



The Time is Meow

A cat welfare action plan
for Westminster



Cats are not political – they come in all colours: black, white, ginger and many more – yet politicians from all parties can improve cat welfare immeasurably by addressing some of Cats Protection’s agenda priorities.



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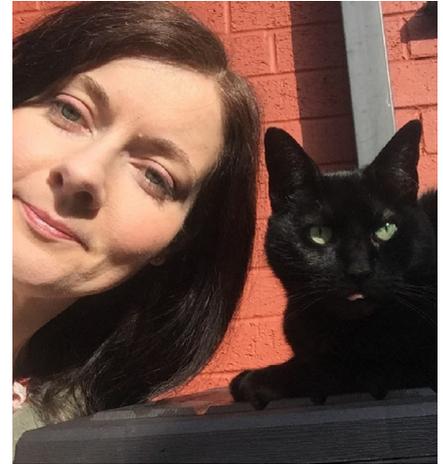
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Compulsory microchipping of pet cats

Why it matters

Over 2.5 million owned cats in England (27%) are still not microchipped¹, leaving them without any permanent form of identification. Cats are known for their inquisitive nature and can become lost or injured – even those that live indoors can slip outside unnoticed. It is heart-breaking for an owner when a cat goes missing, and without a microchip they may never be reunited or informed if their pet is killed on the roads.



What the government can do

Introduce regulations to make microchipping of pet cats compulsory in England to give cats the same level of protection as their canine counterparts.

Awareness-raising on its own is not enough, and regulation is the most effective way to drive up the number of pet cats that are microchipped. We know it works – since compulsory microchipping was introduced for dogs in 2016, over 90% of pet dogs are now microchipped, while the UK figure for pet cats is 71%¹.

Holly had been missing for 20 months when she was picked up as a stray by Cats Protection's Atherton & Wigan Branch. Because she was microchipped, she was swiftly reunited with her delighted owner Ruth.

8 out of 10 stray cats coming into Cats Protection's centres were not microchipped. This means the charity may be rehoming cats that actually have owners but the owner sadly can't be identified².

