

**The PawPrints Awards celebrate the vital role of local authorities and public bodies in protecting animals and supporting local communities to be for every kind.**

In 2026, the Awards focus on prevention and early intervention - recognising that the most effective way to improve animal welfare is to address issues before they escalate. Whether through strong service delivery, innovative approaches, or outstanding leadership, the Awards aim to recognise those making a meaningful and lasting difference.

**This document sets out the criteria for the Core, Hero and Special Awards, alongside guidance on how to submit your evidence.**

To enter, organisations should first complete the [online entry form](#). Following this, supporting evidence should be submitted by email to [Lee Gingell, RSPCA Public Affairs Manager](mailto:lee.gingell@rspca.org.uk). Submissions should clearly state the award category - and level, where applicable - and demonstrate how the criteria have been met.

There is no prescribed format for submissions, but they should be clear, concise and structured in a way that aligns to the criteria set out in this document. Evidence may include policies and procedures, case studies, data, campaign materials, or examples of partnership working. Where possible, links to existing content can be provided rather than large attachments.

The PawPrints Awards are designed to be both pragmatic and ambitious, recognising the realities of local service delivery while encouraging continuous improvement. We are particularly interested in understanding not just what is in place, but how it is making a difference to animal welfare outcomes. Submissions that demonstrate impact, learning, and a preventative approach will be strongest.

**All entries will be assessed against the published criteria, with winners and finalists notified ahead of the PawPrints Awards 2026 event.**

For any queries about the criteria or submission process, please contact [Lee Gingell](mailto:lee.gingell@rspca.org.uk) ([lee.gingell@rspca.org.uk](mailto:lee.gingell@rspca.org.uk)).

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## CORE AWARDS CRITERIA

ANIMAL ACTIVITY LICENSING			
LEVEL	CRITERIA		EVIDENCE REQUIRED
<b>BRONZE:</b> STATUTORY COMPLIANCE AND WELFARE FOUNDATIONS  <i>A legally compliant, welfare-focused licensing service, aligned to national legislation and prepared for emerging responsibilities.</i>	POLICY AND PROCEDURES	A clear, accessible policy and supporting procedures are in place outlining how animal activity licensing is delivered, including application processing, inspection and enforcement.	Written policy and procedural documents.
	COMPLAINT HANDLING	A defined and transparent procedure is in place for responding to complaints relating to licensed animal activities.	Relevant section of policy/procedure.
	INSPECTION APPROACH, DELIVERY, AND OFFICER COMPETENCY	Inspections are carried out in line with statutory guidance, in a timely manner using a risk-based approach, and by appropriate, competent personnel who are suitably trained to carry out inspections and licensing duties.	Inspection procedures, example records, training records and/or competency framework.
	EXPERT CONSULTATION AND SUPPORT	Access is available to appropriate expertise, including veterinary professionals, behaviour specialists (ideally ABTC-registered), and reputable animal welfare organisations, to support licensing decisions.	List of experts or arrangements in place.
	WELFARE-FOCUSED LICENSING APPROACH	Licensing processes and inspections reflect a clear focus on animal welfare, including compliance with statutory welfare requirements.	Inspection templates or guidance.
	LICENCE CONDITIONS AND COMPLIANCE MONITORING	Appropriate licence conditions are applied, with processes in place to monitor and respond to non-compliance proportionately.	Example licence conditions and enforcement policy.
	RECORD KEEPING AND DATA MANAGEMENT	Accurate and up-to-date records are maintained for licensed premises, inspections, and enforcement activity.	Example systems or templates.
	PUBLIC ACCESS AND TRANSPARENCY OF LICENSING INFORMATION	Clear and accessible information is available to the public, including a published list of licensed establishments and their ratings (where applicable).	Website links
	PRIMATE POLICY AND PREPAREDNESS	A clear policy that recognises primates are not suitable companion animals and discourages their keeping or sale. In England, the authority also demonstrates reasonable preparedness for primate licensing requirements.	Policy and/or preparatory activity.
<b>SILVER:</b> CONSISTENT DELIVERY AND EARLY INTERVENTION	WELFARE PROMOTION AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	Active promotion of responsible ownership, including microchipping, neutering, and duty of care under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.	Website links or campaign materials.
	SPECIALISED OFFICER TRAINING	Additional training supports a deeper understanding of welfare, including behavioural and developmental needs (e.g. breeding establishments).	Training records or bookings.

