

Re-homing Procedures for Dogs and Cats

A. Objective:

Many animals need a second chance at being a favourable pet after they were abandoned or given up by their owners. Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) encourages the public to adopt abandoned or surrendered dogs and cats through approved non-profit making voluntary animal welfare organizations.

B. Policy for re-homing of dogs and cats:

- (a) In general, no member of the public is allowed to adopt animals from AFCD directly. Animal re-homing MUST normally be arranged through approved non-profit making voluntary organizations (organization). The organisations involved in the re-homing programme should be approved by AFCD's Senior Veterinary Officer / Animal Management (SVO/AM) in advance.
- (b) Dogs and cats which are ready for re-homing must meet the following criteria:
 - (a) They should be healthy, or treatable in case of having sickness.
 - (b) Their temperament should be acceptable.
 - (c) If they were caught as stray animals or found abandoned, they are normally kept for four days at the animal management centre (AM Centre) pending possible claiming by the keeper, so as to confirm their abandoned status.
 - (d) Microchipped animals which were caught as strays or found abandoned may be kept for a period of 10 to 20 days, while the AM Centre attempts to locate the registered keeper and re-unite animal with the keeper.
 - (e) If animals were surrendered by their owners through proper procedures to AFCD, they will normally be made available for re-homing at once.
- (c) There will be cases where animals need to be removed immediately by the organization for care or treatment or other sound reason. In such cases, the animal may be removed without delay after being approved by a Veterinary Officer (VO), and the organization must then ensure the necessary prompt and adequate care and treatment for the animal. The organization has also to agree to return the animal to the AM Centre if the true owner/keeper reclaims the animal, or if so required by the SVO/AM,

Such early removal cases include: -

- (a) young animals,
- (b) animals needing treatment beyond the facilities or capacities of the AM Centre at the time; and
- (c) other special cases.
- (d) The organization removing the animal from the AM Centre or arranging for the animal to be adopted must normally ensure prompt examination by a registered veterinary surgeon as soon as possible on the same day on which the animal leaves the AM Centre.
- (e) The organization must keep records of the animals to be made available for inspection and checking by AFCD on request.
- (f) The organization must (a) issue official receipts for all monies received, and (b) keep accurate accounts.
- (g) These procedures apply in general. Special cases may be processed on an "as-needed" basis and these must be fully recorded by the AFCD officer concerned and by the organization. SVO/AM must also be fully notified in advance and agree with such alteration.

- (h) The organization should take reasonable steps to remove animals for re-homing from the AM Centers as soon as they can, as space in the AM Centres is very limited.
- (i) The organization must keep accurate records of every animal acquired by them from or pertaining to AFCD, and of every animal re-homed by them. All adopters must be clearly registered or recorded with relevant details in a register or other record system kept up to date by the organization. All members and affiliates including affiliated shelters and fosterers involved in adoption must be properly registered with the organization, and with proper records kept by the organization. The organization should keep and should provide to the adopter an accurate record of treatment, including but not limited to vaccination and sterilization. Where there is veterinary treatment, it should be supported by relevant veterinary certification. For dogs, proper dog licensing procedures must also be followed.
- (j) The organization has a responsibility to assess adopters and animals for suitability. The organization should not re-home animals which they assess as unsuitable, and should not release animals to unsuitable adopters. The organization also has a responsibility to follow-up adopted animals and adopters to monitor for proper care and keeping of the animals.

