



Animal Welfare Charter

June 2026



Forest of Dean
— DISTRICT COUNCIL —





The Forest of Dean District Council recognises its statutory obligations for animal welfare but believes that these minimum standards ought to be exceeded wherever possible, not merely serve as objectives. With officers at present undertaking investigating incidents of unnecessary suffering under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 using delegated authority, the Council is already exceeding the minimum statutory requirements.

The statutory powers of the District Council are firstly contained in a range of licensing provisions concerned with the protection of animal welfare in activities such as pet shops, animal breeding and boarding establishments, riding establishments and zoos. The council also has the statutory duty of providing a dog warden service, which encompasses dealing with complaints of dogs being out of control in public spaces. The Council's dog warden service has been awarded the gold standard from the RSPCA.

Animal Welfare Act 2006

In 2006, the Animal Welfare Act largely repealed and replaced the 1911 Protection of Animals Act, strengthened and updated the provisions of that Act, and consolidated and updated several other pieces of animal welfare legislation. In addition, the Act introduced a new offence of failing to ensure the welfare of an animal. Any person responsible for an animal must ensure that five specific needs of the animal are met: (a) its need for a suitable environment, (b) its need for a suitable diet, (c) its need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns, (d) any need it has to be housed with, or apart from, other animals, and (e) its need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

If it is suspected that any domestic animals' welfare needs aren't being met, then please call the Forest of Dean District Council and we will consider animal welfare concerns in line with our Corporate Enforcement Policy.

Animal Activity Licence

You must have an animal activity licence if you:

- Provide or arrange boarding facilities for cats or dogs
- Breed dogs
- Sell animals as pets
- Hire out horses
- Keep or train animals for exhibition.

The current Animal Welfare Regulations began on 1 October 2018.



Pet Shops

In accordance with the introduction of 'Lucy's Law', The Forest of Dean District Council prohibits the sale of puppies and kittens at any pet shops within the District that have not been bred by the licence holder. It is also a licence condition of pet shops within the District that animals must not be sold to anyone under the age of 16 years.

The Council opposes puppy farming and supports the RSPCA in recommending that prospective dog owners only purchase puppies that are seen with their mothers and, if possible, their sires. The Council would also encourage residents to consider homing a rescue dog rather than a puppy, in an effort to reduce the population of unwanted dogs.

Stray Dogs

The Council has a legal responsibility to deal with stray dogs. All stray dogs will be thoroughly checked for identification in an attempt to reunite the dog with its owner. It is Council policy to re-home all unclaimed stray dogs after the statutory seven days, unless there is veterinary advice to the contrary.

Report or claim a lost or stray dog:

- Call **01594 810000** 9am to 4.45pm Monday to Thursday, 9am to 4.30pm on Friday
- Email street.wardens@fdean.gov.uk



- If you pick up a stray dog, we will collect it and take it to our council-appointed kennels. The owner will then have seven days to claim the dog. We will attempt to release a dog to the owner if a dog is microchipped and/or ownership can be proven.

Out of Office Hours

Stray dogs found out of the office hours above should be taken to Sling kennels within the following hours: opening times 9am until 8pm Monday to Thursday and 6pm Friday to Sunday. Contact: Sling kennels on **01594 832536** or **07876 641854**.

Microchipping

It is a legal requirement that your dog is microchipped. Microchipping helps us reunite you with your pet quickly. What happens when your dog's microchipped:

- Your dog's microchip is given a number, which will show up whenever your dog is scanned.
- The professional who microchips your dog will also take your contact details.
- These details are kept alongside the microchip number on a database, so that your dog can be returned to you if it's lost or stolen.

You're responsible for keeping your dog's microchip information up to date, for example if you move house.

In addition to microchipping, there is now the additional security of the 'DNA Protected' service available to dog owners: Gloucestershire Constabulary, with the support of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, have also developed a DNA database for dogs to help ensure a dog's safe return if it is lost or stolen. This service is available nationwide via www.dnaprotected.co.uk and has the full backing of police to help tackle the ongoing concerns around pet theft.

Responsible Dog Ownership

If you are thinking about owning a dog, or if you already have one:

- Make sure that your dog is trained in basic obedience. Look for a local training class.
- Worm your dog about every four months, puppies more frequently. Ask your vet for advice.
- Clean up after your dog - bag it and bin it!
- Make sure your dog has a collar and tag with your address details.

