additional food and toileting.
- Litters of kittens aged less than eight weeks should be transported together. The transport of unweaned litters should only be undertaken when essential for welfare reasons and then must be transported with the mother.
- Cats should have their view protected from other cats, e.g. a cover provided.
- Additional vigilance should be given to cleanliness and risk of infection when transporting feral (glossary 9) cats.
- All vehicles and equipment must be regularly cleaned and disinfected.

Cats should not be left in a vehicle where the temperature may pose a risk.

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.

# Assessment of animals

## Training and behaviour modification

55	Each 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.
----	--

The individual can be an employee, a volunteer or an external consultant. They should either hold a recognised qualification (glossary 5) in training and behaviour, or be able to demonstrate through recommendation that they have sufficient experience and knowledge to provide advice and can demonstrate ongoing professional development. All behaviour modification programmes should be based on positive reinforcement and tailored to the individual requirements of the animal.

Suitable training and experience could be evidenced through full assessed membership of a Practitioner Organisation which is itself a member of the Animal Behaviour and Training Council. The ABTC website lists accredited practitioners (animal trainers through to veterinary behaviourists) <https://abtc.org.uk>

56	All training and behaviour modification shall be done through positive reinforcement methods without the use of coercive or punitive techniques and/or equipment.
----	---

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.

Slip-leads should not be used as a training aid or for exercise purposes. They should not be used in normal everyday operations.

## Animal assessment

57	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.
----	---

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.

58	Particular care shall be taken when considering rehoming a dog in a new home with young children.
----	---

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 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.

**59** Where the animals are kept in animal housing units by foster carers these units shall meet the housing conditions specified in Annex 1a for dogs and/or 1b for cats.

**60** Each home which is used to provide foster care shall be visited in person or virtually (glossary 7), assessed and approved by a suitably knowledgeable member of the organisation’s staff or volunteers, or another ADCH member, before it is used for fostering animals. This assessment needs to ensure home environment, including other residents, is suitable and foster carer is competent (glossary 3) and capable of meeting the animals’ needs and required standards. The organisation must be able to stipulate any needs for follow up visits.

Members should risk assess whether a virtual (glossary 7) assessment is sufficient, but if there are concerns a physical assessment should be made.

**61** For dogs, 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. The foster home should provide a suitable environment based on each dog’s assessment and individual needs and should take into consideration the dog’s ability to cope with other animals in the home (owned and fostered). Any resident or foster animals’ welfare should also be taken into consideration.

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** For cats, an assessment shall be made, and steps in place to avoid the risk of over-crowding and hoarding both owned and foster cats, and agreement reached with the foster carer. 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, or other foster cats.

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.

The only allowed exception is for orphan kittens and lactating queens, when socialising as an important part of their welfare and development. A vet must be consulted to consider the benefits and disadvantages in each particular case.

**63** Dogs shall not be fostered in homes where they are likely to be left on their own long enough for them to become distressed.

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 (glossary 4).

**64** Assurances shall be given that the foster homes will make arrangements for dogs to be given exercise sufficient for the size and breed of the dog and to meet its welfare needs (glossary 4).

## Neutering

**65** The organisation shall have all cats neutered, unless this is against veterinary advice (glossary 6). Where deemed appropriate but it has not been possible to neuter before it has been rehomed, a system for ensuring the animal is neutered shall be put in place.

