



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

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

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

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

The ADCH membership was consulted and agreed that the Minimum Standards should focus on the five welfare needs of animals, along with some additional elements that are either a legal requirement, or constitute agreed, sector best practice.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The self and external assessments we have already undertaken indicated that most members are already broadly compliant with the new Minimum Standards. For those that are not, the time allowed for compliance will depend on the scale of work and funding required, and the plan for completion. However, we would expect that

the majority of members will be compliant with the new Minimum Standards within 12 months of their assessment.

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

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

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

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

Additionally, a member can expect to be externally assessed approximately once every three to five years. External assessments will be carried out by either a member of the ADCH Management Committee (or any successor board of Trustees of ADCH), or a suitably trained employee or volunteer of a member organisation, as nominated and appointed by the Management Committee or Trustees.

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

Where a member organisation has two or three sites, all should be assessed individually.

Where a member organisation has between four and ten sites, three sites should be selected and assessed.

Where a member organisation has more than ten sites, at least three or 10% of sites should be assessed, whichever is the greater.

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

Where a member organisation operates only through multiple volunteer foster homes, relevant sections of the Minimum Standards still apply and should be assessed.

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

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

Please don't hesitate to contact Michelle Baxter Wickham, ADCH Relationship Manager, who will be happy to help ([michelle@adch.org.uk](mailto:michelle@adch.org.uk)).