C. Animal adoption arrangement :

Category I – Organizations with their own kennels/shelters

- (a) Adopter must be a member or office-bearer or affiliate or registered adopter of the approved organization concerned.
- (b) Representatives of the organization can visit AM Centre, with prior agreement of the AM Centre, to select the potential animals.
- (c) Transportation of the selected animals to the organization concerned is normally carried out by the organization.
- (d) If an animal is selected, the transfer of the animal must normally be conducted within 5 days. After 5 days, AFCD may consider disposing of the animal or re-homing of the animal by another organization.
- (e) The adopted dogs and cats must be de-sexed or sterilized and appropriately vaccinated by a registered veterinary surgeon at the expense of the adopter or the organization, normally before release to the adopter. Dogs must also be implanted with microchip. All these must be confirmed in certificate(s) to be issued by the veterinary surgeon at the time.
- (f) If there is valid written veterinary instruction that the de-sexing or sterilization of the animal needs to be delayed until after releasing to the adopter, or the adopter wishes with good reason to choose a veterinarian other than the one provided by the organization, the organization has the right to ask the adopter to pay a deposit of \$1,000 pertaining to de-sexing operation or sterilization procedure to the satisfaction of the organization; in such cases the de-sexing/sterilization should be completed within 2 weeks after the adoption or as specified in writing by the VO or SVO/AM or by a registered veterinary surgeon exclusively employed by the organisation. The deposit of \$1,000 must be fully refunded when the adopter produces a valid veterinary certificate of de-sexing or sterilization to the organization. Deposits should be separately accounted by the organization. Please also see paragraph B 6.
- (g) The organization should not charge any fee for feeding and care of the adopted animal in this re-homing programme.
- (h) The organization may recover from the adopter the reasonable expenses, including the appropriate veterinary fees, reasonable transport costs, the costs of vaccination, licensing and microchipping. The organization must not add profits, surcharges, administrative charge. In

recovering these expenses, the organization must support the amounts by giving originals or true-copies of the relevant expense receipts obtained from the veterinary clinic, government, or other proper party. The organization should keep the original or true-copies in their file for checking by AFCD if so required. Fees paid directly by the adopter to veterinary clinics, Government, or other proper parties should be covered by receipts from those parties to the adopter direct.

- (i) If an organization for good reason needs a general variation from any of the above requirements, the organization should submit the proposed variation details and its justification to the SVO/AM, who will respond in writing to confirm or refuse the variation concerned. For individual one-off special cases, please see paragraph B7.
- (j) The organization may be required to sign an undertaking to AFCD to confirm: -
 - That the organization is a non-profit organization, and/or a charity as defined in the law, and to provide supportive document as evidence;
 - That the organization will not profit from animals they obtain from AFCD, nor impose surcharges or administrative fees on such animals, nor sell or trade in such animals, nor pressure adopters or other persons to donate money other than normal membership dues in relation to such animal and recovery of expenses as provided by these rules. At any other times, organizations are free to fund-raise in other ways at other times as per any non-profit organization or charity, and can accept fully voluntary donations;
 - Such other provisions as AFCD might need.

Category II – Organizations without their own kennel/cattery

- (a) Adopter must be a member or office-bearer or affiliate or registered adopter of the approved organization concerned.
- (b) Representatives of the organization can visit the AM Centre, with prior agreement of the AM Centre, to select the potential animals.
- (c) Representatives of the organization are allowed to enter the AM Centre to clean and groom the potential animals on days and times agreed with the AM Centre.
- (d) The organization concerned may by prior agreement with the AM Centre arrange an adoption visit for the potential adopters. The adoption visit would normally be scheduled on Saturday between 12:00 and 16:30, or otherwise during normal office hours. All visitors must leave by 16:30.
- (e) Except as specified at (f) below, for current adoption where the adopter takes or receives the animal on the same day or within the few days after selection, AFCD staff will license any adopted dog on the spot after selection has been made. The adopter should provide documentary proof of residential address and contact details for AFCD inspection. Normally, the dog licensee must be the adopter, and not the organization concerned.
- (f)
 - (i) Licensing at the time is not essential for pups under 12 weeks old, or for other reasons as specified by the SVO(AM) or VO. The organization must follow-up the animal to ensure that it is subsequently licensed.
 - (ii) When the dog is taken by the organization for special care by the organization or their affiliate, or to be kept while the organization finds an adopter, the dog at (e) may be licensed to the office-bearer or affiliate concerned.
- (g) The adopted dogs and cats must be de-sexed or sterilized and appropriately vaccinated by a registered veterinary surgeon at the expense of the adopter or the organization, normally before

release to the adopter. Dogs must also be implanted with microchip. All these must be fully confirmed in certificate(s) issued by the veterinary surgeon at the time.

