



# Welfare Framework: Excellence in the Rescue, Rehabilitation and Rehoming of Sighthounds

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*Please note: This document contains references and hyperlinks to internal Greyhound Rescue Wales policy. These are not accessible to those outside of Greyhound Rescue Wales.*

## Foreword



Sighthounds have a unique physiology and temperament that sets them apart from many other dogs, especially when it comes to a regime of care.

At Greyhound Rescue Wales, we understand that kennelling is a necessary part of the rescue, rehabilitation and rehoming of sighthounds from a number of different backgrounds. Although many sighthounds are already used to a kennel environment, it can still present a number of challenges that anyone responsible for kenneling arrangements should be aware of, in order to

provide a suitable environment for dogs to transition to pet life.

We aim to provide a consistently high level of care that is tailored to a dog's individual needs but underpinned by a series of clear and measurable standards that we do not fall below. With 30 years' experience in the rescue, rehabilitation and rehoming of sighthounds, Greyhound Rescue Wales has a unique perspective on the tailoring of kennel practice to best meet the needs of these remarkable dogs. This framework outlines the standards we uphold in our own kennels and sets a benchmark not only for Greyhound Rescue Wales, but for other organisations that are involved, or intend to be involved, in the kennelling of sighthounds.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Doyle'.

**Tim Doyle**

**CEO, Greyhound Rescue Wales**

## Introduction and Terms

This framework is laid out in sections, broken down into clear, measurable and actionable standards. Standards are numbered in accordance with GRW policy guidelines. There are two types of standards which can be identified as follows:

- **MUST** - These are mandatory standards that must be met to meet the minimum expected. Any failures (or predicted failures) to meet these standards must be raised (via the on-duty manager) to the CEO at the earliest opportunity.
- **SHOULD** - These are standards which must be maintained during routine running. There may be circumstances, however, that temporarily mean they cannot be met. These could be urgent operational pressures, maintenance issues, unique needs of a particular dog etc. It is important that failures to meet these standards are reported to the CEO at weekly intervals (e.g. at weekly management meetings.) It is also vital to ensure temporary circumstances for not meeting these standards do not become permanent.

## Responsibilities

### CEO:

- Overseeing the production and maintenance of the framework
- Monitoring overall compliance
- Ensuring requirements are correctly resourced

### Rescue and Rehoming Manager:

- Ensuring Kennel Supervisor and subordinate staff/volunteers are aware of the standards required and enacting the standards in their work
- Providing guidance and assistance to the Kennel Supervisor
- Ensuring staff/volunteers have the necessary resources to meet the standards
- Reporting non-compliance in accordance with [Introduction and Terms](#).

### Kennel Supervisor:

- Ensuring the day-to-day kennel routine is meeting the standards and adjusting where necessary
- Supervising kennel staff/volunteers and correcting any actions that don't meet the standards
- Reporting to the Rescue and Rehoming Manager any issues of non-compliance, or issues that are likely to result in non-compliance
- Reporting any resourcing issues (e.g. maintenance, staffing, equipment etc.) to the Rescue and Rehoming Manager

### All Kennel Staff and Volunteers:

- Adhering to the standards under the supervision of the Kennel Supervisor and/or Rescue and Rehoming Manager as appropriate

## Intake: Introduction



The intake stage can be one of the most intensive parts of the rescue process as there is so much activity to complete in a relatively short space of time. Good management and governance of animal records, neutering, vaccinations, previous owner records and more are essential to the smooth running of the process.

It is also a particularly stressful time for the dogs involved. They are exposed to a number of unfamiliar people, animals and environments over the space of several hours. This can mean that dogs don't exhibit some key behaviours initially, and care should be taken over the first few days in particular to closely observe their ability to cope in their new environment. Refer to section [Care of Dogs: Environment and Companionship](#) for more information on kennelling dogs both individually and together, as well as important considerations for their kennel environment.

## Intake: Neutering

1. Dogs **SHOULD** be routinely neutered as part of the intake process, except where it is not possible due to age, health, veterinary or behaviourist advice.
  - a. Where it has not been possible to neuter before rehoming, or it is recommended to delay neutering, a system for ensuring the animal is neutered at a later date **MUST** be put in place, unless this is against a veterinary or competent behaviourist's advice.

## Intake: Admission and Veterinary Checks

2. When dogs are received, they **MUST** be thoroughly scanned for a microchip using an ISO-compliant scanner.
  - a. Where dogs have other ID (e.g. ear tattoos) suitable checks **MUST** be carried out.
    - i. Where ear tattoos are present but unreadable, efforts **MUST** be made to confirm ID with relevant organisation (e.g. GBGB, GRI)
  - b. All ID details **MUST** be recorded on the dog's record using the kennel management software.
3. When a microchip, tag or tattoo is found on a *lost* dog, reasonable attempts **MUST** be made to trace the registered owner or keeper line with section 149 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
4. Where no microchip is found, unless against veterinary advice, all dogs **MUST** be microchipped and registered with an appropriate database as soon as possible, with the Greyhound Rescue Wales listed as keeper until the point of rehoming, and especially prior to being walked off site or placed on foster.
5. The health and welfare of all dogs **MUST** be assessed on intake including weight, body condition, skin condition, scars/wounds, nails and teeth and neutering status.
  - a. Health status **MUST** be monitored at least daily and any changes recorded using the kennel management software.
  - b. Any historic health issues or injuries reported by the relinquishing owner **MUST** be recorded using the kennel management software and veterinary history/records obtained.
  - c. Dogs **MUST** be examined by a veterinary professional, Rescue and Rehoming Manager or Kennel Supervisor as soon as possible.
  - d. Dogs with perceived health problems **MUST** be seen by a veterinary

surgeon as soon as possible and monitored as advised by the veterinary surgeon.

6. Unless already up to date with vaccinations, all dogs **MUST** be vaccinated as soon as is reasonably practicable after arrival.
  - a. The vaccination regimen as a minimum **MUST** include vaccination for:
    - i. Parvovirus
    - ii. Distemper
    - iii. Leptospirosis
    - iv. Infectious hepatitis
  - b. Vaccinations **SHOULD** be given either as a booster if vaccination history is known or a primary course of two vaccinations.
7. All dogs **MUST** be treated with broad-spectrum worm and flea/tick/mite treatments on arrival.
  - a. Treatments **MUST** include a regimen for lungworm.
  - b. Treatments for other conditions such as giardiasis **SHOULD** be considered on a case-by-case basis and with veterinary advice where necessary.
8. Care **SHOULD** be taken in the first 2-3 days to avoid over-exposure of dogs to stimuli as they settle into the kennel environment.