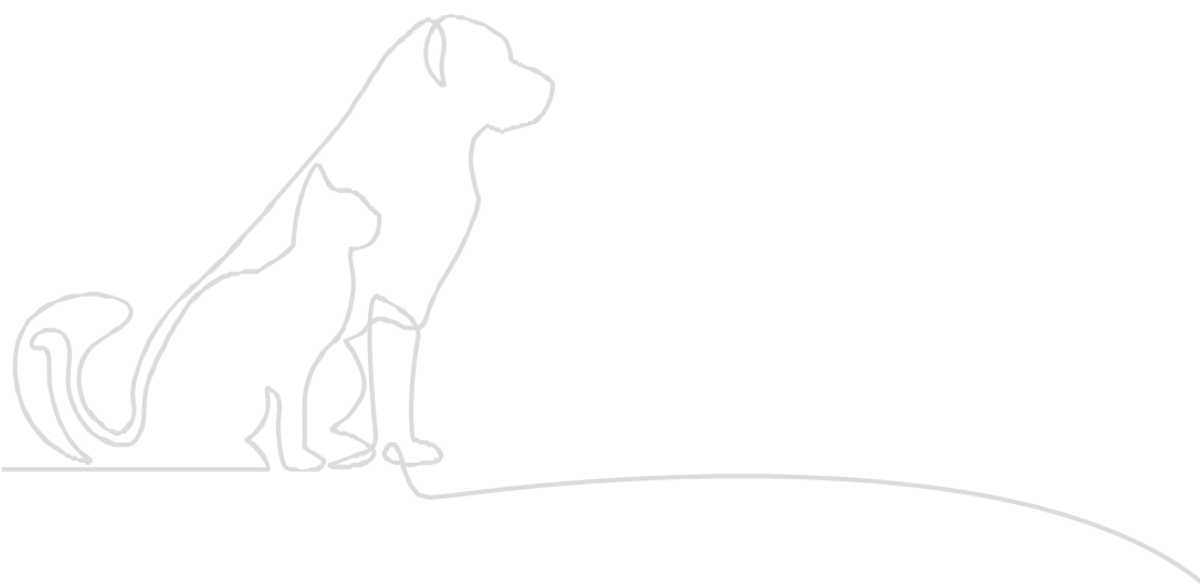
For dogs routine neutering should be assessed on a case by case basis which includes physical factors such as breed, size and age, along with behavioural health of the dog. Where it has not been possible to neuter before rehoming, or it is recommended to delay neutering, a system for ensuring the animal is neutered at a later date shall be put in place, unless this is against a veterinary or competent (glossary 3) Behaviourist's advice.

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.

For dogs, new research indicates significant benefits to delaying neutering until a time suited to the size and breed of individual dogs. It is expected to see rescues taking this new advice into account for the benefit of their dogs' health.

**66** Healthy kittens shall be neutered before they become sexually mature (by 4 months) where the organisation has access to a vet carrying these out, and shall be neutered before they are rehomed wherever possible.

Members shall make every effort to locate and use a vet who will provide neutering before 4 months. To ensure they understand the benefits of carrying this out, it may be helpful to share the information at [www.cat-kind.org.uk](http://www.cat-kind.org.uk)





## 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.

### 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. Animals should be regularly reviewed for signs of deterioration in physical and mental health. Long term confinement of cats is not appropriate.

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 feral (glossary 9) 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.
----	---

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

68	The key factors in deciding whether euthanasia shall be considered are as follows: (a) To prevent pain or suffering (including mental and emotional). (b) If an animal poses an unacceptable risk to people or to other animals. (c) If quality of life for the animal is compromised to an unacceptable degree, with no realistic prospect of improvement. (d) Any other good reason under organisation's operational procedures (e.g. space and resources) and/or its euthanasia policy.
----	--

69	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.
----	---

Intravenous injection is the recommended method.

70	Each organisation shall have a written policy on euthanasia.
----	--



## Rehoming

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	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.
----	---

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	Prospective adopters and any dogs they have shall meet the dog they are considering adopting. Cats shall also meet their prospective adopters.
----	--

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 to 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.

73	<p>The prospective new owner shall be given specific advice and relevant details about their particular new pet covering its future care, diet, behavioural and welfare needs (glossary 4), veterinary history (physical and mental health) and ongoing requirements.</p> <p>All animals must be assessed as fit to home, either as part of their health check they should have on admission to the organisation, or following any treatment that delays rehoming. If the health check shows any other medical issues, these must be communicated to the prospective owner.</p> <p>Where an animal is to be rehomed with an ongoing health issue, then this should be made clear to the new owner and discussion with a suitably qualified person (staff, volunteer or the organisation's vet), should take place prior to adoption about the implications.</p>
----	---

Insurers will have specific rules about pre-existing conditions, which may require a vet check to diagnose. Members should ensure that they are not in breach of these conditions when providing insurance cover, or limiting the availability of insurance for the new owners

