

APPENDIX 1

Southwark Council Animal Welfare Charter 2016

This animal welfare charter has been adopted by Southwark Council in response to requests from local residents. It has been developed in consultation with residents and animal welfare agencies.

Southwark Council is committed to protecting the welfare of animals living in the borough. This charter aims to help safeguard animals in the borough by promoting animal wellbeing and providing information and guidance on animal care and legal responsibilities.

Southwark Council supports the RSPCAs 'Five Freedoms' and believes that anyone responsible for looking after animals should ensure they have:

- **Freedom from hunger and thirst**
By providing fresh water and the right type and amount of food to keep them fit
- **Freedom from discomfort**
By making sure animals have the right type of environment including shelter and somewhere comfortable to rest
- **Freedom from pain and disease**
By preventing them getting ill or injured, and making sure they are diagnosed and treated rapidly if they do
- **Freedom to express normal behaviour**
By making sure they have enough space, proper facilities and the company of other animals of their own kind
- **Freedom from fear and distress**
By making sure their conditions and treatment avoid mental suffering.

This charter is not intended to cover every aspect of animal welfare; it focuses on the areas which the council considers most important and where it can have influence.

The council calls upon all members of the public to support this charter and to act in accordance with the animal care recommendations, whilst seeking further advice as required, and to report animal cruelty to the RSPCA.

The role of the council

The council will use its best endeavours to promote improvements in animal welfare by taking account of animal welfare issues in day to day operations, in the decision making process, and through influence in association with other authorities, voluntary welfare groups and Government agencies. The council will:

- Carry out its statutory duty to license all animal establishments in the Borough, including pet shops, dog breeding establishments and owners of dangerous

wild animals. Licensing ensures compliance with the law and the fair treatment of animals. The council will take enforcement action against unlicensed premises.

- Report suspected cases of cruelty or neglect of animals to the relevant authorities such as the police or the RSPCA.
- Liaise with the RSPCA where it is found people are keeping animals in inappropriately large numbers or unsuitable conditions. Residents are also encouraged to report suspected instances of animal hoarding to the RSPCA.
- Investigate reports of stray animals. The council's pest control team will respond to reports of strays. The RSPCA will be contacted where it is believed an animal has been abandoned.
- Work with other agencies and government bodies to encourage responsible pet ownership and positive animal welfare practices (including the Police, RSPCA, Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, and Petlog).
- Allow for pet waste (including dog faeces) to be disposed of in any council bin provided it is bagged first, and raise awareness of this.
- Signpost dog owners to free or low cost microchipping (and provide general advice on microchipping) on the council's website.
- Ensure that all pest control treatments are carried out humanely and by trained and experienced staff.
- Endeavor to procure food from sources which have considered the welfare of animals and animal friendly farming practices.
- Encourage schools to promote animal welfare to pupils.

The role of residents

Pet owners have responsibilities under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. Failure to take reasonable steps to ensure animal welfare is an offence and could result in prosecution by enforcement bodies. Ignorance is not considered an excuse for the inappropriate treatment of animals.

In accordance with their specific needs, pet owners should:

- Provide adequate nutrition and fresh water. All food (and waste) should be stored and disposed of carefully to prevent attracting vermin.
- Provide a suitable environment (including space and habitat) to allow animals freedom to express their natural behavior. Residents should strongly consider whether this can be provided in their homes before taking on pet ownership.
- Provide access to pet healthcare as required including regular control of parasites such as fleas and worms, vaccinations and neutering where appropriate.
- Never abandon a pet under any circumstances, and make reasonable arrangements for the care of their animal while away as required. It is

recommended that pet owners use only licensed boarding establishments or if using pet-sitting services, dog sitters should be licensed under the Animal Boarding Establishment Act 1963.

- Rehome any animal that they are no longer able to take care of. Abandoning an animal can constitute a criminal offence.

Specific information for council accommodation

In addition to the legal rules applying to all pet owners, council tenants must comply with the rules regarding pets in the Conditions of Tenancy. In summary, residents are allowed to keep pets provided:

- They are not dangerous (as per the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976)
- They are not a health risk, and animal waste is properly disposed of
- They are not likely to cause a nuisance
- They are not being kept for breeding and selling purposes
- The home is suitable for the type of animal and able to meet all of the animal's needs under the Animal Welfare Act 2006
- There is no court disqualification from the owner keeping animals
- They are microchipped where the law states this is required – as in the case of dogs.