## Intake: Dogs from Outside the British Isles

*This section refers only to dogs arriving directly into Greyhound Rescue Wales from outside the UK, Republic of Ireland, Channel Islands or Isle of Man.*

9. Dogs **MUST** not be imported by Greyhound Rescue Wales without prior approval of the CEO, following submission of a justification case for consideration.
10. The ADCH **MUST** be notified of the intention to import a dog from outside the British Isles.
11. Dog importation from within the EU **MUST** be carried out following the Balai Directive (Directive 92/65/EEC)
12. When importing dogs from outside of the EU, additional advice **MUST** be sought from a vet and the ADCH and ensure legal compliance.
13. Any imported dog **MUST** have a documented behavioural assessment, carried out by a suitable competent person in the country of origin, showing suitability for rehoming in a domestic environment in the British Isles.
14. Veterinary tests **MUST** show the dog is disease free.
  - a. Veterinary advice **MUST** be taken to understand which tests are required, bearing in mind the disease profile of the source and destination countries using <https://cvbd.elanco.com/> and information on ADCH's website <https://adch.org.uk/importation>, which also contains an up to date list of diseases that are of the greatest concern.
15. Blood tests **MUST** be completed by an EU-approved laboratory e.g. Acarus laboratory <https://www.langfordvets.co.uk/diagnostic-laboratories/acarus/>.
16. If dogs are free from exotic disease they **MUST** be given appropriate preventative veterinary treatment (e.g. vaccination where available) to prevent infection against diseases endemic in the source and destination countries. Diseases of most concern are: Rabies, Babesiosis; Ehrlichiosis; Leishmaniasis and Dirofilaria.
17. Upon arrival into the British Isles, following importation, the dog **MUST** move directly into the care of Greyhound Rescue Wales and these Standards shall apply.

## Care of Dogs: Introduction

Sighthounds are unlike many other dogs. Their physiology and temperament means they have some unique care requirements that need to be taken into consideration.

### Physiology

Sighthounds (in particular greyhounds) have very low levels of subcutaneous fat, coupled with a short, thin coat. This means environments that may be comfortable for many



other dogs would be unpleasant for sighthounds. They are particularly susceptible to extremes of temperature and may need additional heating and insulation in weather conditions that would otherwise be tolerable to other breeds. Their athletic build also means they are prone to pressure sores and balding when lying on hard surfaces, so bedding of a suitable size and construction is essential to providing them with an appropriate sleeping environment.

Bred for short bursts of intense speed, sighthounds generally enjoy short periods of high-intensity activity, but also require a great deal of undisturbed rest time. Balancing an appropriate amount of physical and mental enrichment activity with suitable rest is essential to satisfying their needs.

### Temperament

Sighthounds have an unusual combination of comparatively high prey drive with a generally quiet and sensitive disposition. They do not respond well to negative stimuli and are known to 'shut down' in environments they find too stressful. The majority enjoy regular human interaction, however those that have suffered abuse, rough handling or are of a more sensitive disposition may need a bespoke handling and training plan to address their needs

## Care of Dogs: Housing Conditions

18. Sleeping areas **MUST** be sufficiently insulated and/or heated to prevent extremes of temperature.
- a. Where heating is provided through the use of infrared heat lamps, panels, tubes or similar, these **MUST** be switched on where outdoor temperatures are forecast to drop below 14°C for more than 3 hours.
    - i. Infrared heating does not heat air, but rather heats objects in direct line of sight of the heating device. Dogs **MUST** therefore have access to a suitably-heated space (e.g. under a heat lamp) as well as a non-heated space (e.g. away from the heat lamp) to allow them to regulate body temperature.
  - b. Where outdoor temperatures are forecast to drop below 10°C for more than 3 hours, dogs **SHOULD** be provided with warm clothing (e.g. a fleece layer) of the correct size and fit.
    - i. Warm clothing **SHOULD** be removed for periods of high-intensity activity (e.g off-lead running.)
  - c. Weather forecasts **MUST** be reviewed by the Rescue and Rehoming Manager (or other senior staff member) daily to ensure appropriate measures are being taken for the conditions.
    - i. Where temperatures are consistently below 10°C, dogs **SHOULD** be monitored for early signs of cold exposure, such as cold ears/paws, shaking or shivering, seeking shelter, or unusual changes in behaviour.
  - d. Where sleeping areas are temperature-controlled (e.g. through the use of thermostat-controlled central heating), ambient temperatures **MUST** be kept between 16°C and 21°C.
    - i. Dogs **SHOULD** not require additional clothing provided temperature control is being maintained.
  - e. Heating devices **MUST** not be sited in a manner or location where they present a risk of burning, electrocution, or a risk of fire.
    - i. Open flame appliances **MUST** not be used.
  - f. In hot weather, dogs **MUST** have access to a cooler, shaded area. (See [Annex B.](#))
    - i. All reasonable efforts **SHOULD** be made to prevent accommodation temperatures from rising above 26°C.

19. In periods of prolonged hot weather (as defined at [Annex B](#)) the kennel routine **MUST** be adjusted as far as possible to reduce activity at the hottest parts of the day.
20. Sufficient ventilation **MUST** be provided at all times to prevent a build up of damp or condensation inside the unit.
  - a. Damp and moisture **MUST** not be allowed to reach a level inside the kennel that may increase the risk of disease or cause undue stress for the resident dog(s).
21. Fences **MUST** be secure and safe and the units constructed in a way which will ensure that all dogs are secured.
  - a. Where metal bars and frames are used, they **MUST** be of a suitable gauge with spacing adequate to prevent dogs escaping or becoming trapped.
  - b. All kennels **MUST** be secure to prevent escape.
22. All dogs **MUST** be provided with a bedding area or bench, raised from the ground, large and suitable enough to allow the dog to lie comfortably.
  - a. Sleeping areas **MUST** be adequate for the size and breed of the dog.
  - b. The space **MUST** be sufficient for the dog to stand up, sit fully erect, turn around and lie down in a natural position.
  - c. Suitable bedding **MUST** be provided which allows the dog to be comfortable and which is capable of being easily and adequately cleaned and disinfected. Bedding shall be sited out of draughts and shall be checked daily and maintained in a clean, parasite free and dry condition.
23. Dogs **MUST** have access to a run/exercise area during routine kennel opening hours.
  - a. Exercise areas **MUST** not be used as overnight sleeping areas.
24. Crating may be necessary to aid recovery, for habituating puppies, or for providing safe spaces for dogs. However, crating **MUST** not be used to house dogs permanently.
  - a. Crates **MUST** be large enough to allow the dog to stand, turn around normally while standing up, sit erect and lie down in a natural position.
  - b. The dog **MUST** have regular opportunities to toilet and not be left inside so long that he or she becomes distressed, or generally for more than four hours at a time, other than sleeping overnight.

- c. Crating **MUST** not be used as a long-term alternative to providing suitable kennel accommodation.

