

London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham Animal Welfare Charter

Statement of Intent

- 1.0 The Council supports the view that all animals have a right to life free from cruel treatment and unnecessary suffering.
- 1.1 This charter has been adopted by the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham to reflect the concerns of the Administration and all residents who care about animal welfare.
- 1.2 The Council recognises that animals are capable of feeling, capable of enjoying a state of wellbeing and equally capable of suffering. Therefore, the Council considers that the owners and keepers are responsible for ensuring that the welfare needs of their animals are met.
- 1.3 The Council will seek to work together with external agencies and organisations to ensure a co-ordinated approach to animal welfare issues.

These include the need:

- For a suitable environment (place to live)
 - For a suitable diet
 - To exhibit normal behaviour patterns
 - To have appropriate company (be housed with, or apart from, other animals)
 - To be protected from pain, injury, suffering and disease.
- 1.4 This charter does not cover every aspect of animal welfare, but it does aim to detail those areas the Council considers important and where it feels it can have some influence as a responsible and representative public body.
 - 1.5 The Council supports all current animal welfare legislation.

- 1.6 The Council expects animal owners to respect the rights of other people, to clear up after their dogs, to observe restrictions such as dog free areas and prevent nuisance, alarm or damage to property or the environment generally.
- 1.7 The animal welfare charter will be reviewed regularly and if necessary revised from time to time to reflect changes in legislation and to address the needs of our residents.

Council responsibilities

- 2.0 Under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, the Council has responsibility for stray dogs. This service is provided by the Council's contractor.
- 2.1 We will ensure that all strays found in the borough are treated humanely and are not subject to any further pain or suffering, including stress.
- 2.2 We will have a clear policy for the treatment of injured or sick stray dogs found both during and outside of office hours.
- 2.3 We will ensure advice and information on stray dog services in the borough is consistent and widely available.
- 2.4 All dogs will be thoroughly checked for identification and if possible returned to their owner. Otherwise strays will be transferred to the kennels used by the council's stray dogs' contractor or Battersea Dogs & Cats Home. It is Council policy never to euthanize a healthy dog that is capable of being rehomed.
- 2.5 We will provide advice and information on responsible dog ownership to owners of all dogs that are directly returned to the owner by the Council.
- 2.6 The Council is required by law to issue licences for activities involving animals, with the aim of maintaining good standards of animal health and welfare. There are national licensing requirements for selling animals as pets, provision of boarding for cats and dogs, hiring out horses, breeding of dogs and for keeping or training animals for exhibition.
- 2.7 The Council will always seek to ensure high standards of health and welfare arrangements are maintained by organisers of animal shows which may involving animal petting and or display. The Council will work with organisers and venues to ensure high welfare standards are maintained and ensure personal hygiene controls are being maintained.
- 2.8 For large scale events (horse eventing / polo) the Council will seek to ensure there is competent persons in place (e.g. veterinary practitioners) to provide the required animal welfare oversight and intervention as required.
- 2.9 We will continue to work in partnership with the City of London Animal Health Inspectors to ensure that the premises comply with the statutory licence conditions.

Council Policies

Pets and health & wellbeing

3.0 Research suggests that animal companionship and pet ownership can offer a range of benefits to an individual's physical and mental health and wellbeing, There is some evidence that pet ownership increases physical activity levels in the elderly and can improve social engagement and interactions for those at risk of social isolation such as the elderly or people with a disability. Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) in hospitals, nursing homes and other settings have demonstrated a moderate positive impact on outcomes for emotional wellbeing, autism-spectrum symptoms, behavioural problems, and medical difficulties.

Responsible Pet Ownership

4.0 The Animal Welfare Act 2006 stipulates that owners and keepers of animals are responsible for ensuring that the welfare needs of the animals are met. We strongly advise that anyone thinking of getting a pet should have good knowledge and / or take professional advice on the care of such animals before acquiring them.

Since April 2016 it is law that all dogs are microchipped and must wear a collar and tag with identifying name and address when out in a public area. Consideration should be given to neutering the animal to prevent unwanted pregnancies. There should be regular health checks, including vaccinations where required.

Animal waste should be safely and hygienically disposed of. Pet owners are encouraged to control their animals properly to avoid the possibility of them causing annoyance or distress to members of the public or other animals.