<p><i>A consistent, supporting licensing service that improves compliance and raises welfare standards.</i></p>	OPERATOR ENGAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE SUPPORT	Engagement with licence holders supports understanding and compliance with welfare standards.	Examples of engagement or guidance.
	EARLY INTERVENTION AND CASE MANAGEMENT	Practical steps are taken to identify and address issues early, supporting improvement before escalation.	Examples of interventions.
	USE OF LICENSING FRAMEWORKS TO DRIVE IMPROVEMENT	Licensing tools (e.g. star ratings) are used to encourage improved welfare standards.	Examples of application.
<p><b>GOLD:</b> PREVENTION, PROACTIVITY AND LEADERSHIP</p> <p><i>A proactive, intelligence-led licensing service that prevents poor welfare, supports responsible operators, and protects animals through effective regulation and partnership working.</i></p>	VENDOR AND BREEDER RESPONSIBILITY FRAMEWORK	Clear protocols support vendors and breeders to ensure customers understand and can meet animal welfare needs and legal responsibilities.	Example guidance or materials.
	PROSECUTION AND ENFORCEMENT PROTOCOL	A clearly defined procedure is in place for initiating and pursuing legal action where necessary, with evidence of application where appropriate.	Policy and example cases.
	PROACTIVE MONITORING OF UNLICENSED AND HIGH-RISK ACTIVITIES	Processes are in place to identify and address unlicensed activity, as well as licensed or unregulated activities that present inherent animal welfare risks. This includes proactive monitoring, engagement, and, where appropriate, escalation in relation to activities such as “puppy yoga”, cat cafés, and similar activities where welfare concerns are recognised.	Policy/procedure and examples of monitoring, engagement, or enforcement activity.
	INTELLIGENCE-LED ENFORCEMENT	Data, complaints, experience and intelligence are used to prioritise enforcement and higher-risk activity.	Examples of targeted enforcement.
	USE OF PREVENTATIVE WELFARE TOOLS	Recognised welfare tools (such as the Innate Health Assessment) are used to support a preventative, outcomes-focused approach.	Examples of application.
	PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND COLLABORATION	The authority works with partners to improve compliance, share intelligence, and enhance welfare outcomes.	Examples of partnership activity.

## STRAY DOG SERVICES

LEVEL	CRITERIA		EVIDENCE REQUIRED
<p><b>BRONZE:</b> STATUTORY COMPLIANCE AND WELFARE FOUNDATIONS</p> <p><i>A legally compliant, welfare-led service that responds consistently and appropriately to all stray dogs.</i></p>	STATUTORY STRAY DOG DUTIES	Clear arrangements are in place to meet duties under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 for all stray dogs in public places. This includes safe collection/acceptance, a minimum 7-day holding period, and lawful outcomes (reunification, rehoming, or other appropriate pathways).	Service specification, contract, or policy outlining delivery of statutory duties.
	WORKFORCE CAPABILITY: HANDLING, WELFARE AND BEHAVIOUR	All responsible for handling stray dogs are appropriately trained (including cover staff), with training reflecting best practice in low-stress, reward-based	Training records (within the last 3 years) and an outline of the