## Care of Dogs: Food and Water

25. Clean, potable water (fit for human consumption) **MUST** be available to dogs at all times and changed daily.
  - a. Where dogs share accommodation, there **MUST** be at least one water bowl per dog.
26. All dogs **MUST** be supplied with an appropriate diet, suitable for species, age, life stage and condition.
  - a. Where dogs have specialist or supplemented diets, these **MUST** be recorded using the kennel management software.
27. Where dogs are being fed together (e.g. in double kennels) each dog **MUST** receive its own bowl and be physically separated from its kennel mate (e.g. by placing one dog in the run and lowering the hatch) until both dogs have finished eating.
28. Food and water intake **MUST** be monitored and any problems recorded through kennel management software.
  - a. Veterinary advice **SHOULD** be sought for any dog not eating and/or drinking for more than 24 hours.
    - i. An exception may be made for new arrivals. Dogs may eat very little (or not at all) during the initial period in a new environment. Such cases should be closely monitored for signs of ill health in case intervention is needed.
  - b. Veterinary advice **SHOULD** be sought for any significant weight loss or unexplained weight gain.
    - i. Weight **SHOULD** be recorded daily using the kennel management software until further veterinary advice is provided.
    - ii. Significant weight loss/gain is defined as a change in body score, as shown at [Annex A: Body Condition Score Chart](#).
29. Appropriate disinfectants **SHOULD** be used to clean food preparation areas immediately after use.
  - a. Where human and animal food and/or drink production takes place in the same area, these **SHOULD** not take place at the same time and/or using the same utensils.
  - b. Handwashing facilities **MUST** be available in food preparation areas.
30. Where soiled or otherwise excreta-contaminated materials are brought into the food preparation area (e.g. placing soiled bedding into the washing

machine) care **MUST** be taken to prevent cross-contamination between soiled materials and food preparation areas and equipment.

- a. Soiled bedding awaiting washing **MUST** not be stored in any food preparation areas.
- b. Hands **MUST** be thoroughly washed after handling soiled bedding or other materials.
- c. Hands **MUST** be thoroughly washed before preparing food and water for dogs.

## Care of Dogs: Disease Control and Vaccination

31. Dogs **MUST** be checked for signs of ill-health on arrival.
  - a. Any dog with signs of a potentially infectious disease **MUST** be taken straight to an isolation facility and a vet appointment booked.
  - b. If an outbreak of infectious animal disease is suspected (e.g. more than one dog is likely to be affected) actions outlined in the [Hillcrest BCP](#) **MUST** be followed.
32. Policy relating to the use of isolation facilities **MUST** be followed and is available at [GRW016-Isolation Kennel Policy](#).
  - a. When isolation facilities are in use, guidance on hygiene practices, infection control and welfare monitoring **MUST** be briefed to all staff on duty.
    - i. A verbal or written handover of guidance **MUST** be given at staff/shift changeovers when the isolation facilities are in use.
33. An animal first aid kit **MUST** be available for use and staff made aware of its location.
  - a. The first aid kit **SHOULD** be of a standard that can keep dogs safe and prevent further harm whilst veterinary advice is sought.
  - b. The first aid kit **MUST** be checked at least annually and the date last checked recorded in a visible location on or near to the kit.
    - i. Any used/missing items **MUST** be restocked as soon as possible.

## Care of Dogs: Cleaning and Disinfecting

34. All units, corridors, common areas, kitchens etc. **MUST** be kept clean and free from accumulations of dirt and dust and shall be kept in a condition which will reduce the risk of disease spread.
35. Each occupied unit **MUST** be cleaned daily.
- a. All excreta and soiled material **MUST** be removed from all areas used by the dogs at least daily and more often if necessary.
    - i. Where excreta is discovered by staff outside of regular cleaning, it **SHOULD** be removed immediately and the area spot-cleaned as soon as reasonably possible.
  - b. Cleaning practices **SHOULD** not adversely affect dogs through overly regular removal of familiar smells, unnecessary introduction of strong-smelling chemicals, or prolonged exposure to a constantly damp environment.
    - i. Spot cleaning **SHOULD** be considered throughout the day and bedding rotated one piece at a time unless soiled
36. All bedding areas **MUST** be kept clean and dry.
- a. Dogs **MUST** have access to a dry area whilst their housing is being cleaned.
37. Each unit **MUST** be thoroughly cleaned, disinfected and dried at a change of occupancy.
38. Facilities **MUST** be available for the appropriate storage, treatment and disposal of all classifications of waste including wash down water and particularly 'controlled wastes' such as wash-down water contaminated by faecal matter.
39. Care **MUST** be taken with cleaning routines to protect dogs from disinfectant poisoning or injury.
- a. Where disinfectants are applied to animal-contact surfaces (e.g. kennel walls, floors, runs etc.) they **MUST** be sufficiently rinsed with water following an appropriate contact time in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
    - i. Phenolic disinfectants (e.g. Jeyes, Dettol) are toxic to many animals and **MUST** not be used in the kennel environment.
40. Any chemicals **MUST** be used, handled, and stored strictly in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions and any applicable COSHH requirements.

41. Moveable items such as beds **SHOULD** be removed for cleaning at least weekly.
- a. All beds, sleeping platforms and bedding provided **MUST** be durable, safe, and capable of being easily cleaned and disinfected.
  - b. Where raised beds are provided, they **MUST** be appropriate to the dog regarding size and height, and materials used shall not be toxic to dogs.
  - c. The type of bedding used **MUST** be safe, soft and easily cleaned or disposed of after use.
42. Methods such as pressure washing or steam cleaning can be frightening, stressful or potentially harmful to dogs that are nearby and they **SHOULD** be removed from the area while these are taking place.

## Care of Dogs: Environment and Companionship

43. All dogs **MUST** have the opportunity to exercise daily.
- a. Kennelled dogs **MUST** receive two exercise sessions daily, unless otherwise prohibited by health, behavioural or environmental factors.
    - i. At least one of these sessions **SHOULD** be off-lead in a secure area, unless otherwise prohibited by health, behavioural or environmental factors.
    - ii. Dogs **MUST** wear a muzzle at all times when off-site or exercising in pairs, unless otherwise outlined in their training plan for health or behavioural reasons. Single dogs exercising alone in a secure area are not mandated to be muzzled.
      1. Where dogs are unable to be muzzled, they **MUST** only be exercised:
        - a. As the only dog off-lead in a secure area.
        - b. On lead.
  - b. Behavioural assessments **MUST** be taken into consideration when choosing to exercise dogs together.
    - i. Where dogs are exercised together, staff and/or volunteers **MUST** be provided with suitable training and equipment to break up dog fights.
      1. Equipment such as break sticks and corrective sprays are for emergency use only and **MUST** not be used as part of routine training or handling.
  - c. Exercise programmes **MUST** be adjusted in hot weather conditions to prevent heat-related illness. (See [Annex B.](#))
44. All dogs **MUST** have toys and/or feeding enrichment to provide opportunities to perform natural behaviour such as hunting or play.
- a. In situations where it is not safe to leave toys or food puzzles in kennels (e.g. shared kennels), this enrichment activity **MUST** be incorporated into either routine exercise or a dedicated enrichment period.
  - b. Items provided **MUST** be the correct size and type for the individual dog and its behaviour.
    - i. The dog **SHOULD** be monitored closely when the object is first introduced. Changing toys or feeding devices on a regular basis will introduce novelty and maintain interest.