Dogs

4.1 The Council liaises with other organisations to promote responsible dog ownership by:

- organising regular events in the borough's parks with our Parks Police service to encourage responsible pet ownership as well as providing a free micro-chipping service.
- Promoting low cost neutering in conjunction with local veterinary practices and the RSPCA or Dogs Trust.
- Developing the Borough Action for Responsible K9's (BARK) project; a multi-agency group which proactively encourages responsible dog ownership and tackles irresponsible dog owners.
- Carrying out regular proactive BARK patrols of the borough to educate the community on dog health and welfare, responsible ownership and dog related

legislation. We also visit properties where we have been made aware of a dog related welfare complaint or environmental concern such as fouling or noise or where we suspect a banned type of dog is being kept.

- Promoting animal welfare by placing advice on our website, including information on statutory services such as stray dogs and licensing of animal establishments.

Dangerous Dogs

- 4.2 Sometimes potentially dangerous dogs are kept illegally and in some cases are mistreated. We are working closely with the Metropolitan Police Service, Safer Neighbourhoods Team and the Police Status Dogs Unit and will provide support to the investigation of incidents involving dangerous dogs used as “status symbols”. We will not tolerate anti-social behaviour linked to dogs.

We believe that any dog, no matter what breed, can be dangerous if it is in the wrong hands. Any dog is regarded as being dangerously out of control if it injures a person or it behaves in such a way that it worries a person and makes them think that it will injure them.

To allow a dog to be dangerously out of control is an offence under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, which also lists the details of all banned dog breeds.

Puppy farming

- 4.3 We oppose puppy farming and support the RSPCA in recommending that prospective dog owners purchase only puppies that are seen with their mothers. We also encourage residents to consider rehoming a rescue dog rather than a puppy, in an effort to reduce the population of unwanted dogs.

Cats

- 5.0 We encourage residents to be responsible cat owners and support local animal welfare organisations in their efforts to educate and assist cat owners.

The Mayhew Animal Home offers a ‘trap, neuter and release’ programme for feral cats in the borough, and also offers a re-homing service for abandoned or stray cats, helping to find them loving and committed new lifetime homes.

Giving animals as prizes

- 6.0 It is council policy that the conditions for hiring or letting any of the Council’s facilities – premises or land – include a clause specifically banning the provision of live creatures, animals or fish, as prizes. We oppose the giving of animals as prizes because;
- No preparation of animal housing, feeding or how the animal should be kept is available.

- The prize winner may have little knowledge about the pet's husbandry requirements in question or how to be a responsible owner.
- The prize may be accepted without proper consideration or thought to the animal in question.

6.1 The Council encourages other private premises or landowners to follow this lead. It is against the law for unaccompanied under 16-year olds to be given animals as prizes under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. Licensing officers will ensure that licensees are aware of their duty of care under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

Horse, Pony and Donkey Rides

7.0 Anyone offering pony rides on Council land should be licensed under the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) Regulations 2018 and must meet strict conditions stipulated by the regulations.

Animal Hoarding

8.0 An increasing number of cases are coming to light nationally where individuals own a high number of animals but are unable to provide adequate standards of nutrition, sanitation, shelter and veterinary care. Hoarders often care about their animals deeply, but they don't see or understand that their behaviour actually results in animal neglect. This neglect can involve cramped, poor living conditions and in extreme cases, starvation, illness or death.

The vast majority of animal hoarders exhibit a range of behaviours that are characteristic of mental illness. As a result, hoarders must be treated with compassion and respect in order to help solve the problem and stop this type of cruelty.

Hoarders are often in denial about their inability to provide appropriate care for their animals and typically believe that no-one else can care for their animals like they do. They are often hold the belief that if they seek help, or allow external intervention, their animals will be euthanized or taken away from them.

RSPCA Inspectors investigate hoarding and cruelty offences. To make a report go to <http://rspb.org.uk/issues-take-action/animal-hoarding>.

Pets in Council Accommodation and Sheltered Housing Schemes

9.0 Our leases prohibit the keeping of pets. However, where a flat has a garden the housing officer may give consent for the leaseholder to keep a pet subject to the pet not causing a nuisance. The Council's decision regarding nuisance is final. The Council will not agree to the lease being varied to allow the keeping of pets.

Tenants of communal sheltered accommodation are not allowed to keep pets without prior written approval by the Council. Such approval will be at the discretion of the Council and each application will be considered on its individual merits having regard in particular to the suitability of the accommodation, the nature and size of the pet and the interests of any other tenants.