		handling and behavioural understanding.	content and provider.
	WELFARE-LED CARE FOR SICK AND INJURED DOGS	Procedures to ensure prompt, appropriate, and compassionate care for any stray dog who is sick or injured, including veterinary access and contingency arrangements.	Relevant policy and procedural documentation.
	IDENTIFICATION AND SAFE REUNIFICATION	All dogs (including deceased) are scanned for identification, with reasonable efforts made to reunite them with their keepers or owners as quickly and safely as possible.	Policy/procedure documentation.
	WELFARE STANDARDS IN FACILITIES	All facilities used for stray dogs must meet the five welfare needs under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and have an appropriate license.	Facility details and relevant policies/procedures.
	SUPPORTING RESPONSIBLE OWNERSHIP AT REUNIFICATION	When dogs are reunited, owners or keepers are provided with clear, supportive information to help prevent future straying.	Example materials (leaflets, links, guidance)
	RECORD KEEPING AND CASE TRACKING	Accurate records are maintained for all stray dogs, ensuring traceability, transparency, and clear outcomes.	Example record template or system.
	SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY (OUT-OF-HOURS; WHERE APPLICABLE)	Where provided, out-of-hours services clearly support responses to stray dogs.	Description of service provision.
<b>SILVER:</b> CONSISTENT DELIVERY AND EARLY INTERVENTION  <i>A consistent, supportive service that works with local communities to reduce straying.</i>	REHOMING FRAMEWORK AND SAFEGUARDS (INCLUDING THIRD PARTIES)	<p>A structured rehoming process approach that ensures all unclaimed stray dogs are assessed, appropriately matched, and rehomed responsibly.</p> <p>Where third-party organisations are used, the authority must have assurance that they operate to appropriate welfare standards, such as the ACDH standards, and have a clear and proportionate euthanasia policy (where euthanasia is only performed when it is in the best interests of welfare).</p>	Rehoming policy or framework and evidence of third-party assurance (e.g. agreements or policies).
	PUBLIC AWARENESS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	Ongoing activity promotes responsible ownership and helps prevent straying, including messaging on microchipping, neutering, and the duty of care.	Campaign examples, materials or links.
	RESPONSIBLE RETURNS AND MICROCHIPPING COMPLIANCE	Processes ensure returned and rehomed dogs are microchipped, and records are accurate, using a supportive and proportionate approach.	Policy and procedural documentation.
	EARLY INTERVENTION TO REDUCE REPEAT STRAYING	Practical steps are taken to reduce repeat incidents, including advice, follow-up, identifying patterns, and signposting support services.	Examples of approaches, case handling, or processes.
<b>GOLD:</b> PREVENTION, PROACTIVITY AND LEADERSHIP  <i>A proactive, preventative service that</i>	ACCESSIBLE, NEEDS-LED SERVICE PROVISION	Service delivery reflects local need and supports a timely response to stray dogs, including flexible or extended access where appropriate.	Description of service model and rationale.
	PROACTIVE, YEAR-ROUND RESPONSIBLE OWNERSHIP CAMPAIGNS	Planned, sustained campaigns delivered throughout the year to promote responsible ownership, including microchipping, neutering, seasonal risks, and	Example of campaign activity over and within the last 12

reduces demand, supports local communities, and improves long-term animal welfare outcomes.		welfare awareness.	months.
	PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND TARGETED PREVENTION	Collaborative working with relevant partners to identify trends, target interventions, prevent straying, and promote responsible ownership to sustainably improve animal welfare outcomes.	Examples of partnership activity or targeted initiatives.

HOUSING			
LEVEL	CRITERIA		EVIDENCE REQUIRED
<b>BRONZE:</b> ACCESS AND WELFARE FOUNDATIONS  <i>A clear, consistent and welfare-aware approach to pets in housing, supporting fair access and responsible ownership.</i>	PET-FRIENDLY HOUSING POLICY	A clear, positive and accessible policy is in place covering pets in housing. This must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flexibility to consider pet ownership on a case-by-case basis</li> <li>- Clear expectations on the types and numbers of animals</li> <li>- Responsibilities of pet owners</li> <li>- A clear approach to complaints and concerns (e.g. nuisance, welfare)</li> <li>- Prohibition of commercial breeding and vending, and discouragement of non-commercial breeding.</li> </ul>	Relevant sections of policy and procedures.
	CONSIDERATION OF PETS IN HOUSING DECISIONS	Pets are appropriately considered within housing and homelessness decisions, with a consistent and transparent approach.	Policy or procedural documentation.
	TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION	Reasonable consideration is given to accommodating pets in temporary or emergency housing, or supporting suitable alternatives where this is not possible.	Policy or examples of approach.
	TENANT RESPONSIBILITIES AND ANIMAL WELFARE	Clear guidance is provided to tenants on responsible pet ownership and meeting welfare needs.	Example tenant guidance.
	COMPLAINT HANDLING (PETS AND WELFARE)	A clear and proportionate procedure is in place to manage complaints relating to pets, including nuisance, welfare, or safety concerns.	Policy/procedure section.
	STAFF AWARENESS AND GUIDANCE	Relevant staff are aware of pet policies and supported to apply them consistently.	Internal guidance or training.
	WELFARE PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORT SIGNPOSTING	Access to a list of local, reputable animal welfare and veterinary organisations is provided, including support services where available.	Copy of list or link
	RECORD KEEPING AND CASE MANAGEMENT	Basic records are maintained for pets that are considered within housing cases.	Example records or templates.