- ii. When adding new enrichment devices, staff **SHOULD** ensure that they do not cause stress to the dog.
  - c. Individually-housed dogs **SHOULD** be given something to chew unless contrary veterinary advice is given. Feeding enrichment can be provided by scatter feeding of dried food or biscuits, food-filled play balls or other items to supplement the normal feeding regime.
45. All dogs **MUST** have human contact and interaction daily.
46. Puppies **MUST** be adequately and appropriately socialised and habituated to prevent fear behaviour towards animals, situations, environments and people.
- a. A daily socialisation programme to enable this **MUST** be followed.
    - i. Puppies **SHOULD** have positive interactions with a range of people. They should be gently introduced to handling, grooming, being lifted and touched all over.
    - ii. Puppies **SHOULD** be positively exposed to as many sights, sounds, tastes, textures and smells as possible that they are likely later to encounter in a normal domestic home.
  - b. Where veterinary advice prevents wider socialisation (e.g. infectious diseases) an alternative programme **MUST** be implemented to meet these needs as far as possible.
47. Dogs **MUST** never be *forced* to interact with people.
- a. Dogs **MUST** have the facility to avoid people should they wish (e.g. a hiding place or quiet area)
  - b. Dogs **MUST** be protected from animal company which causes them fear, frustration or distress, but provided with enjoyable animal company where possible.
48. In kennels where dogs are housed separately and in the vicinity of other dogs, each dog **MUST** be able to control their view of other dogs (e.g. by moving behind a wall or away from an opening.)
49. Dogs **MUST** be introduced to one another slowly and in a positive way.
50. Decisions to pair dogs **MUST** be made by the Rescue and Rehoming Manager, covering staff member or an appointed deputy.
- a. Dogs **MUST** not be housed with each other if either tries to avoid the other or appears fearful of them.
  - b. Pair-housed dogs **SHOULD** have sufficient space and adequate resources to minimise competition and to be able to move away from one another if they choose.

51. Pregnant, whelping, nursing bitches and puppies under seven weeks of age **MUST** be accommodated somewhere safe and quiet.

- a. Bitches with puppies **SHOULD** be placed in a foster home and if not possible, alternatives within the centre should be sought e.g. a maternity wing or unit (temporary or permanent.)
- b. Puppies **MUST** not be housed away from the bitch or rehomed until they are at least eight weeks of age, unless this is under veterinary guidance.
- c. Bitches **MUST** be able to spend time away from the puppies as they wean.

52. Staff and volunteers **SHOULD** be encouraged to play and interact with dogs, taking care to ensure that this contact does not cause the dog undue stress.

- a. Training plans for each dog **MUST** outline clear handling instructions to be enforced.
  - i. Formal handling and training requirements for a dog **MUST** take precedence over the requirement for play and interaction.
    1. Where specific handling instructions are in place, these **MUST** be displayed on the outside of the dog's kennel.
- b. Where a dog does not have a specific training plan, staff and volunteers **MUST** follow generic handling instructions.

## Care of Dogs: Grooming

53. All dogs **MUST** be groomed when necessary and steps taken to ensure coats are free from mats.
- a. Grooming **SHOULD** be introduced gradually and in a positive way where dogs are not familiar or comfortable with grooming.
  - b. Bathing **SHOULD** be provided:
    - i. Either on arrival, or 48 hours after flea treatment.
    - ii. The day before neutering.
    - iii. The day before rehoming.
54. Claws **MUST** be kept at an appropriate length to prevent discomfort to the dog.
- a. An appropriate method of trimming claws **SHOULD** be chosen to meet the needs of the dog.
  - b. Care **MUST** be taken to avoid over-trimming of claws that could result in injury and/or risk of infection.

## Care of Dogs: Veterinary Care

55. There **MUST** be at least one nominated veterinary practice or veterinary surgeon who can advise on the health of dogs entering and resident within the organisation. Details are stored in the BCP and on the kennel management software.
56. All veterinary products **MUST** be stored, used and disposed of as required by the product datasheet and Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) legislation, or relevant local legislation.
- a. Unnecessary access to medicines **MUST** be prevented by storing medicines in a lockable location.

## Supervision and Competence: Introduction

Providing suitable management, supervision, training and monitoring is essential to ensuring the welfare of sighthounds within a rescue organisation. Simply having good intentions is not enough to provide a sufficient level of care and protection in a rescue environment.



### Management and Supervision

The structure of staffing will depend on the size of the centre and the number of dogs in its care. Where there are different levels of management and supervision at a centre, care should be taken to avoid too much overlap, e.g. a manager who spends too much time working in the kennels is unlikely to be able to focus on wider issues. Levels of responsibility and delegation must be clear and used effectively when making decisions, e.g. a supervisor should be clear on what decisions they can take independently vs. which should be referred to their manager.

Necessary supervision is important in a kennel environment. People will often be expected to work alone and independently with dogs, however it is important that established standards are enforced and incorrect actions are corrected promptly and in a constructive manner. Conversely, it is also important to avoid working to unnecessarily-high or 'unofficial' standards as time and resources can be wasted with limited benefit.

### Competence

The animal rescue sector can be contentious when it comes to views on what constitutes best practice. It is important that staff and volunteers are provided with suitable training to meet the needs of their role, so that key decisions on animal welfare and day-to-day practice are not left to personal opinion. Consideration should also be given to key risk areas when planning training, such as first aid, fire safety, manual handling, road safety and more.

Training should incorporate elements of the organisation's policies on the training topic, as well as where to access key information. Setting written standards and policy are of limited benefit if staff and volunteers are not aware of how to access them. In addition, consideration should be given to how much of an individual's time can be spent interpreting such information. For example, a manager (as an office-based role) is expected to read policy in precise detail and take decisions based on the content, whereas a kennel volunteer has a much more time-limited and hands-on role and may need such information summarised in clear instructions from their supervisor.

## Supervision and Competence

57. Whilst dogs are on site, there **MUST** be a contactable keyholder within reasonable distance to the premises.
- a. Keyholders **MUST** be aware of emergency plans and operational procedures
    - i. These **MUST** be accessible to anyone on the premises and shared online if necessary.
  - b. Emergency plans **MUST** be reviewed and updated annually.
58. Dogs **MUST** not be left unattended anywhere other than in their units.
59. Dogs **MUST** not be left unattended in situations likely to cause them excessive stress.
- a. Where dogs are unable to tolerate a kennel environment (for example, constant barking/howling when unattended, 'climbing walls' or showing other indicators of high stress) a suitable foster home **MUST** be found for them at the earliest opportunity.
60. Dogs **MUST** not be left unattended for a period of time likely to cause them excessive stress.
61. A staff ratio of one on-duty staff member to ten dogs **SHOULD** be maintained during routine operations.
- a. There **SHOULD** be at least one staff member within 30 minutes' travel of the site during working hours.
62. Foster carers **MUST** be trained and given guidance by Greyhound Rescue Wales staff, relevant to the dogs they are caring for.
63. Staff **SHOULD** be in-date with all competencies and training outlined in the [GRW Training Matrix](#).
64. Volunteers **MUST** complete an induction package appropriate to their role in accordance with the [Volunteer Onboarding Process](#).
65. There **MUST** be a staff member on duty during routine working hours who has overall control of the centre and remains within a reasonable distance of the site.
- a. During routine operations, this **MUST** be either the Rescue and Rehoming Manager, Kennel Supervisor or Rescue and Rehoming Coordinator unless responsibility is otherwise delegated to another person by the CEO directly.