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 74 | <p>On being adopted by their new owner, every animal shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have been vaccinated and treated for parasites (see disease control and vaccination above). Where it has not been possible to complete the second part of the vaccination course, a system should be put in place with the new owner to ensure this is carried out by them</li> <li>• Have a matt free coat and be groomed if appropriate for the breed.</li> <li>• A transitional feeding schedule should be provided, if required.</li> <li>• Have been fully examined before departure, if not by a veterinary surgeon then by a suitably skilled and competent (glossary 3) person.</li> <li>• Have a record of the animal's health, breed (if applicable), believed age, and vaccinations which shall be given to the new owner.</li> <li>• Any previous or ongoing health issues shall always be disclosed to the new owner, as in Standard 72. A supply of any required medication and relevant data sheet should be given to the new owners with a written record of their health record.</li> </ul> |
|----|---|

Any appropriate equipment and accessories being supplied with an animal must be suitable for the animal. Staff or volunteers must explain how to use it.

Copies of manufacturer instructions could be provided with any provided equipment. Also see standard 56 on non-aversive training.

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 75 | <p>A suitably trained (glossary 3) person should provide details to the new owners of the type of animal, and specific individual, that they wish to adopt. 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. The organisation should assist in returning any animal at the request of the new owner, either directly back into the original organisation, or by arrangement with another organisation where capacity prevents a return to the original organisation.</p> |
|----|---|

# Legal and Administrative

## Management of the rescue

76	The organisation shall keep records for all animals for which it is responsible in line with its own policy (and a minimum three years in Scotland) including a description of all animals received into the establishment, noting date of arrival and departure, believed age, vet history, behavioural assessments, the name and address of the new owner/keeper and a record of what details the organisation passed onto the new owner. The organisation shall ensure new keepers' details are recorded on the microchip database. It is acceptable for details of the organisation to be recorded as well where the database allows for this.
----	--

77	Personal data should be held in accordance with GDPR and the organisation's own data protection and retention policies.
----	---

77	The organisation should be able to evidence that they follow their data protection and retention policies. See <a href="https://www.gov.uk/data-protection">https://www.gov.uk/data-protection</a> and <a href="https://www.dataprotection.ie/">https://www.dataprotection.ie/</a>
----	--

78	<p>The organisation should have written procedures, followed by all who are responsible for animal care and available to all staff and volunteers, for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feeding</li><li>• Cleaning</li><li>• Transportation</li><li>• Prevention and control of disease spread</li><li>• Animal monitoring</li><li>• Death of an animal</li><li>• Escape of an animal (on and off premises)</li><li>• In an emergency</li></ul>
----	---

If animals are kept in premises:

**(a)** A written emergency plan must be in place, known and available to everyone on the premises, and

**(b)** Such a plan must be followed where necessary to ensure appropriate steps are taken to protect all animals on the premises (without risking human life) in case of fire, flooding, breakdowns of essential heating, ventilation and aeration or filtration systems or other emergencies.

**(c)** The site should be lockable

Any such emergency plan must include details of the emergency measures to be taken for the extrication of the animals should the premises become uninhabitable and an emergency telephone list that includes the fire service and police. The emergency plan includes emergency drills, testing emergency equipment and ensuring that staff know how to use it, electrical safety and testing, back up facilities and accommodation and extremes of weather and temperature.

**79** Where members of the public can view or come into contact with animals, suitable measures must be taken for the safety and welfare of the animals including staff supervision, signage and locked doors.

If animals are on public display, signs must be displayed on enclosures to deter members of the public from, for example, tapping on glass or poking fingers into cages. Clear signage must be in place at all times outlining health and safety risk to customers and appropriate behaviour around animals on the premises relevant to the specific species. In addition to signs, other measures may be required, such as limiting access to some animal enclosures. Organisations must ensure that no animal is accessed or handled by the public without supervision or direction of a suitable staff member or volunteer with knowledge of the animal. The animal must be able to decide not to be handled. Signs should inform the public that they should not enter an enclosure or handle an animal without first speaking to a member of staff or volunteer.

Hand washing facilities are to be available for the public handling animals.

