

Principles Underpinning ADCH Standards and Assessments

In this statement we explain the principles underpinning ADCH's Minimum Welfare and Operational Standards and the linked Assessment programme. These principles reflect ADCH's values.

Standards

- 1 **Relevant** - The standards are relevant to, and achievable by, every organisation - large and small, with centres, foster carers, commercial boarding, volunteers, staff, etc.
- 2 **Animal-focused** - The standards are based around each dog's or cat's experience, from the point when organisation's responsibility for care begins, through to rehoming and follow-up. They reflect the five welfare needs and show the minimum care that each animal should receive to have their welfare needs met.
- 3 **Ownership** - ADCH consults with its members over the standards, including revisions, so ADCH owns the standards on behalf of members who value highly belonging to a standards-based Association.

Assessments

- 4 **Improving welfare** - When ADCH assesses an organisation against these standards, the priority is to help create real improvement in the welfare of dogs and cats in the care of that organisation, now and in the future.
- 5 **Solutions-focused** - During or after assessment visits ADCH's volunteer assessors can provide a template for action plans and aim to suggest pragmatic solutions to organisations who are not currently able to meet one or more of the standards.
- 6 **Support** - ADCH's central team and our volunteer assessors have toolkits, knowledge and experience available to support organisations to deliver care at least in line with the minimum standards. They can also draw upon the entire resource of the Membership - over 10,000 people - to signpost towards help in solving any problem.
- 7 **Training** - ADCH also provides training to help organisations to meet the standards.
- 8 **Independence of Members** - Member organisations are independent charities, and we know that there is often more than one way to meet an animal's welfare needs as set out in the Standards. Therefore, some Standards are expressed succinctly, with detail in guidance notes. This reflects local management and trustees' responsibility for deciding how to meet the standards, given their management of resources, volunteer / staff mix, property etc.
- 9 **Self-assessments** - ADCH trusts members to self-assess against the standards and offers the same support whether assessments are done by members themselves or Volunteer Assessors on a cyclical basis.
- 10 **Withdrawal of Membership** - Members overwhelmingly support the solutions-based approach to assessments, but occasionally a member chooses not to adopt the available solutions. This can lead to a two-way process where the member or ADCH can decide to withdraw from membership, or not to admit an applicant into membership. This ensures fairness to all members and upholds the value of the reputation of ADCH and its members. This is upheld in the constitution.
- 11 **Action plans** - ADCH can also help members to draw up action plans, and provide help with implementation, to achieve full compliance with all standards.
- 12 **Assessors** - ADCH invests in ongoing training for our Volunteer Assessors, both during induction and through ongoing professional development.