## Transport of Dogs: Introduction



Transport of animals in the UK is regulated by law. The Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order states that:

*'No person shall transport any animal in a way which causes or is likely to cause injury or unnecessary suffering to that animal.'*

In addition to this, the Highway Code states that:

*'When in a vehicle make sure dogs or other animals are suitably*

*restrained so they cannot distract you while you are driving or injure you if you stop quickly'.*

This means that dogs must be transported in a way that will cause them no harm and will reduce the level of harm inflicted in the event of an accident. They must also be restrained from interfering with driving and remove the risk of injury to passengers in the event of an accident.

Ex-racing greyhounds in particular may be familiar with being transported by road, however consideration should still be given to the effects of travel on dogs regardless.

Travel by road can be stressful for dogs. Not only is the motion and noise an added source of stimuli, but there is an increased risk of heat exhaustion, dehydration and physical injury involved. Consideration should be given to the suitability of the vehicle being used to transport the dogs, as well as the competence of the individual carrying out the journey.

Although most dogs can tolerate short journeys without issue, longer journeys of several hours require extra measures to ensure the welfare needs of the dog(s) are being met. Dogs should not be transported by road on journeys in excess of 6 hours unless in exceptional circumstances.

## Transport of Dogs

66. With regard to transportation of dogs, steps **MUST** be taken to ensure that:

- a. Dogs are suitably restrained (using a seat belt harness, dog cage or dog guard.)
- b. Cages are of adequate size, designed to provide good ventilation and firmly secured, out of direct sunlight and away from heating vents.
- c. Dogs can stand, move around and lie down with a form of absorbent material in the carrier to prevent urine/faeces/vomit soaking them.
- d. Dogs are not transported when the temperature poses significant risk.

67. On long journeys dogs **MUST** be:

- a. Offered food at regular intervals of not more than 8 hours and given water at intervals of not more than 4 hours or as frequently as individual needs require.
- b. Given the opportunity to relieve themselves.
- c. Not left unattended in vehicles for unreasonable periods.
- d. Not left in a vehicle where the temperature may pose a risk.
  - i. Dogs **MUST** not be moved in a red-level heatwave, even with the presence of air-conditioning.

68. Journeys over 6 hours **MUST** not be undertaken unless by exception granted from the CEO.

- a. A full journey plan including route, approximate timings, planned breaks etc. **SHOULD** be submitted prior to approval, along with a justification for the journey.
- b. A 1 hour stop to enable toileting and water **SHOULD** be taken.
  - i. After this a further 6 more hours can be undertaken.
  - ii. Following the journey, a minimum 11-hour rest period **MUST** be given before transport can commence again.
- c. Dogs **SHOULD** be assessed as fit to travel for over 6 hours with a vet check being undertaken before the decision to make the journey.

69. Pregnant bitches **SHOULD** not be transported unless for veterinary purposes/advice or to move them to accommodation better suited for their welfare.

## Assessment and Training of Dogs: Introduction

The assessment and training of dogs is a key part of their rehabilitation for pet life. Whether they have come from a working background, another home, another shelter, or found as a stray, it is extremely important to understand a dog's pattern of behaviours and have plans in place to correct those which are problematic.

The assessment process is an important step in the rehoming pipeline. Without fully understanding a dog's temperament and behaviours, it will not be possible to match them with a suitable home. It is also important to understand that assessment is an ongoing process rather than a one-off event. Dogs will often be guarded in an unfamiliar environment and are unlikely to show their true temperament in their first few days at the shelter. Many will have behaviours that only become apparent once they leave the kennel environment and live in a home. It is vital that a system is in place to record relevant observations from all staff and volunteers, not just those responsible for managing the assessment process. The system should be devised and supervised by a suitably competent and qualified person to ensure observations are being taken and recorded in an appropriate manner.



Training needs of dogs at the shelter will vary considerably. Racing greyhounds and working lurchers in particular will often have no experience of the home environment, having lived their lives in a kennel. They may have no experience of stimuli such as noises from household appliances and household smells. They will also have little or no experience of the physical home environment such as stairs, furniture and food stored indoors. It is important they are introduced to this environment where possible to understand any problem behaviours.

Where problem behaviours or rehabilitation requirements are identified, a suitably competent and qualified person should produce appropriate reward-based behavioural modification programmes (training plans.) This person could be a staff member, volunteer, or external contractor; regardless of their status, the organisation must be satisfied of their competence and qualification(s.)

Training plans must be regularly reviewed under the supervision of a competent person. Staff and volunteers carrying out training must also be regularly supervised to ensure they are carrying out the plans safely and correctly.

## Assessment and Training of Dogs

70. The Rescue and Rehoming Manager **MUST** evaluate the individual behavioural and physical needs of each dog resident at the centre.
- a. The Rescue and Rehoming Coordinator **SHOULD** provide as much relevant information as possible to support the evaluation.
    - i. The Rescue and Rehoming Coordinator **SHOULD** be involved as far as practicable in the assessment process in order to understand the rehoming requirements of each dog.
  - b. Staff and volunteers **MUST** report relevant changes, developments or observations of behaviour as well as assessments undertaken and their findings.
  - c. Dogs **SHOULD** be assessed on:
    - i. Sociability with humans, sighthounds and other breeds.
    - ii. Behaviour in the house.
    - iii. Body handling.
    - iv. Food manners and resource guarding.
    - v. Environmental considerations such as traffic, travel, town, park, prey drive.
    - vi. Personality, energy levels and treat/play preferences.
  - d. Assessments **SHOULD** take place both on site and off site in locations such as park walks, local towns and events.
    - i. Dogs **MUST** wear a collar, harness, lead and muzzle (where applicable) while being assessed in public.
71. Home direct dogs **MUST** be assessed by The Rescue and Rehoming manager (or appointed deputy.)
72. Foster dogs **MUST** be assessed initially by staff and then by foster carers with a minimum weekly update.
- a. Staff **MUST** record these daily against a dog's record using kennel management software.
73. The characteristics of each dog **MUST** be assessed in order to identify the most suitable type of home.
- a. When matching a dog to an adopter, consideration **MUST** be given to the dog's health and meeting its welfare, social and behavioural needs

- b. Particular care **MUST** be taken when considering rehoming a dog in a new home with young children and other animals.
74. The Rescue and Rehoming Manager **MUST** ensure appropriate reward-based behavioural modification programmes (training plans) are produced for dogs that exhibit unwanted behaviour or rehabilitation requirements.
- a. New training plans, changes to training plans or issues related to training plans **MUST** be discussed at regular staff meetings.
  - b. Any deviations from, or alterations to, training plans **MUST** be approved by the Rescue and Rehoming Manager.
  - c. Training plans **MUST** be discussed at weekly team meetings, including the Rescue and Rehoming Manager and Kennel Supervisor as a minimum.
75. All training and behaviour modification **MUST** be done through positive reinforcement or reward-based methods without the use of coercive or punitive techniques and/or equipment.