**80** Where organisations use third party facilities (such as commercial boarding) to routinely (glossary 8) house their animals, they must physically inspect the premises. This must occur prior to the agreement, when self-assessments are requested by ADCH and at any other time they see fit. A formal record of the inspection must be kept. A formal agreement must be held on the care provision given by the premises' staff, and staff and volunteers from the organisation. Premises must be licenced with the local authority. Including the accommodation used by the rescue, if eligible.

Units housing rescue or private boarding animals must be separated by a solid door or in a different building. Extra precautions must be taken to prevent the spread of disease.

Copies of the organisation's own procedures and ADCH Minimum Welfare and Operational Standards must be provided to the boarding establishment.

Further welfare visits should take place more frequently, depending on the number and need of animals under the organisations legal responsibility. The organisation must be able to raise any concerns about the care of their animals, or the facilities, with a named individual (such as the owner or manager) at the premises



# Annexes A and B - Housing Conditions

Under each jurisdiction's relevant legislation, 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.

Apart from Scotland these acts do not apply to animal rescue or rehoming centres unless they are carrying on a business of providing accommodation for other people's animals.

In Scotland from 1 September 2021 it became mandatory for any rescue or rehoming centre to be licensed or for anyone rehoming an animal to be licensed. In all other countries there is currently 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 housing conditions

A1	Sleeping areas of dog units shall be sufficiently insulated and/or heated to prevent extremes of temperature.
----	---

A2	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 or becoming trapped.
----	---

A3	All dog kennels shall be secure to prevent escape.
----	--

A4	Ventilation shall be provided to all interior areas of dog kennels.
----	---

This should be sufficient to ensure an adequate number of air changes, without the creation of excessive, localised draughts in the sleeping area.

A5	Dog units shall have a sleeping area.
----	---------------------------------------

A6	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.
----	---

Rescues must comply with any mandatory local licencing regulations.

A7	Suitable bedding shall be provided which allows the dog 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.
----	--

A8	Dog exercise areas shall not be used as overnight sleeping areas.
----	---

Where kennels do not have runs attached, the rescue should ensure additional exercise opportunities are given to dogs via the use of paddocks and additional walks. New builds should not utilise this type of kennel if planning permission can be obtained for attached runs.

A9	Heating facilities shall be available in the unit (including any isolation facility) and used according to the requirements of the individual dog. The heating system shall avoid any risk of electrocution, fires and burning.
----	---

A10	The sleeping accommodation shall be capable of being maintained at an ambient temperature appropriate for species and breed of dog. 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 must be catered for, e.g. short haired dogs with little body fat, underweight or old dogs.
-----	--

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.

In order for rescues to know if they are meeting the standards they need thermometer(s) positioned correctly. Rescues should use thermometers which record the maximum and minimum temperatures, as well as current environmental temperature. These should be positioned as close as safely possible to the same height as the dogs' sleeping position, and away from draughts, heaters or sunny windows which would result in a false reading. It is good practice (but not essential) to maintain a daily record of temperatures to help take action to manage temperatures during hot or cold spells.

Max/min thermometers give reassurance to animal carers that the dog's kennel is staying within the recommended levels for temperature, and also provide early identification of issues with heating apparatus, or kennels where extremes of temperature are being reached when no one might be present, e.g. overnight in winter or in the middle of the day in summer.

One thermometer for every kennel is ideal but fewer could be used by utilising removable sticky pads and disinfecting the thermometer between uses. In order not to put dogs at risk, rescues should ensure that thermometers are not placed where a dog may be able to reach them. Using removable sticky pads could enable a rescue to check a kennel when it is unoccupied, or when smaller dogs unable to reach a thermometer are occupying a kennel.

A11	Heaters shall not be sited in a manner or location where they present a risk to the dog of burning or electrocution, or a risk of fire. Open flame appliances shall not be used.
-----	--

A12	Dogs shall always have the option to move to a cooler, shady area in hot weather.
-----	---

A13	All dog beds, sleeping platforms and bedding provided shall be durable, safe, capable of being easily cleaned and disinfected.
-----	--

