

The law: what you must do to meet your animal's welfare needs.

Did you know that since 2007, The Animal Welfare Act has required you to meet the "welfare needs" of your pets. Here's what you must do to avoid breaking the law. If you are unsure about looking after your pets, please contact ourselves or any other reputable animal charity for advice.



Your animal needs a suitable environment in which to live.



- They need enough room to stand, rear up, lie down and move about.
- They need a clean and dry sleeping area to live in
- Their enclosure should not be near stressful sounds, noises or other environmental stressors.
- Prey animals should not be in sight of a species which is their natural predator (don't keep hamsters opposite snakes and don't let your cat sit on the gerbil cage).
- Exotic animals have very specialist and costly needs.

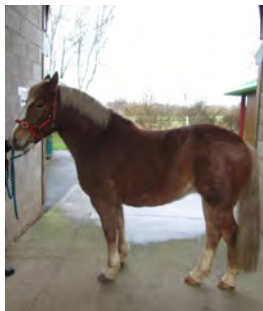
Your animal needs a suitable diet

- Ensure your animal's diet is appropriate for its species—did you know rabbits need a diet of around 80-100% hay or grass?
- You need to select a quality diet for the correct age range of animal.
- The animal should be fed regularly and any changes in diet gradual.
- The diet should NEVER be comprised of just human food!



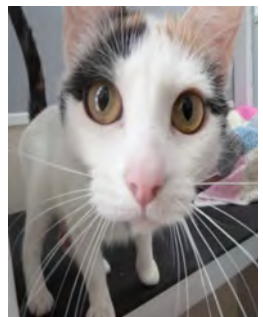
Your animal needs to be able to exhibit most normal behaviour patterns.

- They need adequate exercise and enrichment of their daily environment (making their environment more interesting).
- They have specialised needs—for example rabbits need to graze and chew, cats need a post to scratch, and dogs need an opportunity to make a noise sometimes.
- They need room to do things like stand fully up, rear up, and lie down.



Your animal may need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals

- Some animals need the company of their own species (carefully chosen in the case of dogs and equines).
- Others are solitary species (such as cats) and many cats may live best on their own.
- Some traditional pairings of animals (such as rabbits and guinea pigs together) are totally inappropriate.
- If you're keeping fish or reptiles, different species need different water chemistry, or humidity levels, so don't mix.



Your animal needs to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.



- It's your responsibility to provide veterinary care for your animal when it becomes unwell.
- You must factor this into a decision to get an animal, as charity veterinary services may not always be available.
- You must act promptly when the animal is ill.
- Some normal behaviours (such as breeding), present huge problems for people and animals, and should be limited by neutering your pet.



Oak Tree Farm, Wetheral Shields, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA4 8JA. Tel: 01228 560082. web: www.oaktreeanimals.org.uk

Registered Charity 1169511