



## **Norfolk and Suffolk Animal Trust (NASAT) Policy for dog euthanasia.**

**Approved by: Board of Trustees**

**Date Approved: 30.04.2026**

**Next Review Due: 30.04.2027**

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### **1. Purpose**

This policy sets out the circumstances and decision-making process under which a dog in the care of NASAT may be humanely euthanised. The organisation is committed to prioritising:

- The welfare and dignity of each dog
- The safety of volunteers, staff, and the public
- Ethical and legally responsible decision-making

Euthanasia is always considered a **last resort**.

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### **2. Guiding Principles**

- Every reasonable effort will be made to rehabilitate and rehome dogs.
  - No dog will be euthanised for convenience, space, or time limitations.
  - Decisions will be based on **professional veterinary advice** and/or **documented behavioural risk**.
  - The process will be transparent, documented, and agreed by trustees.
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### **3. Grounds for Euthanasia**

#### **3.1 Medical Reasons**

Euthanasia may be considered where:

- A qualified veterinary surgeon confirms the dog is suffering from a **serious, untreatable condition**, or
- Treatment would not provide a reasonable quality of life, or
- Pain or distress cannot be adequately managed

A written recommendation from the attending vet must be obtained.

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### 3.2 Behavioural Reasons

Euthanasia may be considered where a dog:

- Has shown **repeated aggression** (towards humans or other animals), and
- Has caused injury or presents a **credible risk of serious harm**, and
- Has undergone reasonable behavioural assessment and/or intervention without improvement

Additional considerations:

- Incidents must be **documented** (dates, triggers, severity, outcomes)
- The behaviour presents a **risk that cannot be safely managed or mitigated**
- Volunteers or handlers have expressed **legitimate fear for their safety**

Where possible, input from a qualified behaviourist should be sought.

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## 4. Decision-Making Process

### 1. Evidence Gathering

- Veterinary report (for medical cases)
- Behavioural assessments and incident logs (for behavioural cases)

### 2. Consultation

- Discussion with the attending vet
- Input from experienced handlers/volunteers
- Behaviourist input where applicable

### 3. Trustee Review

- A **majority agreement of NASAT Trustees** is required
- Trustees must review all evidence before making a decision

#### 4. Final Authorisation

- Euthanasia may only proceed once:
    - Veterinary advice supports the decision (medical or welfare grounds), and
    - Trustee majority agreement is formally recorded
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#### 5. Safeguarding Volunteers and Public

- NASAT recognises its **duty of care** to volunteers and the public
  - No volunteer should be expected to handle a dog they feel unsafe around
  - Immediate risk management measures (e.g., restricted handling, muzzling, isolation) must be implemented while decisions are pending
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#### 6. Documentation

For every case, NASAT will maintain records including:

- Veterinary reports
  - Behaviour/incident logs
  - Trustee decision records (including vote outcome)
  - Date and reason for euthanasia
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#### 7. Conduct of Euthanasia

- Must be carried out **humanely by a qualified veterinary surgeon**
  - Wherever possible, the dog should be in a calm, low-stress environment
  - A familiar handler may be present if appropriate
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#### 8. Review

- Each euthanasia decision will be reviewed (internally) to ensure policy compliance
  - This policy will be reviewed periodically by trustees
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