The council does not require tenants to submit applications to have pets, except where this requires modification to the property. But it does expect tenants to consider the requirements above.

Residents must not use their home for any purpose which might cause a nuisance to neighbours. Where persistent nuisance is reported – for instance from excessive barking, other noise or aggressive behaviour – the council will work with residents to address issues (e.g. by providing advice and contacts for qualified animal behaviourists¹). If there is no improvement, this may result in the resident being advised to rehome the animal. Failure to address the issue will be dealt with according to the Antisocial Behaviour Policy, which could lead to eviction.

Useful contacts

- Please report any instances of animal cruelty to the RSPCA on 0300 1234 999 or online <https://www.rspca.org.uk/utilities/contactus/reportcruelty/online>
Further information can be found online at <http://www.rspca.org.uk/home>
- To report a stray dog, please contact Southwark Pest Control on 020 7525 2000 or 0800 952 4444 or email pestcontroladmin@southwark.gov.uk. Alternatively you can report this online at <http://beta.southwark.gov.uk/pest-control/>
- Further advice on pet care can be found on the RSPCA website <http://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/>
- Further advice for Southwark residents about keeping pets, including microchipping http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200005/animal_welfare

¹ www.rspca.org.uk/findabehaviourist

- For further information in relation to pet care we recommend contacting your local vet.

Animal agencies/welfare groups

- **RSPCA London South East Branch**, 380 Norwood Road, West Norwood, London SE27 9AA, *020 8761 5832*
- **Battersea Dogs and Cats Home**, 4 Battersea Park Road, Battersea, London, SW8 4AA *0843 509 4444*
- **The Dogs Trust**, Bolton House, 17-26 Wakley Street, London, EC1V 7RQ, *020 7837 0006*
- **Blue Cross**, Shilton Road, Burford, Oxon, OX18 4PF, *01993 822651*

Appendix – Further guidance on keeping types of pet (provided on website)

This is a quick summary of some of the requirements for certain types of pet. More detailed information can be found at <http://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/>
For further advice, please contact a reputable pet shop, vet or relevant expert.

Dogs

- A collar/tag with the owner's name and address, plus ideally a phone number.
- To be micro-chipped with up-to-date contact details. Failure to do so could result in a £500 fine. The council's website advises on free microchipping.
- To ensure dogs are kept on leads in communal walkways or communal areas and not be left unaccompanied in these areas or balconies.
- To ensure no animal waste or cat litter trays are left in communal walkways.
- To consider the size the dog will grow to, space they will require, and exercise requirements when considering the suitability of the property for the dog.
- Not banned under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, a criminal offence, police will be contacted immediately, and this could lead to termination of tenancy.²
- To research whether the breed is likely to display aggressive behaviour and to mitigate any risk as required.

Cats

- Provision of a scratch-post and litter tray (to avoid damage to property).
- To consider the suitability of the property based on access to outdoor areas.
- Where cats are kept indoors, to consider how they can ensure cats are still able to exhibit natural behaviours to ensure they stay happy and healthy.
- To consider neutering cats at 4 months old, to prevent issues of roaming and caterwauling when in-season and to help protect the health of your cat.

Birds

- To seek specialist advice on for specific breeds of bird from specialist sources.
- For caged birds, to ensure room to fully stretch out wings in every direction (legal requirement) and space for all the birds to perch at the same time.

Fish

- To seek specialist advice on for specific types of fish from specialist sources.

² Unless a Court has agreed an IED

- To consider the size of tank required for the size of fish. Installation of large tanks may require permission of the landlord.

Reptiles, amphibians and other exotic pets

- These types of animal require a highly specialised care and you should consider their suitability for being kept as pets, and seek specialist advice.

Small animals

- As they can chew, enclosures and areas of access should be safe and secure.
- Some small animals are social so may need to be kept in compatible pairs or groups. Neutering or single sex groupings may be appropriate.

Horses

- Tethering is not a suitable method of keeping equines on a permanent basis. Tethering should be restricted to short periods of tethering, e.g. for grooming.