<p><b>SILVER:</b> CONSISTENT DELIVERY AND EARLY INTERVENTION</p> <p><i>A supportive and consistent service that helps tenants sustain pet ownership and reduces the risk of relinquishment.</i></p>	PET-INCLUSIVE HOUSING APPROACH	The organisation demonstrates a positive and enabling approach to pet ownership, balancing tenant needs, property considerations, and welfare.	Examples or case studies.
	ADVICE AND SUPPORT FOR TENANTS	Pet care advice from recognised welfare sources is provided, including promotion of microchipping, neutering, and responsible ownership.	Examples of materials.
	PET REGISTRATION AND RECORD SYSTEM	A system is in place to record animals kept within properties, with records maintained and updated where appropriate.	Example register or template.
	MANAGING RISKS AND COMPLAINTS PROPORTIONATELY	Pet-related issues are managed in a fair, proportionate and welfare-led way.	Policy and case examples.
	DANGEROUS DOGS ACT COMPLIANCE	A proportionate policy is in place regarding prohibited types, allowing legally exempt dogs to remain where owners comply with legal requirements.	Relevant policy section.
	EARLY INTERVENTION TO PREVENT RELINQUISHMENT	Steps are taken to identify and support tenants at risk of giving up pets, including advice and signposting.	Examples of intervention.
	PARTNERSHIP WORKING	The organisation works with partners to support tenants and improve outcomes.	Examples of partnership activity.
<p><b>GOLD:</b> PREVENTION, PROACTIVITY AND LEADERSHIP</p> <p><i>A proactive, preventative and pet-inclusive housing approach that supports tenants, reduces relinquishments, and improves long-term welfare outcomes.</i></p>	PROACTIVE PET-INCLUSIVE HOUSING STRATEGY	A proactive and embedded approach supports pet ownership across housing services, aligned to wider objectives.	Strategy or integrated policy.
	TEMPORARY AND EMERGENCY HOUSING SOLUTIONS	Practical, proactive solutions are in place to support pets in temporary accommodation or minimise separation through partnerships.	Policy or examples.
	MICROCHIPPING AND NEUTERING SUPPORT	Provision or facilitation of discounted or accessible microchipping and neutering services to support responsible ownership and prevent unwanted breeding.	Examples of activity.
	STRUCTURED WELFARE ADVICE PARTNERSHIPS	Established links with recognised animal welfare organisations, which may provide additional support and collaboration opportunities (e.g. advice services, regular visits, or outreach).	Examples of activity.
	TARGETED PREVENTION OF PET RELINQUISHMENT	Data or experience is used to identify risks and deliver targeted interventions to prevent pet loss due to housing issues.	Examples of targeted work.
	CROSS-SERVICE AND PARTNERSHIP INTEGRATION	Housing services work collaboratively across departments and with partners to deliver joined-up support.	Examples of integrated working.
	PUBLIC AWARENESS AND TENANT ENGAGEMENT	Proactive engagement promotes responsible ownership and available support.	Examples of campaigns.

	CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION	The organisation demonstrates ongoing learning and improvement in support of tenants with pets.	Examples of innovation.
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## CONTINGENCY PLANNING

LEVEL	CRITERIA		EVIDENCE REQUIRED
<b>BRONZE:</b> PREPAREDNESS AND WELFARE FOUNDATIONS  <i>A prepared and welfare-aware service that recognises and plans for animals within emergency response.</i>	INCLUSION OF ANIMALS IN EMERGENCY PLANS	Companion animal welfare is clearly included within emergency and contingency planning documentation.	Relevant sections of plans.
	TEMPORARY ANIMAL SHELTER AND EVACUATION PLANNING	Suitable locations are identified as temporary animal shelters, with clear plans for the evacuation and safe accommodation of pets during incidents.	Policy sections and details of shelter arrangements.
	PUBLIC PREPAREDNESS INFORMATION	Information is available to support pet owners preparing for emergencies, either directly or via signposting.	Website links or materials.
	CONTACTS AND WELFARE PARTNERSHIPS	A clear and up-to-date contact list is maintained of local veterinary providers and animal welfare organisations, with defined roles in emergency response.	Copy of a list and explanation of roles.
	DEFINED ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	Clear roles and responsibilities are established within the authority and with partners for responding to incidents involving animals.	Plans or organisational documents.
	STAFF AWARENESS AND PREPAREDNESS	Relevant staff are aware of procedures and their role in responding to incidents involving animals.	Training or briefing materials.
	RECORD KEEPING AND INCIDENT LOGGING	Systems are in place to record incidents involving animals and actions taken.	Example logs or templates.
<b>SILVER:</b> COORDINATION AND EARLY INTERVENTION  <i>A coordinated and proactive service that works with partners and local communities to improve preparedness and reduce risks.</i>	MULTI-AGENCY PLANNING AND NGO INVOLVEMENT	Animal welfare organisations are actively involved in contingency planning and exercises, alongside wider multi-agency partners.	Examples of meetings or exercises.
	TRAINING AND TABLETOP EXERCISES	At least one tabletop exercise within the past three years includes a companion animal welfare element.	Details and date of exercise.
	SUPPORT FOR HIGH-RISK ANIMAL PREMISES	Support is provided to establishments with large numbers (e.g. breeders, kennels, rescue centres) to develop their own contingency plans.	Examples of guidance or support.
	PUBLIC INFORMATION AND PREPAREDNESS	Ongoing communication supports public awareness of preparing themselves and their pets for emergencies.	Examples of materials or campaigns.
	EARLY INTERVENTION AND RISK	Risks to animals are identified and mitigated where possible (e.g. flooding,	Examples of preventative

	MITIGATION	extreme weather).	activity.
	ALLOTMENT HOLDER SUPPORT	Advice is provided to allotment holders on caring for animals in emergency scenarios.	Example advice.
<b>GOLD:</b> PREVENTION, RESILIENCE AND LEADERSHIP  <i>A resilient, proactive and well-coordinated system that protects animals in emergencies and supports local communities effectively.</i>	EMERGENCY ANIMAL ACCOMMODATION CAPACITY	The authority (individually or through LRF partners) has access to sufficient kennel or containment capacity (e.g. vari-kennels) to support animal welfare during emergencies.	Details of capacity and access arrangements.
	LIVE EXERCISE WITH ANIMAL WELFARE COMPONENT	At least one live exercise within the past five years (or planned) includes a companion animal welfare element, supporting operational readiness.	Details and date of exercise.
	PROACTIVE PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS	Proactive campaigns or engagement activities are delivered to ensure pet owners are prepared for emergencies.	Examples of activity.
	INTEGRATED ANIMAL WELFARE IN RESILIENCE PLANNING	Animal welfare is embedded within wider resilience strategies and local risk planning.	Strategy documents.
	ADVANCED PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCE PLANNING	Strong partnership arrangements are in place to coordinate response at scale.	Examples of agreements or planning.
	CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT	Learning from incidents and exercises is used to improve future planning and response.	Examples of review or improvements.