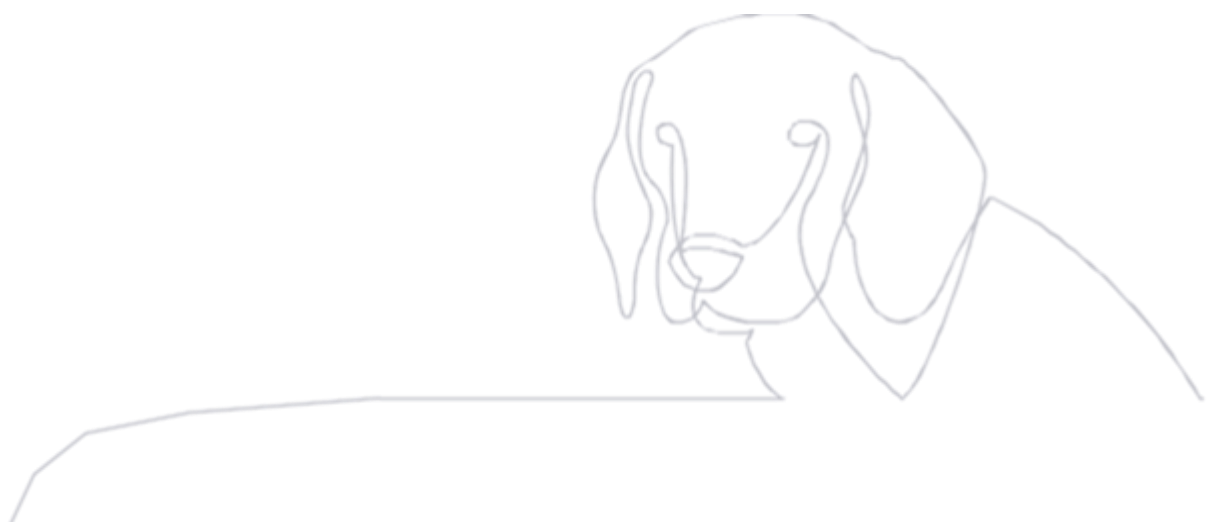
A14	Where raised beds are provided, they shall be appropriate to the age of the dog regards size and height, and materials used shall not be toxic to dogs.
-----	---

A15	The type of bedding used shall be safe, soft and easily cleaned or disposed of after use by each dog
-----	--

A16	Crating shall not be used to house dogs permanently and shall not be used as a long-term alternative to providing suitable kennel accommodation.
-----	--

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.

**A17** Crates 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 he or she becomes distressed, or generally for more than four hours at a time.





## B) Cats housing conditions

B1	The cattery shall be structurally sound, constructed of materials that are robust and safe and be well maintained.
B2	Full length and width sneeze barriers shall be provided where the gap between cat units is less than 62.5cm.
B3	Waste water shall not run off into adjacent cat pens.
B4	There shall be an escape-proof area (safety corridor/entrance lobby) at the exit of each cat unit.
B5	There shall be a safe, secure, waterproof roof over all of the cat units (sleeping accommodation and exercise area) and the safety corridor. For the exercise area, materials used shall be capable of filtering UV light and providing adequate shade.
B6	There shall be adequate lighting in the cat unit.
B7	<p>Ventilation shall be appropriate all year round (both cool in hot weather and avoiding cold draughts in winter). Localised draughts in the cat's sleeping accommodation shall be avoided.</p> <p>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.</p>
B8	Cats shall always have the option to move to a cooler, shady area in hot weather.
B9	<p>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.</p> <p>The height of cat sleeping areas should be between 75cm and 1.5m. 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.</p> <p>Rescues must comply with any mandatory local licencing regulations.</p>
B10	<p>Shelves or raised areas shall be provided to allow cats to rest high up.</p> <p>The raised areas should be easily accessible and ramps or steps may need to be used for elderly, ill, very young or disabled cats.</p>
B11	Heating facilities shall be available in the unit (and any isolation facility) and used according to the requirements of the individual cat.

**B12** The cat's sleeping accommodation shall be capable of being maintained at an ambient temperature appropriate for species and breed.

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

In order for rescues to know if they are meeting the standards they need thermometer(s) positioned correctly. Rescues should use thermometers which record the maximum and minimum temperatures, as well as current environmental temperature. These should be positioned at roughly the same height as the cats' sleeping position while not putting cats at risk, and away from draughts, heaters or sunny windows which would result in a false reading. It is good practice (but not essential) to maintain a daily record of temperatures to help take action to manage temperatures during hot or cold spells.

