

# Charter

*for the*

# Welfare of Animals



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## Statement of Intent

Aberdeenshire Council believes that it has a moral responsibility for the welfare of all captive and domestic animals, and all wild animals in so far that its activities impinge upon them.

The Council promotes the responsible ownership of pets, and high standards of animal welfare and husbandry at licenced premises, on farms, during transport, and at livestock markets. Aberdeenshire Council endorses the five freedoms, for all animals, conceived by FAWC (The Farm Animal Welfare Council), an independent advisory body to the Government.

1. Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition – by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour
2. Freedom from discomfort – by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area
3. Freedom from pain, injury or disease – by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment
4. Freedom to express normal behaviour – by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind
5. Freedom from fear and distress – by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering

Aberdeenshire Council will work to achieve these objectives on animal welfare matters by:

- Enforcing fairly and even-handedly.
- Exercising control through policy decisions in relation to activities that it manages.
- Educating and advising residents of and visitors to Aberdeenshire on animal welfare issues.
- Providing up-to-date advice on animal welfare issues to individuals or organisations involved with animals.
- Seeking to influence (both within and outwith the Council's area), persons who could have an impact on animal welfare issues.

Aberdeenshire Council will amend and update the Animal Welfare Charter as necessary, to reflect the changes in legislation and local circumstances.

## Responsible Ownership of Pets

To control and protect dogs and the community, Aberdeenshire Council will fully utilise its Dog Warden service.

The Council encourages the responsible ownership of pets. It believes that education by advice is of paramount importance, and encourages dialogue with pet owners through its Dog Wardens.

It will produce literature on the responsible ownership of dogs, including lists of dog training classes, (some run by Aberdeenshire Council) for distribution.

## Stray Dogs

The Council regards the education of the dog owning public to be essential in its fight to lessen the number of straying dogs, and thereby cause a reduction in the resultant problems of fouling, traffic hazards, etc.

The Council takes an active role in the education of dog owners regarding straying and will:

- Give talks to schools and other groups.
- Produce literature in the form of information booklets and leaflets.
- Provide periodic displays in libraries and other places accessible to the public.

Aberdeenshire Council promotes permanent identification of dogs by microchipping. It will provide a voucher system and discount scheme to this end. Microchipping will be done upon request by the Dog Warden unit.

This Council will uphold the requirement for dogs to wear collars and name tags (necessary by law).



## Licensing of animal boarding, breeding and riding establishments, pet shops and dangerous wild animals

Aberdeenshire Council will continue its policy to uphold the conditions of the above establishments in line with the published Guidance and Model Licence Conditions. It will seek to ensure that the conditions are continually reviewed, and implemented to the highest standards to ensure the welfare of animals.

The Council will appoint Veterinary Surgeons to inspect premises as necessary, and to advise on aspects of health and welfare. It will undertake to carry out annual inspections when the licences are renewed, and regular intermediate inspections at both quiet and busy times throughout the year.

## Performing Animals

Any training method should not cause suffering or fear to the animal, and performances should not be demeaning to either animal or performer. The five freedoms should be observed at all times. This will be taken into consideration when a licence under the Performing Animals (Regulation) Act 1925 is applied for.

## Animal Circuses

When considering the leasing to Circuses of Council owned or maintained land, the following will be taken into account:

- The type of animal used, e.g. domestic animals such as horses and dogs, or rare or endangered “wild” species such as tiger.
- Whether the five freedoms are observed throughout the animal’s life.
- If breaches of the five freedoms are established, this will be justification for refusal of any subsequent applications for lease of Council ground for Circuses.

## Giving Animals as Prizes

This Council opposes the giving of live animals as prizes because:

- They may be accepted upon impulse
- No preparation of living quarters or feed is possible
- The keeper may have little knowledge of the husbandry requirements needed to conform to the five freedoms

## Farm Animals

To protect the welfare of farmed animals, and to prevent and control the spread of disease, Aberdeenshire Council will ensure that its Inspectorate are authorised under the appropriate legislation, that they may properly fulfil their statutory duties. They will ensure that DEFRA Codes of Practice, relating to animal welfare, are adhered to by all persons having care of livestock, even if on a temporary basis.

## Markets

Aberdeenshire Council, through its Animal Health and Welfare Inspectors, will provide a presence on most market days. They will ensure that the legislation relating to livestock markets is being complied with by market operators, farmers and hauliers. (The Welfare of Animals at Markets Order 1990)

In addition, they will ensure that the Code of Practice for Livestock Markets and The Market Strategy are adhered to.

## Transport

The Inspectorate will make checks on livestock transporters for compliance with legislation, and in the interests of animal welfare. The checks will include such matters as ensuring that animals:

- are fit to travel
- are not overcrowded on the means of transport
- are on vehicles that are suitable for such use and are well maintained

Documentation checks will also be carried out to ensure feeding, resting and watering has been carried out at appropriate times.

This Authority will actively liaise with the Police and other bodies to carry out multi-agency road checks on vehicles.

## Farm Visits

The Inspectorate will visit farms to check for the disease prevention and control measures through farm records. Aberdeenshire Council will investigate on farm welfare complaints, or pass on to the appropriate authority within one working day.

## Enforcement Policy

Aberdeenshire Council's policy is to enforce by education and advice. The Inspectorate will freely give advice and information regarding legal requirements, in order to ensure that the obligations are met.

Aberdeenshire Council will resort to prosecution when the seriousness of the case dictates, or other options have failed.

## Contingency Plans

Aberdeenshire Council will periodically update its contingency plans for notifiable disease such as Foot and Mouth, Rabies etc. in conjunction with the Grampian Joint Emergencies Working Group and any other bodies. These plans will aim to limit the spread of disease, and subsequent suffering to other healthy animals.

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