## Departures: Introduction



### Adoptions

The one thing a dog truly needs is the one thing a shelter can't give them: a permanent home. Adoptions are, therefore, always an exciting time for those involved. However, there are still a number of very important processes that need to take place to ensure the adoption runs smoothly and avoid adoption failures as far as possible.

The potential adopter(s) must be properly assessed by a competent person to ensure they are able to meet the needs of the dog they are proposing to adopt. An output-based approach affords much more

flexibility, with a focus on how the adopter proposes to meet the dog's needs, rather than focusing on what facilities they do/don't have in their home. For example, some adopters may not have a garden but are able and willing to take their dog to a suitable outdoor space throughout the day for toileting, exercise, and play.

Sufficient records must be kept of the adopter's details and the assessment process in case any issues arise in future. It is often the case that new adopters will experience some minor difficulties in the first few weeks with their new dog. By having details on file, staff and volunteers providing support will have a much greater understanding of the situation and be able to provide more meaningful advice.

The handover is a key part of the rehoming process. Adopters will often be so excited to collect their new dog they won't retain much of what they are told initially. It is important they are given clear, written instructions to take away with them and refer to later, as well as all relevant contact details for post-adoption support.

### Fostering

Fostering is a unique environment that requires sufficient oversight from a competent coordinator. Foster carers should not just be left to 'get on with it' and must receive ongoing support where required. It is also important they are made aware of their obligations and responsibilities such as observing and reporting on the behaviour of their foster dog, and facilitating visits from potential adopters.

### Euthanasia

Euthanasia is a difficult and sensitive subject and it is vital that a robust and clear policy is in place. Decisions on euthanasia are highly emotive and there should be as little ambiguity as possible to protect the wellbeing of those involved in the process. Greyhound Rescue Wales will never euthanise a healthy, rehomeable dog.

## Departures: Rehoming

76. Information about the prospective new owner/keeper and their family **MUST** be obtained to ensure their circumstances and facilities fit the requirements of the particular dog they wish to rehome.
- a. Proof of address **MUST** be provided before adoptions are carried out.
  - b. Relevant information from rehoming application forms **MUST** be retained using the kennel management software.
77. Prospective adopters and any dogs they have **MUST** meet the dog they are considering before adoption.
78. The prospective new owner **MUST** be given specific advice and relevant details about their particular new pet covering:
- a. Its future care, diet, behavioural and welfare needs
  - b. Ongoing training requirements and how to source advice
  - c. Equipment to be used such as muzzles
  - d. Veterinary history (physical and mental health) and ongoing requirements.
79. All dogs **MUST** be assessed as fit to home, either as part of their health check on admission to the organisation, or following any treatment that delays rehoming.
- a. If the health check shows any other medical issues, these **MUST** be communicated to the prospective owner.
  - b. Where a dog is to be rehomed with an ongoing health issue, then this **MUST** be made clear to the new owner
    - i. Discussion with a suitably qualified person (staff, volunteer or the organisation's vet), **SHOULD** take place prior to adoption about the implications.
80. On being adopted by their new owner, every dog **MUST**:
- a. Have been vaccinated and treated for parasites
    - i. Where it has not been possible to complete the second part of the vaccination course, a system **SHOULD** be put in place with the new owner to ensure this is carried out by them.
  - b. Have a matt-free coat and be groomed where appropriate for the

breed.

- c. Be provided with a transitional feeding schedule, if required.
- d. Have been fully examined before departure, if not by a veterinary surgeon then by a suitably skilled and competent person.
- e. Have a record of the dog's health, breed (if applicable), believed age, and vaccinations which shall be given to the new owner.
- f. Be provided with a supply of any required medication and/or supplements and the relevant datasheet(s) and guidance should be given to the new owners.
- g. Be provided with a collar, tag, harness, lead and muzzle if used.
  - i. Where calming products (e.g. Pet Remedy, Adaptil etc.) are in use in the kennel environment, a reasonable quantity **SHOULD** be provided to the adopters to aid the transition to a new environment.
  - ii. Staff or volunteers **MUST** explain how to use equipment and accessories correctly to the new owner.

81. A suitably trained person **SHOULD** provide details to the new owners of the type of dog, and specific individual, that they wish to adopt.

82. It **MUST** be made clear to the new owner that they are welcome to contact Greyhound Rescue Wales if they require advice or information on any issue with their new pet.

83. The Rescue and Rehoming manager (or allocated deputy) **SHOULD** assist in returning any dog at the request of the new owner, either directly back to Greyhound Rescue Wales, or by arrangement with another organisation where circumstances prevent a return to Greyhound Rescue Wales.

84. Adoption fees are, in part, a test of financial commitment to caring for a dog. Fees **MUST** not be waived or reduced without prior approval from the CEO, following consideration of an individual case.

- a. Unless prior approval is granted from the CEO, adoption fees **MUST** be paid in full before the dog is signed over to the adopter.

## Departures: Fostering

85. Dogs residing in foster homes **MUST** be kept in the home and not in kennels or similar units.
86. Each home which is used to provide foster care **MUST** be visited in person or virtually assessed and approved by a suitably knowledgeable member of staff or volunteers, or another ADCH member, before it is used for fostering dogs.
- a. This assessment **MUST** ensure the home environment, including other residents, is suitable and the foster carer is competent and capable of meeting the dogs' needs and required standards.
    - i. Where follow-up visits are required, the reasons for these **MUST** be recorded on the foster carer's record in the kennel management software and date(s) agreed with both parties as soon as reasonably possible.
87. A foster home **SHOULD** provide a suitable environment based on each dog's assessment and individual needs and take into consideration the dog's ability to cope with other animals in the home (owned and fostered).
- a. Any resident or foster animals' welfare **SHOULD** also be taken into consideration.
    - i. A representative from Greyhound Rescue Wales **SHOULD** provide support with dog introductions in the foster environment.
88. Dogs **MUST** not be fostered in homes where they are likely to be left on their own long enough for them to become distressed.
89. Assurances **MUST** be given that the foster homes will make arrangements for dogs to be given exercise sufficient for the size and breed of the dog and to meet its welfare needs.
90. Foster carers **MUST** be responsible for the day to day needs of the dog including feeding, water, suitable environment, exercise and vet visits.
91. Greyhound Rescue Wales **MUST** provide foster carers with the necessary food/equipment and cover all veterinary costs.
92. Foster carers **MUST** be checked at least annually to ensure their home environment is still fit for fostering dogs.

### Departures: Neutering

93. Where it has not been possible to neuter a dog prior to adoption, an agreement **MUST** be made with the adopters that the dog will be neutered when appropriate.
- a. The Rescue and Rehoming Manager (or appointed deputy) **SHOULD** note the approximate date for the dog to be neutered and contact the adopter at this point to confirm arrangements have been made. This process should be automated as far as possible to avoid missed reminders.

