

WHERE DO YOUR DOG REGISTRATION FEES GO?

Under the Dog Control Act 1996 the Council's responsibilities include dog registration and record keeping, owner education and control and ranging duties. The object of the Act is to make better provision for the care and control of dogs.

The dog control budget, which includes operating the dog pound, is funded totally from dog registration fees. There is no subsidy from general rates. The registration fee structure allocates the costs of dog control and registration as closely as possible to where they are incurred.

Administration/Owner Fee

Maintaining registration records, issuing tags and the first response to public inquiries is covered by the administration fee. This cost is the same for each owner and does not increase as the number of dogs owned increases. The administration fee is added to the fee for the first dog shown on the registration form.

Dog Fee

The Dog Fee covers costs that can be associated with the dog, for example ranging, complaints, and impounding. A separate fee is paid for each dog, with different charges for pet dogs, working dogs and neutered dogs. The stepped scale makes an allowance for the time and resources required to control each class of dog, and provides an incentive to owners to neuter their pet dogs.

The administration fee is paid once. The dog fee is paid for each dog being registered. This reduces the overall cost of registering subsequent dogs and recognises the fact that the fixed owner charges are incurred at the same level regardless of the number of dogs owned. The following are functions paid for by the dog registration fees. (Percentage figures have been rounded):

Registration of Dogs and Maintenance of Dog Register (17.75%)

The Council is required by Section 34 of the Dog Control Act to keep a register of all dogs kept within its District. There are 14,409 dogs and 9834 owners in the database.

Registration costs include purchase of tags, printing notices and envelopes, postage, advertising fees and payment dates, receipting fees and issuing registration tags.

Keeping the dog register up to date involves operating a system to monitor dogs in and out of the district, answer public inquiries, follow up unregistered dogs and send reminders to dog owners. The dog register, which has 44 dogs classified as 'menacing' and 7 as 'dangerous', also helps reunite lost dogs with their owners.

Public Awareness, Education and Training (9.70%)

Educating the public and dog owners about owner responsibilities, the role of animal management officers, and the statutory obligations of the Council is an important part of the Animal Management Officer's work. This includes visits to schools and interested groups.

Staff are also involved in training to keep up to date with new developments in their industry, customer service, new technology and other work related skills.

Enforcement and Prosecutions (3.15%)

The final step in the enforcement process is action through the Court. This includes the prosecution of owners of unregistered dogs. To date in 2024/25 492 infringement notices have been issued.

Ranging and Response to Complaints (31.8%)

Regular patrols are made to monitor dog behaviour, with special attention to problem areas (beaches, parks etc) during holiday periods.

Follow-up of public complaints regarding dog control, noise, wandering dogs and dangerous dogs. 1557 calls have been recorded so far in 2024/25 with the most common complaints being barking (396) roaming (215) and aggressive behaviour (111).

Pound and Pickups (13%)

Registration fees meet the cost of maintaining and operating the dog pound, including collection and care of impounded animals. Impounding fees are also credited to this account to cover the cost of looking after impounded dogs. Animal control rates pay for the time spent on control of stock. A total of 449 calls were logged regarding lost and found dogs in the last year.

Administration and Management (23.35%)

This includes linking with the National Dog Database, office space, insurance, administration services such as word processing, communications, photocopying, collection of fees, postage (other than bulk postage) and part of the Council management costs.

National Dog Database Levy (1.25%)

All Councils are required to pay a levy to the Government to cover the cost of operating the National Dog Database administered by the Department of Internal Affairs.

Dog Registration

