



# Animal Welfare Quick Guide

## Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011

A person who owns, or is responsible for an animal, even on a temporary basis, is required by law to care for it properly and take reasonable steps to ensure its welfare needs are met.

**The 2011 Act states that a person commits an offence if that person does not take reasonable steps to ensure that the needs of an animal for which that person is responsible are met, to the extent required by good practice.**

### An animal's needs include:

- its need for a suitable environment;
- its need for a suitable diet;
- its need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns;
- any need it has to be housed with, or apart from, other animals; and
- its need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

**Those responsible for animals must comply with legislation.**

### Offences:

It is an offence to fail to ensure that the needs of an animal are met.

It is an offence to take any action, or to fail to take action, that causes an animal to suffer unnecessarily.

## Codes of Practice:

The Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs has produced Codes of Practice to provide practical guidance on caring for your animals. The Codes also contain useful advice and information to consider in advance of purchasing a pet and can be accessed via the following links:

[Codes of practice for non-farmed animals](#)   [Codes of practice for farmed animals](#)

## Enforcement:

**Three separate bodies are responsible for enforcement of the 2011 Act:**

**District Councils** are responsible for enforcing the 2011 Act in respect of non-farmed animals e.g. domestic pets and equines (horses and donkeys).

**The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs** is responsible for enforcing the 2011 Act in respect of farmed animals.

**The PSNI** is responsible for enforcing the 2011 Act in respect of wildlife crime, animals on the road, and other criminal activity.

Enforcement officers can take a range of actions including giving advice, issuing Improvement Notices, taking animals into possession and prosecution.

**To report an animal welfare concern, contact the appropriate body.**

# Council Animal Welfare Contact Details

(when your concern relates to non-farmed animals such as domestic pets or equines)

## Belfast City Council

Telephone: **028 9027 0431** Email: [animalwelfare@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:animalwelfare@belfastcity.gov.uk)

## Eastern Region

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, and Ards & North Down Borough Council.

Telephone: **028 9244 7861** Email: [animalwelfare@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:animalwelfare@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)

## Northern Region

Mid & East Antrim Borough Council, Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council, and Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council.

Telephone: **028 2563 3134** Email: [animal.welfare@midandeastantrim.gov.uk](mailto:animal.welfare@midandeastantrim.gov.uk)

## Southern Region

Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council, and Newry Mourne & Down District Council.

Telephone: **028 3751 5800** Email: [animalwelfare@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk](mailto:animalwelfare@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk)

## Western Region

Fermanagh & Omagh District Council, Derry City & Strabane District Council, and Mid Ulster District Council.

Telephone: **028 8225 6226** Email: [animalwelfare@fermanaghomagh.com](mailto:animalwelfare@fermanaghomagh.com)

# DAERA Animal Welfare Contact Details

(when your concern relates to farmed animals)

- Monday to Friday 9am-5pm: Telephone - **0300 2007840**.
- Weekends: contact a local Private Veterinary Practice or the PSNI and you will be referred to the relevant “on call” officer.

# Wild Animal Welfare Contact Details

(when your concern relates to crime against wild animals, animal fighting, and welfare issues where other criminal activities are involved)

- Contact your local PSNI Station on 101 or, if urgent, call 999.

**Further details, including links to other animal welfare information resources, are available on [Nidirect](#) and your local [Council](#) websites.**