## KENNELLING

Assessment is based on the following RSPCA guidance:

- a) **GENERAL POINTS OF GOOD PRACTICE (MUST CHECKLIST)**
- b) **GENERAL POINTS OF GOOD PRACTICE (SHOULD CHECKLIST)**

LEVEL	CRITERIA		EVIDENCE REQUIRED
<b>BRONZE:</b> STATUTORY COMPLIANCE AND WELFARE FOUNDATIONS  <i>A legally compliant, welfare-led kennelling service that meets essential welfare standards.</i>	COMPLIANCE WITH WELFARE LEGISLATION AND RSPCA MUST STANDARDS	All kennelled dogs are cared for in line with Section 9 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and the RSPCA MUST standards for the welfare of seized dogs.	Completed MUST checklist
	DEMONSTRATION OF WELFARE DELIVERY	Evidence is provided demonstrating how at least <b>two MUST criteria per welfare need</b> are consistently met in practice.	Supporting evidence mapped to the MUST checklist.
	WELFARE OVERSIGHT AND	Where kennels are externally contracted, the authority demonstrates oversight	Contract, SLA, or monitoring

	ACCOUNTABILITY	and assurance that the required welfare standards are met.	documentation.
<b>SILVER:</b> CONSISTENT DELIVERY AND ENHANCED WELFARE PRACTICE  <i>A consistent, well-managed service that goes beyond minimum standards to deliver enhanced welfare.</i>	COMPLIANCE WITH MUST AND SHOULD STANDARDS	All MUST and SHOULD standards are met, with evidence demonstrating delivery across all welfare needs.	Completed MUST and SHOULD checklist.
	DEMONSTRATION OF ENHANCED WELFARE DELIVERY	Evidence is provided that at least <b>two MUST and SHOULD criteria for each welfare need</b> are consistently met.	Supporting evidence.
	CONTRACTUAL AND POLICY ASSURANCE	Contracts or policies clearly require compliance with Animal Welfare Act duties and RSPCA good practice standards, including monitoring arrangements.	Contract or policy documents.
	PROVISION FOR PUPPIES AND VULNERABLE DOGS	Additional provisions are in place to support puppies and other vulnerable dogs (e.g. fostering, specialist care, reduced kennel time).	Description of approach and examples.
<b>GOLD:</b> OPTIMISED WELFARE, ENRICHMENT AND LEADERSHIP  <i>A high-performing, welfare-optimised kennelling service that delivers enriched care and continuous improvement.</i>	BEHAVIOURAL EXPERTISE AND SUPPORT	A structured, ongoing relationship is in place with a suitably qualified behaviour expert (ideally ABTC-registered) to support welfare, assessment, and care practices.	Evidence of relationship and visits.
	ENRICHMENT AND WELFARE IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES	Additional initiatives are implemented to improve welfare outcomes, such as environmental enrichment, socialisation, or reward-based training programmes.	Details of initiatives.
	CONTINUOUS WELFARE IMPROVEMENT	The authority demonstrates a proactive approach to improving welfare standards over time, using learning, feedback, or innovation.	Examples of improvements or developments.

## HERO AWARDS CRITERIA

The Hero Awards recognise outstanding initiatives, individuals, or partnerships that go beyond statutory duties to deliver meaningful, preventative impact for animal welfare. All Hero Award categories are assessed against the same core criteria and are aligned to the theme for 2026: prevention and early intervention.

### 2026 HERO AWARD CATEGORIES

#### RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP HERO AWARD

Promoting and enabling responsible ownership to prevent welfare issues.

#### PUBLIC AWARENESS, EDUCATION AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE HERO AWARD

Influencing public attitudes, knowledge, and behaviours.

#### PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION HERO AWARD

Targeted interventions addressing risks before escalation.

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (ALL HERO AWARDS)

CRITERIA AREA	WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED	WHAT STRONG EVIDENCE LOOKS LIKE
CLARITY OF INTERVENTION AND NEED	A clear understanding of the issue, target audience, and rationale for the initiative.	Defined problem statement, use of data or insight, clear objectives.
DESIGN AND DELIVERY	How the initiative was designed, implemented, and delivered, including use of partnerships.	Delivery plan, examples of activities, evidence of collaboration.
PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION FOCUS	The extent to which the initiative proactively prevents issues or intervenes early.	Evidence of early engagement, reduction in incidents, proactive approach.
IMPACT AND OUTCOMES	The measurable difference the initiative has made.	Quantitative data (e.g. reductions, engagement), qualitative feedback, case studies.
SUSTAINABILITY AND LEGACY	The ability of the initiative to continue, scale, or be replicated.	Ongoing delivery plans, embedded approaches, scalability.
INNOVATION AND LEARNING	Creativity, new approaches, and evidence of learning or improvement.	Pilot approaches, innovation, lessons learned and applied.

## EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

REQUIREMENT	DETAILS
SUMMARY OF INITIATIVE	Clear overview of the initiative and its purpose.
SUPPORTING EVIDENCE	Data, case studies, or qualitative insights.
OUTPUTS AND MATERIALS	Campaign materials, guidance, or resources.
IMPACT EVIDENCE	Demonstration of outcomes and change achieved.
PARTNERSHIP INFORMATION (IF APPLICABLE)	Details of organisations involved and their role.

## SPECIAL AWARDS CRITERIA

The Special Awards recognise exceptional individuals, organisations, and partnerships that have made a significant and lasting contribution to animal welfare. Unlike the Core and Hero Awards, these are awarded for: outstanding leadership or impact, sector-wide influence, and/or exceptional contribution over time or in a defining moment.

## 2026 SPECIAL AWARD CATEGORIES

CATEGORY	PURPOSE	WHAT THIS AWARD IS LOOKING FOR	EXAMPLES OF WORK COULD INCLUDE
<b>SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD</b>	Recognising an individual or organisation that has made an exceptional contribution to animal welfare.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Outstanding dedication or leadership</li> <li>b) Significant and sustained impact</li> <li>c) Contribution beyond expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Long-standing service</li> <li>b) Exceptional leadership</li> <li>c) Transformational impact on a service or community</li> </ul>
<b>INNOVATOR AWARD</b>	Recognising innovative approaches, tools, or models that have significantly improved animal welfare.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) New or creative solutions</li> <li>b) Practical application and delivery</li> <li>c) Evidence of impact or potential to scale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) New service models</li> <li>b) Digital tools or systems</li> <li>c) Pilot programmes or policy innovation</li> </ul>
<b>WITHNALL PARTNERSHIPS AWARD</b>	Recognising outstanding partnership working between local authorities and other organisations to improve animal welfare outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Strong, effective collaboration</li> <li>b) Clear shared goals and joint delivery</li> <li>c) Demonstrable impact achieved through partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Multi-agency enforcement approaches</li> <li>b) Joint welfare initiatives</li> <li>c) Cross-sector collaboration (e.g. local authority + charity + police)</li> </ul>
<b>MASSINGHAM ADVOCACY AWARD</b>	Recognising outstanding advocacy and influence that has driven change for animal welfare.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Policy or legislative influence</li> <li>b) Leadership in campaigning or public affairs</li> <li>c) Clear contribution to national debate and/or systemic change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Influencing local or national policy</li> <li>b) Leading campaigns or movements</li> <li>c) Driving adoption of best practice</li> </ul>

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (ALL SPECIAL AWARDS)

CRITERIA AREA	WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED	WHAT STRONG EVIDENCE LOOKS LIKE
<b>SIGNICANCE OF CONTRIBUTION</b>	The scale, importance, and relevance of the contribution.	Clear articulation of why the work matters, sector relevance.
<b>IMPACT AND OUTCOMES</b>	The difference made to animal welfare.	Measurable outcomes, case studies, testimonials.
<b>LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCE</b>	The extent to which the nominee has led, influenced, or inspired change.	Evidence of leadership, influence on others, wider adoption.
<b>INNOVATION OR DISTINCTIVENESS</b>	What makes the contribution stand out.	New approaches, unique delivery, or exceptional quality.
<b>LEGACY AND SUSTAINABILITY</b>	The lasting value or ongoing impact of the work.	Long-term outcomes, scalability, continued influence.

## EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

<i>REQUIREMENT</i>	<i>DETAILS</i>
<b>NOMINATION STATEMENT</b>	Clear description of the individual or organisation, and the initiative.
<b>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE</b>	Data, case studies, or qualitative evidence.
<b>IMPACT DEMONSTRATION</b>	Evidence of outcomes or change achieved.
<b>SUPPORTING MATERIALS</b>	Reports, campaigns, testimonials, or endorsements.