Max/min thermometers give reassurance to animal carers that the cat's enclosure is staying within the recommended levels for temperature, and also provide early identification of issues with heating apparatus, or pens where extremes of temperature are being reached when no one might be present, e.g. overnight in winter or in the middle of the day in summer.

One thermometer for every pen is ideal but, if necessary, thermometers can be moved over time, disinfecting them when necessary.

**B13** Cats shall be able to remove themselves from any additional source of heat.

**B14** Heaters shall not be sited in a manner or location where they present a risk to the cat of burning or electrocution, or a risk of fire. Open flame appliances shall not be used.

**B15** Suitable bedding shall be provided which allows the cat 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.

**B16** A cat shall have space for safe play and exercise.

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. 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. The exercise area should be a minimum of 1.8m tall.

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.

Rescues must comply with any mandatory local licencing regulations.

**B17** Cats shall be provided with a place to hide which shall be large enough to provide concealment.

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.

# Annex C – Importation of dogs and cats from outside of the UK and Ireland

The following standards relate to transfers outside of the UK, Republic of Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man.

You will see from the importation guidance that some of these standards are of a different nature from the existing standards. In particular the first standard asks Members (including applicants for membership) to alert the ADCH if they are involved in importation so that we can assign an appropriate assessor, and also manage the particular risks involved to assessors and to the ADCH brand.

C1	Members and applicants shall notify ADCH if they plan to import dogs and/or cats from outside the UK, Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. See guidance below.
C2	Dog and cat importation from within the EU shall be carried out following the Balai Directive (Directive 92/65/EEC)
C3	Members importing dogs and cats from outside of the EU shall seek additional advice from their vet and the ADCH and ensure legal compliance.
C4	Any imported dog or cat shall have a documented behavioural assessment, carried out by a suitable competent (glossary 3) person, in the country of origin, showing suitability for rehoming in a domestic environment in the UK and Ireland.
C5	Dogs and cats shall only be imported after veterinary tests show the animal is disease free. With veterinary liaison Members shall ascertain which tests are appropriate, bearing in mind the disease profile of the source and destination countries using <a href="https://cvbd.elanco.com/">https://cvbd.elanco.com/</a> and information on ADCH's website <a href="https://adch.org.uk/importation">https://adch.org.uk/importation</a> , which also contains an up to date list of diseases that are of the greatest concern
C6	Blood tests shall be done using an EU Approved Laboratory e.g. Acarus laboratory <a href="https://www.langfordvets.co.uk/diagnostic-laboratories/acarus/">https://www.langfordvets.co.uk/diagnostic-laboratories/acarus/</a> .
C7	If dogs and cats are free from exotic disease they shall be given appropriate preventative veterinary treatment (e.g. vaccination where available) to prevent infection against diseases endemic in the source and destination countries. The diseases we are most concerned about are: Rabies, Babesiosis; Ehrlichiosis; Leishmaniasis and Dirofilaria.
C8	Upon arrival into the UK or Ireland, following importation, the animal shall move directly into the care of the organisation and ADCH Standards shall apply.
C9	Organisations shall have a plan in place in case the rehoming of an animal is not successful.

## Importation of dogs and cats from outside of the UK and Ireland guidance

This standard is of a different nature to other standards. ADCH must manage its risks to assessors and to the brand and must ensure that appropriate assessors are allocated for visits.

The standards do not apply where dogs have been handed in by Members of the Public and not imported by the organisation. Assessors will need to exercise care when organisations do not import themselves but act in close contact with another party that does the import.