You must have close control over your dog when out and about. This is particularly important around children, livestock and traffic.

Do not let your dog approach other dogs that are on the lead unless their owner agrees - a dog on the lead may be a sign that it is nervous of other dogs.

Pet Sitting Services

The Council encourages responsible pet ownership and recommends that pet owners use only licensed boarding establishments, or if using pet sitting services, that owners should take up references, visit the service provider beforehand and contact animal welfare organisations for advice when required.

Animal Hoarding

An increasing number of cases are coming to light nationally where individuals, including some private animal sanctuaries, keep many animals in unsuitable conditions. Anyone keeping large numbers of animals needs to consider carefully whether they have adequate, suitable facilities and sufficient knowledge and resources to care properly for all the animals. Professional advice should be sought. People are encouraged to report any suspected instances of animal hoarding to the Council.

Horses

Equines are protected under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and the Forest of Dean District Council encourage serious welfare concerns to be reported by calling **01594 810000** or email street.wardens@fdean.gov.uk The Council supports the introduction of the Horse Passports Regulations (England) 2004.

Livestock

Gloucestershire Trading Standards animal health and welfare team enforces the legislation designed to protect livestock, farm animals, and the integrity of the human food chain. The team's responsibilities include monitoring and influencing the standards of animal health and welfare on farms, in transport, at markets and other animal gatherings, in order to ensure that they are protected from cruelty and avoidable pain or distress, and also to prevent the spread of disease.

For animal welfare livestock complaints call **01452 887667** (9.30am-16.00pm) or email tradingstandards@gloucestershire.gov.uk For out of hours emergencies please call **03000 200301** and ask for the duty vet.

Angling

The Council recommends that anglers follow the Code of Practice based on the recommendations of the Medway Report. The key points being:

The use of double and treble hooks should be kept to a minimum and avoided entirely when the intention is to return the catch alive to the water;

- Fish intended for food should be killed humanely;
- Unhooking a fish humanely and safely is one of the most important skills for an angler to learn. All anglers should be equipped with disgorgers and unhooking mats and be properly trained in their use;

- Employment of the pike-gag should take fully into account the size of the fish for which it is used;
- Barbless hooks should be favoured; and
- Holding periods in keep-nets should be as brief as possible.

All anglers are asked to ensure that they comply with national and regional bylaws relating to angling. Details of this legislation can be found by contacting the Environment Agency. We also ask anglers to clean fishing equipment and tackle in between uses to help to stop the spread of disease and alien organisms between different waters.

The Council would emphasise that the safe disposal of fishing tackle is essential; this is to prevent injury to both domestic and wild animals.

Pest Control

The Council promotes and supports only the use of safe and humane methods of pest control. The Council encourages householders to seek professional advice on pest control, rather than using over the counter preparations, to prevent harm to non-target species (including pets) and children.

Bats

The Council supports legislation that protects bats and their roosts.

Cats and Wildlife

Cats may kill far more wildlife than their owners realise because cats only bring home a small proportion of the wildlife that they may kill.

Predatory cat behaviour is normal, and cats that are kept indoors all the time will likely suffer. However, cat owners can greatly reduce the number of kills by keeping their cats indoors at night, from at least an hour before sunset until an hour after sunrise, especially during March-July

and December-January, and after bad weather, such as rain or a cold spell.

Cats living near to a bat roost can be particularly damaging, as the bats are vulnerable on entering and leaving the roost. Evening bat activity starts about half an hour before sunset and lasts for about 2 hours, so this is an important time to keep cats indoors and again in the early morning before sunrise.

A bell fitted to the cat's collar may reduce the number of kills.

Fireworks

The Council supports 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. The Council also supports the RSPCA's campaign www.rspca.org.uk/getinvolved/campaign/fireworks to introduce legislation limiting the permitted noise level to 90dB in order to minimise the distress caused to animals by the use of such fireworks.

Where possible, we ask that those planning to let off fireworks either use silent ones or notify their neighbours well in advance of the event. The Council also actively encourages the responsible use of fireworks around animals in accordance with guidance issued by DEFRA and supported by the Blue Cross.

Giving Animals as Prizes

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 made it an offence for any animal to be sold or given as a prize to anyone under the age of 16 years. It is also Council policy that the conditions for hiring or letting any of the Council's facilities, premises or land shall include a clause specifically banning the provision of live animals, including fish, as prizes. The Council encourages other private premises or landowners to follow its lead.





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