### Departures: Euthanasia

94. Greyhound Rescue Wales is required to have a written policy on euthanasia. This is available at [GRW010-Euthanasia Policy and Procedures](#) and **MUST** be followed in all cases that consider the requirement for euthanasia or end-of-life care.
- a. Euthanasia of dogs **MUST** only be carried out by (or under the direction of) a veterinary surgeon using appropriate intravenous injection.

## Management Processes

95. Records **MUST** be kept for all dogs under the responsibility of Greyhound Rescue Wales, using the kennel management software.
- a. As a minimum, dog records **MUST** include:
    - i. A description of the dog.
    - ii. Date of arrival and departure.
    - iii. Believed age.
    - iv. Vet history.
    - v. Behavioural assessments.
96. Records **MUST** be retained for a minimum of 3 years following adoption and include:
- a. Name and address of the new owner/keeper.
  - b. A record of what details have been passed onto the new owner.
97. New keepers' details **MUST** be recorded on the relevant microchip database.
- a. It is acceptable for details of Greyhound Rescue Wales to be recorded as well where the database allows for this.
98. Personal data **MUST** be held in accordance with GDPR and [GRW012-Information Security Policy](#).
99. Where members of the public can view or come into contact with dogs, suitable measures **MUST** be taken for the safety and welfare of the dogs including staff supervision, signage and locked doors.
100. Written emergency plans detailing evacuation of dogs **MUST** be in place, known and available to staff and volunteers.
101. Rehoming sites **MUST** be locked outside of routine working hours when animals are present.
102. Measures **MUST** be taken to prevent members of the public, contractors or other unauthorised persons handling or otherwise interfering with dogs unsupervised.
- a. Where there is a physical risk to the public (e.g. from reaching into enclosures etc.) signage **MUST** be present outlining the risk and prohibiting such behaviour.

## Management Processes: Inspections

103. Where third-party facilities (such as commercial boarding kennels) are used on behalf of Greyhound Rescue Wales, these **MUST** be physically inspected before use and a formal record of the inspection retained on Google Drive.
- a. Premises **MUST** be licenced by the local authority.
  - b. The premises **MUST** be provided with a copy of these standards and deemed capable of meeting them by the Rescue and Rehoming Manager, CEO, or another deputy appointed by the CEO directly.
104. The rehoming centre(s), and any boarding kennels in use by the organisation, **MUST** be inspected by the CEO (or an appointed deputy) at least 4 times in a calendar year.
- a. Inspections **SHOULD** consist of a minimum of 2 scheduled and 2 unannounced visits throughout the year.
  - b. Inspections **MUST** include:
    - i. A compliance check with a randomised selection of *at least 25%* of these standards.
      1. One standard = one top-level paragraph, including any sub-paragraphs contained within.
    - ii. A verbal discussion with the Centre/boarding kennel Manager, and Rescue and Rehoming Manager (where applicable.)
    - iii. A visual inspection of all kennel and exercise facilities.
    - iv. A review of any incidents occurring since the last inspection.

## Reference Documents and Further Reading:

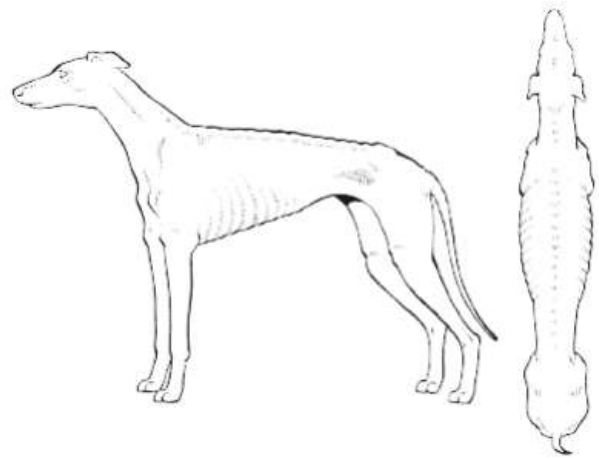
Document	Link	Description
ADCH Minimum Welfare Standards	<a href="#">Click here</a>	The minimum standards GRW is required to meet as an ADCH member
The Welfare of Racing Greyhounds (Wales)	<a href="#">Click here</a>	The voluntary code for the welfare of racing greyhounds in Wales. The code explains what keepers of racing greyhounds must do to meet the standards of care the law requires.
Animal Welfare Establishments (Wales): Code of Best Practice	<a href="#">Click here</a>	Guidance to help animal welfare establishments follow the law on the welfare of vulnerable animals.
Animal Welfare Act 2006	<a href="#">Click here</a>	The law governing the welfare of animals (vertebrates) in England and Wales
Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963	<a href="#">Click here</a>	The law governing boarding establishments for animals in GB.
Animal Health Act 1981	<a href="#">Click here</a>	The law governing animal health and disease control in GB.
DEFRA Code of practice for the welfare of dogs	<a href="#">Click here</a>	Guidance on important considerations when caring for dogs.
Dangerous Dogs Act 1991	<a href="#">Click here</a>	The law governing dogs that are deemed dangerous, including legal restrictions and orders around muzzling, use of leads etc.

To view this document online and access hyperlinks, visit [www.greyhoundrescuewales.co.uk/welfare](http://www.greyhoundrescuewales.co.uk/welfare)

## Annex A: Body Condition Score Chart

### Condition Score 1: Emaciated

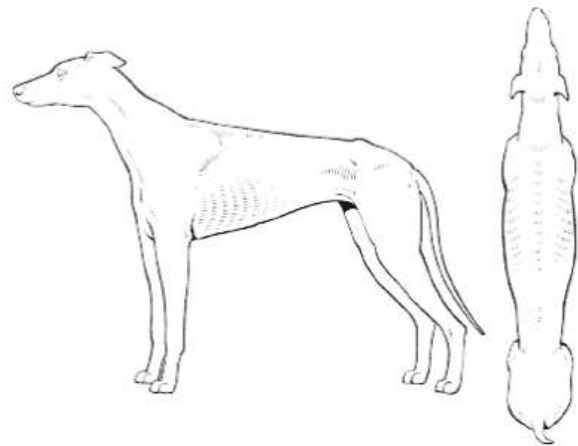
- Individual ribs, spine and pelvis prominent and evident from a distance.
- Lack of muscle mass.
- Little or no body fat.
- Rump hollow.
- Waist prominent when viewed from above.
- Abdomen obviously tucked up.
- Neck thin.
- No fat on tail.



*Veterinary advice must be sought.*

### Condition Score 2: Thin

- Ribs, spine and pelvis bones visible and easily felt.
- Little body fat.
- Neck thin.
- Abdomen tucked up.
- Little fat on tail.
- Obvious waist when viewed from above.