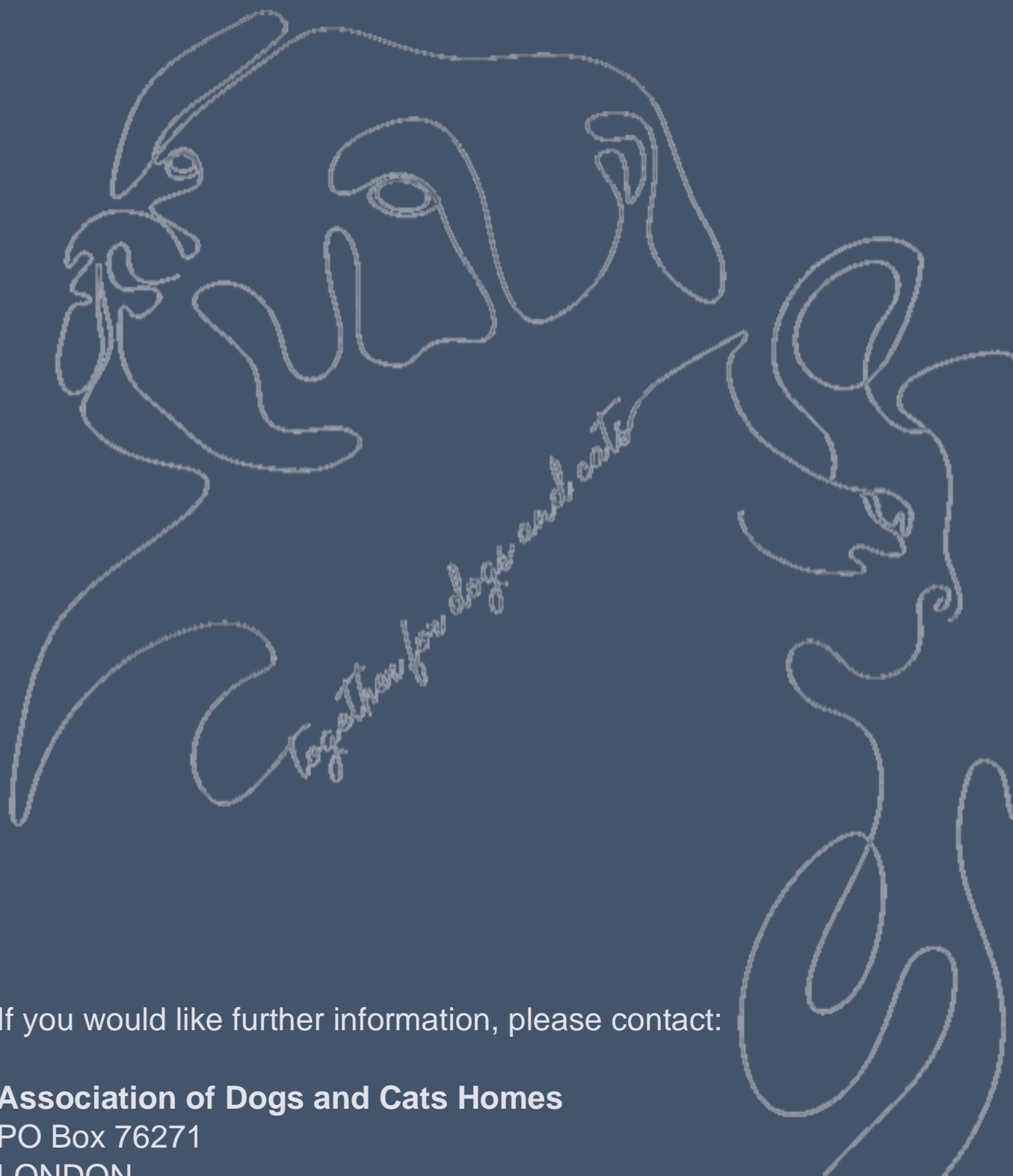
Members considering importation should carefully consider the following:

- Long distance transportation is very stressful for the cats and dogs.
- Animals may not have been socialised/habituated to life in a UK/Irish home and they may not be used to being handled or confined if they were street animals.
- Exotic diseases may be imported including rabies and this increases the disease risks to the native UK/Irish population.

Compliance with Regulation 576/2013 (non-commercial PETS scheme) is not sufficient when the organisations responsible for the movement are animal welfare organisations or rehoming charities.

International rehoming is seen as a temporary solution and organisations are working towards the day when moving dogs and cats across borders for rehoming is no longer necessary.

The EU CVBD website covers both cats and dogs.



If you would like further information, please contact:

**Association of Dogs and Cats Homes**

PO Box 76271

LONDON

SW8 9FA

[enquiries@adch.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@adch.org.uk)

Registered charity no: 1180574

© Association of Dogs and Cats Homes 2025