ASSOCIATION OF MICROCHIP DATABASE OPERATORS
DOMESTIC ABUSE AND ANIMAL MICROCHIPPING PROTOCOL

As part of the government's commitment to tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) the Home Office asked all government departments to look at how they could contribute to this initiative.

Through AMDO's ongoing collaboration with Defra, AMDO agreed to develop a protocol in consultation with leading domestic abuse organisations for dealing with victim-survivors fleeing domestic abuse where microchipped animals are involved.

The protocol includes a process and declaration to deal with locking and transferring microchip registrations as well as protecting the personal details of victim-survivors.

This protocol is not intended to replace any existing agreed processes between organisations and databases that are already fit for purpose but to provide a resource where experience or protocols are not already in place for dealing with such cases.

1 Objectives

1.1 To agree a recommended process and declaration for locking and transferring microchip registrations for databases and organisations dealing with victims fleeing domestic abuse where microchipped animals are involved.

1.2 Ensuring the data held is only accessed for reunification purposes and not misused by animal professionals/authorised agents or perpetrators.

1.3 Microchip databases to allow organisations to complete a transfer of keepership/rehoming into their name and demonstrate when there is a valid reason not to contact the current registered keeper (who may be a perpetrator) to avoid any alerts or objections.

2 Recommended process

2.1 When a pet is identified by an organisation assisting a victim fleeing domestic abuse:

- Microchip number is obtained for the pet, by scanning the pet to ensure the correct microchip number (as any previously issued paperwork maybe incorrect).
- Microchip number is searched via Single Point of Search (SPoS), any standalone microchip lookup portal e.g. https://www.check-a-chip.co.uk/ or any database chip checker service to establish where the data is held.
- The database holding the microchip registration can be accessed by the organisation to view keeper and pet data – ensuring the organisation has

carried out all necessary checks and due diligence as to why the data is being accessed.

- Keepership data verified to be matching the victim fleeing domestic abuse.
- If keepership data does not match the victim-survivor, the Declaration of Authority to Transfer Keepership should be completed https://www.amdo.org.uk/wp-content/_vawg/AMDO-domestic-abuse-TOK-declaration-v1.0-FINAL-20261106.pdf

2.2 The declaration to be provided by the organisation dealing with the victim-survivor and their pet/s to include e.g.

- the organisation has carried out all necessary checks and due diligence to make this declaration
- the database reserves the right to cancel the hold/transfer if inaccurate or false information has been provided
- the client is the registered keeper; or
- the client is not the registered keeper but has provided satisfactory evidence to show that they should be considered the registered keeper; or
- the client is not the registered keeper but the organisation considers that there is significant risk to the client and the pet so the pet should flee with the client

2.3 Transfer of keepership

- If required a transfer of keepership/rehoming to the organisations details completed either online (if access is enabled) or via the database own process - without further checks, delays or notification to the registered keeper i.e. no email, no alerts/SMS messages or consent request to be sent.

2.4 Record locking

- Once the microchip record is held under the organisation's details, a lock to be placed on the record.
- The lock function is to ensure the record cannot be accessed by any animal professional/authorised agents online or via a database contact centre.
- The lock is to ensure data is blocked and not displayed or presented (both online or via call centre).
- Suggested wording to appear for an online search:

  "This record is held for administrative purposes and not available for online access."

- Should a database receive a request to access the data from an animal professional/authorised agent or member of the public, an immediate alert is raised to the organisation that placed the lock informing them that there has

been an attempt to access the data held, potentially escalating the risk to the victim-survivor.

- Record locking to be provided at the request of the organisation or the victim-survivor until further notice.
- A microchip record lock can only be removed by the organisation or the victim-survivor, once placed. In some cases, permanent record locking may be appropriate
- Once the lock is removed, normal microchip/database processes can be followed.
- Databases should review locked records periodically e.g. annually to confirm requirements

2.5 This protocol is not intended to replace any existing agreed processes that are already fit for purpose between organisations and databases.

3 Perpetrator objection handling

3.1 Examples of questions/requests could be

- Why can't I access my pet's registration?
- Why has my pet's registration been transferred to someone else?
- Who has my pet's registration been transferred to?
- I need to find out where my pet is.
- It's my pet, I'm the owner so I have a right to this information.

3.2 A generic response could be

"Unfortunately, we're unable to provide you with that information because we've been provided with satisfactory evidence to hold/transfer the registration. If you believe this is incorrect, you should seek legal advice."

3.3 The objection handling will continue to be updated to add the types of requests that could be made and appropriate responses and will be detailed in a separate objection handling document.

3.4 These could be appropriate for database contact centres and front-line teams in veterinary or fostering or rehoming sectors.

3.5 Organisations may have their own tried and tested objection handling for dealing with perpetrators and other searchers. This protocol does not seek to influence those existing approaches.

4 Changes to the AMDO domestic abuse and animal microchipping protocol

4.1 Occasionally it may be necessary to make changes to this domestic abuse and animal microchipping protocol in accordance with requirements of microchipping legislation, other laws or best practice agreed by AMDO and other stakeholders. When that happens, we will provide stakeholders with an updated version at the earliest opportunity. The most recent version will always be available on request.