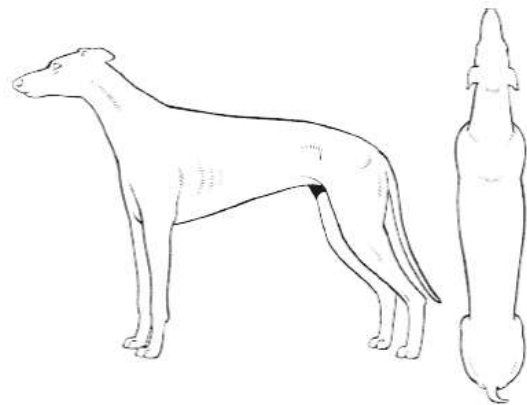
*Increase feeding and worm dog if not wormed recently.*

*Seek veterinary advice if dog remains underweight or unsure of feeding or worming regime.*

*Active racing greyhounds will usually have a condition score between 2 and 3. It is expected that once settled into a healthy pet life, dogs will maintain a condition score of 3.*

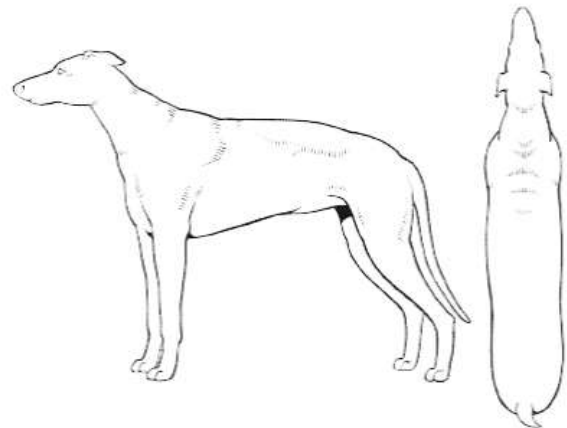
**Condition Score 3: Ideal**

- Ribs and spine can be felt, last few ribs may be visible.
- Dog should have a waist when viewed from above.
- Belly is tucked up when viewed from side.
- Good muscle mass.
- Rump well-muscled.



**Condition Score 4: Overweight**

- Ribs and spine not visible but can be felt.
- Fat deposit on tail.
- Little or no waist when viewed from above, rounded appearance, back appears broadened.
- Dog squarish along back line when viewed from side.
- Abdomen not tucked up, may appear rounded underneath.

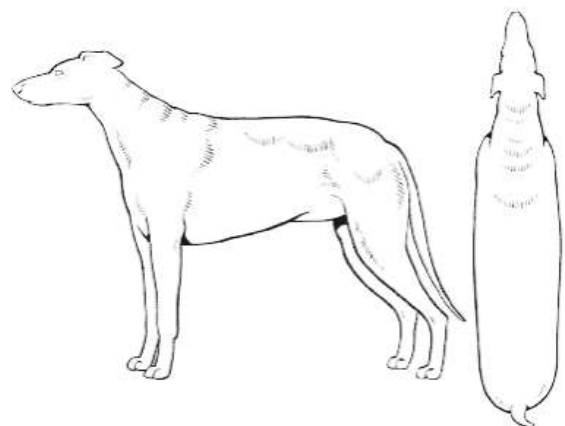


*Reduce feed intake or provide lower calorie feed. Increase exercise.*

*Seek veterinary advice if unsure of appropriate diet or concerns over exercise regime.*

**Condition Score 5: Obese**

- Ribs and spine not visible and difficult to feel.
- Tail has obvious fat deposit.
- No waist and back broadened when viewed from above.
- Belly obviously rounded and possibly distended.
- Dog square or rounded up along back line when viewed from side.



*Seek veterinary advice on diet and exercise regime.*

**Annex B: Heat Index and Guidance**

		Temperature in °C																					
		22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43
RH %	40	22	23	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	31	33	34	36	37	38	41	43	46	48	51	54	58
	45	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	31	32	34	36	38	39	40	43	46	48	51	54	58	
	50	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	31	33	35	37	39	41	42	45	48	51	55	58		
	55	22	23	24	25	26	27	29	30	32	34	36	38	41	43	44	47	51	54	58			
	60	22	23	24	25	27	28	29	31	33	35	38	41	43	45	47	51	54	58				
	65	22	23	24	25	27	28	29	32	34	37	39	42	46	48	49	53	58					
	70	22	23	24	25	27	28	30	32	35	38	41	44	48	50	52	57						
	75	22	23	24	26	27	29	31	33	36	39	43	47	51	53	56							
	80	22	23	25	26	28	29	32	34	38	41	45	49	54	57								
	85	22	24	25	26	28	29	32	36	39	43	47	52	57									
	90	23	24	25	26	28	30	33	37	41	45	50	55										
	95	23	24	25	26	28	30	34	38	42	47	53											
100	23	24	25	26	28	31	35	39	44	49	56												
Aware - Normal exercise can usually continue, but be aware of signs of heat stress and be prepared to cool dogs where needed.																							
Caution - Heat is likely to impact dogs. Exercise must be limited to short, low-intensity activity and avoid prolonged exposure to sun.																							
Considerable Risk - Risk to humans and considerable risk to dogs. Essential kennel activity ONLY with close observation for signs of heat-related illness. Consider additional measures to keep kennel accommodation below 26°C																							
Danger - Impact to dogs and humans, even at rest. Essential kennel activity ONLY, high risk of heat-related illness. Periodic cooling of dogs may be required during the hottest parts of the day.																							

*The above table gives guidance on likely heat risk to fit, healthy dogs. It should not be used in isolation; any decisions on heat risk must take into account other relevant factors. These include the health and physiology of individual dogs, the nature of the activity and the availability of cooling resources amongst others. Heat-related illnesses can still occur at lower temperatures than those listed above and it is important to be aware of early signs of heat stress.*

## **Guidance**

Use the ambient temperature and relative humidity to calculate a heat index score. Scores are banded by level of risk and articulated at the bottom of the table.

Heat risk can be affected by a number of other factors, including wind speed, sunlight intensity, and the health and physiology of individual dogs. Decisions should always be led by close observation of individual dogs and special attention given to early signs of heat stress.

It is important to note that, whilst the heat index does give anticipated levels of risk for temperatures of 22°C and upwards, it does not mean that there is *no* risk of heat-related illness at lower temperatures. Factors such as poor health and obesity, body size, coat thickness and more can mean dogs are at risk of heat-related illness at temperatures that seem perfectly comfortable to humans.

It is strongly recommended that anyone working with or around dogs in the shelter is informed, as a minimum, how to spot early signs of heat stress. Those involved with handling and exercising dogs must be briefed on the shelter's emergency procedures for a dog affected by heat stress. This usually includes emergency cooling measures and must always culminate with the dog being checked by a veterinary surgeon.

It is recognised that, in the UK, many shelters will not have air-conditioned accommodation for their dogs. With average annual temperatures rising in the UK, it is becoming increasingly important to consider what cooling methods *can* be used in extremes of heat. These generally include cooling dogs with water and increasing airflow across the dog as much as possible (e.g. by using electric fans.) There is minimal risk to a healthy dog from being immersed in cool (not freezing) water. Heat-related illness in dogs can quickly become life-threatening and the priority is to cool them using whatever methods are available.