

Should I put an apostrophe in the following? *Ladies toilet, Dogs home*

You might. It depends what you mean.

The simple test is: is the thing for the use of or used for plural entities (no apostrophe) or is it owned by plural entities (apostrophe, please).

Here are some examples to help:

There are two house-proud, old biddies living upstairs and the ladies' toilet is kept very clean in case a visitor calls.

The old ladies also keep two slavering, vicious Rottweilers in the garden and the dogs' home is pretty much wherever they want to sleep.

Both these cases require the apostrophe because the noun has to show the genitive – particular ladies and particular dogs.

However, in the case of Battersea Dogs Home and most uses of Ladies Toilet, the words *dogs* and *ladies* are being used adjectivally. The implication is that the *toilet* is for the use of more than one lady and the *home* houses more than one dog.

Compare these:

Margate's Airport

Margate Airport

Only the second of these would be used on a sign pointing to it.

We don't write Margate's Airport preferring to use *Margate* as an adjective but if we are talking about it, e.g., in something like Margate's Airport is very pleasant then we could happily use the genitive.