Pet Sitting Services

- 10.0 The Council encourages responsible pet ownership and recommends that pet owners use only licensed establishments inclusive of pet sitting services, dog sitters and day care for dogs which should be all licensed under the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) Regulations 2018.

Horses

- 11.0 The Council supports the new EU Horse Passport Registration in micro-chipping of all foals born after 1st July 2009 and all other horses when applying for a horse's first passport. We also support EU registration in the requirement that all horses and ponies need to have a passport identifying the animal.

The Council will enforce the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and will not allow tethering of horses and ponies as a method of keeping equines on a permanent basis when there is no regular daily exercise, in an open environment, on any land owned or managed by the Council. If tethering is temporary or regular daily exercise is provided, then the Code of Practice for tethering horses and ponies should be followed. In line with the RSPCA, we do not oppose an animal being tethered for short periods for grooming or having a short break in a journey or working period.

Dangerous Wild Animals

- 12.0 The Council recommends that if people are selling or keeping animals listed on the schedule of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 and other dangerous and / or exotic animals, they should have specialist knowledge and / or seek professional advice on the care of these animals. Some of these animals can grow very large, live for a long time and can be a threat to life.

We encourage the government to increase the number of animals listed on the schedule of dangerous wild animals and supports the rigorous enforcement of current legislation.

Wildlife and biodiversity

- 13.0 The Council supports measures to conserve wildlife and draws attention to the following:

Parks and Biodiversity

We make minimum use of pesticides in all our public open spaces and encourage the introduction of wildlife and fauna into these areas by sympathetic management and

displaying notices explaining this type of management to visitors. Weed control is by approved methods only. The expansion of such areas within the borough is an ongoing project.

As part of the Council's Parks Strategy, WE WILL:

Work in partnership with the Hammersmith and Fulham Biodiversity Partnership to implement the Biodiversity Action Plan and maintain and enhance all Sites of Nature Conservation Importance.

Ensure that parks development schemes include elements that protect, promote or enhance wildlife habitats.

Improve the protection, management, and promotion of nature conservation sites throughout the borough.

Pesticides

- 14.0 We encourage our residents to use only authorised pesticides that will do no harm to flora and fauna. Members of the public should check for an up-to-date list of authorised pesticides before using them.

The Council has recently banned the use of Glyphosate

The control of animals released into the wild

- 14.1 We are concerned at the potential threat to British wildlife, pets and people by the release of non-native animals into the wild (i.e. terrapins other exotic species). Expert advice should always be sought from DEFRA and the Environment Agency.

Snares

- 14.2 The Council is opposed to the use of snares and these are not permitted to be used on council-owned parks and open spaces. We encourage the government to strengthen legislation in this regard.

Traps

- 14.3 The Council is generally opposed to the use of traps. However, where there is no alternative, we will do all we can to reduce the suffering of the target species and avoid the capture of non-target species.

Bats

- 14.4 The Council supports legislation that protects bats and their roosts.

Grey Squirrels

- 14.5 Where grey squirrels are causing damage to property, they should be humanely caught and destroyed in accordance with national guidelines.

Bees

- 14.6 Bees perform a vital function in pollination and should not be destroyed except in very exceptional circumstances. The Council's Pest Control Service will provide advice and, wherever possible, will arrange for bees to be removed by a beekeeper rather than destroyed. Anyone wishing to keep bees should contact the Bee Keepers' Association for advice.

Wasps

- 14.7 Wasps nests are often sited where they cause nuisance and present a significant risk if disturbed or aggravated. We accept that wasps' nests will often need to be destroyed, but advise that professional advice should always be sought.

Pest Control

- 15.0 We promote and support only the use of safe and humane methods of pest control.
- 15.1 We encourage householders to seek professional advice on pest control, rather than over-the-counter preparations so as to prevent harm to non-target species, humans and the environment.
- 15.3 We discourage the use of sticky board glue traps for controlling rodents as they can cause pain and suffering to both those animals and other animals if they get caught on them.

Pigeons

- 16.0 Over-population of feral pigeons in built up areas can cause health and safety problems.

We discourage the feeding of feral pigeons, for the following reasons.

1. It affects their health.
 2. It attracts vermin and is a risk to human health.
 3. It damages buildings.
 4. It makes them dependent on people for food.
 5. It deprives other birds of food.
- 16.1 We encourage the safe and hygienic disposal of all waste, especially fast food waste products so as not to provide a source of food for pigeons, foxes or vermin.
- 16.2 Where the pigeon population has to be controlled, only humane methods will be used.