- (h) If there is valid veterinary instruction that the de-sexing or sterilization of the animal needs to be delayed until after releasing to the adopter, or the adopter with good reason wishes to choose a veterinarian other than the one provided by the organization, the organization has the right to ask the adopter to pay a deposit of \$1,000 pertaining to de-sexing operation or sterilization procedure to the satisfaction of the organization; in such cases the de-sexing/sterilization should be completed within 2 weeks after the adoption or as specified in writing by the VO or SVO/AM. The deposit of \$1,000 must be fully refunded when the adopter produces a valid veterinary certificate of the de-sexing or sterilization to the organization. Deposits should be separately accounted by the organization. Please also see paragraph B 6.
- (i) The organization should not charge any fee for feeding and care of the adopted animal in this re-homing programme.
- (j) The organization may recover from the adopter the reasonable expenses, including the appropriate veterinary fees, reasonable transport costs, the costs of vaccination, licensing and microchipping. The organization must not add profits, surcharges, administrative charges. In recovering these expenses, the organization must support the amount by giving originals or true-copies of the relevant expense receipts obtained from the veterinary clinic, Government, or other proper parties. The organization should keep the original or true copies in their file for checking by AFCD if so required. Fees paid directly by the adopter to veterinary clinics, government, or other proper parties should be covered by receipts from those parties to the adopter direct.
- (k) If a particular organization for a good reason needs a general variation from any of the above requirements, the organization should submit the proposed variation details with justification to the SVO/AM, who will respond in writing to confirm or refuse the variation concerned. For individual one-off special cases, please see paragraph B7.
- (l) The organization may be required to sign an undertaking to AFCD to confirm :
 - That the organization is a non-profit organization, and/or a charity as defined in the law, and to provide supportive document as evidence;
 - That the organization will not profit from animals they obtain from AFCD, nor impose surcharges or administrative fees on such animals, nor sell or trade in such animals, nor pressure adopters or other persons to donate money other than normal membership dues in relation to such animals and recovery of expenses as provided by these rules. At any other times, organizations are free to fund-raise in other ways at other times as per any non-profit organization or charity, and can accept fully voluntary donations.
 - Such other provisions as AFCD might need.

D. Special condition for the dog and cat adopter:

- (a) Adopter must normally be over 18 years of age.
- (b) Adopter must be a member or office-bearer or affiliate or registered adopter of the approved organization concerned.
- (c) Adopter must provide documentary proof of residential address and contact details to the organization, and to AFCD if so required, for inspection.
- (d) Adopter must not adopt an excessive number of animals through this re-homing programme.

- (e) Adopter is not allowed to transfer the re-homed animal to others within six months from the date of adoption, except back to the organization through which they adopted the animal. If and when appropriate, the organization may re-home the animal to a new adopter in accordance with these procedures.

E.Privilege for the stray dog/cat finder:

The finder will be given the priority to adopt the animal normally. The finder has to inform his/her intention to the VO in charge of the AM Centre concerned, in writing. He/she has to become a member or affiliate or registered adopter of an approved organization and to settle the payment required. He/she could then bring the concerned receipts/papers to the AM Centre to collect the animal, or adopt through normal adoption processes as above. In such case, the adopter has to collect the animal within 5 days, otherwise AFCD would consider to dispose of the animal or to re-home the animal through a recognized organization.

F.Alteration to the re-homing programme:

AFCD may review and revise these requirements and procedures from time to time. Updated/revised requirements and procedures, if any, will be issued by SVO/AM only, and will take effect immediately unless otherwise stated.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department