Foxes

17.0 Foxes are now a common sight in London. The Council does not control the population of foxes and discourages the killing of foxes. Advice and information about foxes is available on our website and at <http://www.thefoxwebsite.org/>

Planning

18.0 The Council is committed to using the mechanisms in the planning process to ensure that animals, plants and their habitats are afforded the appropriate level of protection in accordance with their protected status.

Litter

19.0 Litter is not only unsightly, but an cause harm to both domestic and wild animals,. We expect all litter to be disposed of safely in the facilities we provide for this purpose throughout the borough.

Experiments on Living Animals

20.0 We advocate methods of research that do not involve animals. We also recognise that it is irresponsible and not in the interests of the animal for laboratory animals to be released into the wild where they may not be able to fend for themselves.

Higher Welfare Farming

21.0 The Council would seek the general adoption of a higher welfare approach to farming be adopted and requests that members of parliament support any legislation that will improve animal welfare conditions. We encourage consumers to check food labelling very carefully and to seek assistance from store managers if they are unsure of their meaning in an effort to encourage a more ethical approach to farming.

Transport of Food Animals

22.0 We believe that the live export of food animals is not necessary and that the slaughter of animals should take place as close to where they are reared as possible.

We support the role of trading standards in enforcing roadside checks of livestock in transit to ensure compliance with legislation designed to protect animal welfare.

We support police enforcement of speed restrictions and the condition of vehicles transporting live animals and request that enforcement be more rigorously applied.

Animal Cruelty

23.0 Agencies dealing with children or vulnerable adults, who have suffered physical and / or mental abuse, recognise that there is a link between animal and 'people' cruelty.

The Council supports exchange of information between social services staff and the RSPCA where there are welfare concerns.

The Council encourages the Government to support research by other agencies into the link between animal / child and vulnerable adult abuse in an effort to reduce both animal cruelty and serious crime.

School Meals

24.0 It is the personal choice of a person to eat meat or not. The Council will aim to use higher welfare produce at all Council-run functions or where it has an influence. Meat and vegetarian option meals are available daily throughout the schools who use the Council's contractor. In addition a fish option replaces the meat option on a Friday. Halal meat is available upon request.

Fireworks

25.0 Many animals are frightened by fireworks. We support the introduction and enforcement of legislation such as the licensing of shops selling fireworks and the limit of hours that fireworks are permitted to be used.

We support and promote organised public firework displays at Bishops Park and Ravenscourt Park.

Sky Lanterns

26.0 Sky lanterns can harm wildlife, livestock and other animals by causing injuries that lead to suffering and a slow painful death.

The Council advises against the use of sky lanterns and does not allow them on its own land. The council recommends that harmless alternatives are sought to prevent injury, suffering and fatality of animals.

Publicity

27.0 We will regularly update the information we provide to promote animal welfare through our website.

Blood Sports

28.0 It is Council policy that hunting is not allowed on council-owned land.

Circuses, Performances, Exhibitions and Displays of Animals

29.0 The council permits circuses on suitable land in the borough (Eel Brook Common, Shepherds Bush Green and Lillie Road Rec). The council uses reputable firms and in light of this policy will review its documentation with circus providers to ensure compliance. However, it is Council policy that all applications to hold circuses,

performances, exhibitions or displays of animals on any Council land or premises will be considered individually and the decision to grant or refuse such applications will be based on a wide range of considerations, including animal welfare. The Council does not support the show and exhibition of wild animals and is mindful of the government's plans to ban wild animals in circuses from 2020.

Lost and found pets

30.0 We encourage the use of ID tags and microchipping of pets.

Microchipping pets gives them the best chance of being identified and returned to their owners if they become lost or stolen. From April 6, 2016 it is a legal requirement to have your dog microchipped in England and Wales.

If you have lost your pet, you can contact the Lost Dogs & Cats Line, operated by Battersea Dogs & Cats Home. They have a database of lost dogs and cats from across London and match them with any dogs and cats that are found and handed in to a local authority.

You can also check with The Mayhew Animal Home if they have had any animals handed in.

If you have found a dog or a cat that you think has an owner, check for an ID tag on its collar. They will normally have the name of the animal and the telephone number or address of the owner so you can reunite them with their pet