Continue on to read Monty and Aaron's story

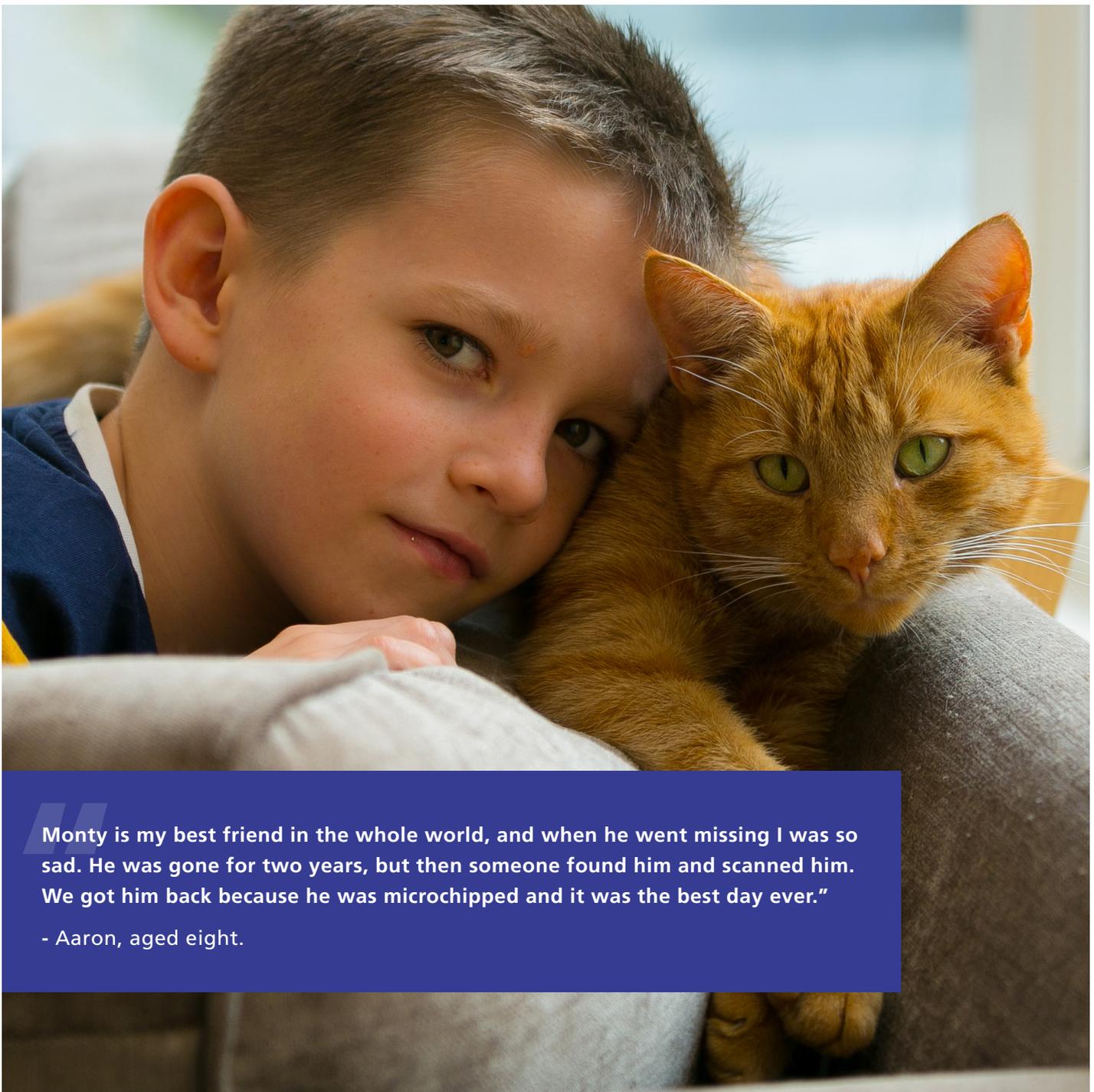


¹ PDSA Animal Wellbeing (PAW) Report 2019

² Cats Protection data 2019 – of cats coming into their centres in England.

The benefits

1. Increase the number of lost cats reunited with their owners.
2. Prevent much-loved pet cats being needlessly rehomed because an owner can't be traced.
3. Enable vets and animal rescuers to quickly alert an owner if their cat is injured.
4. Simplify access of medical records for vets.
5. Enable owners to be informed of a fatal traffic accident if their cat is picked up by a local authority.
6. Help resolve instances of cat theft and ownership disputes.



“Monty is my best friend in the whole world, and when he went missing I was so sad. He was gone for two years, but then someone found him and scanned him. We got him back because he was microchipped and it was the best day ever.”

- Aaron, aged eight.

Licensing of air guns in England and Wales

Why it matters

Sadly, cats are frequently the victims of horrific air gun attacks, often sustaining life-changing or fatal injuries. England and Wales are the only UK nations without air gun legislation, meaning anyone aged over 18 can buy, own and use such a weapon, completely unchecked.

What the government can do

Introduce air gun licensing in England and Wales. Modern, sensible and safe laws on air gun ownership would prevent these lethal weapons falling into the wrong hands, protecting people and vulnerable animals, including cats. Over 110,000 members of the public have signed Cats Protection's petition calling for such legislation to be introduced.



Poppy was the victim of a vicious air gun attack which left her with injuries so severe that vets at first believed she had been hit by a car.

The eight-year-old needed to have an eye removed and sustained a shattered jaw in the shooting near her home in Northumberland in 2019. Having been left nearly blind and needing to be tube fed for some time, Poppy has made a slow recovery.

During 2019, press reports of cat shootings showed 94% took place in England and Wales, the only UK nations not to have air gun licensing legislation¹.

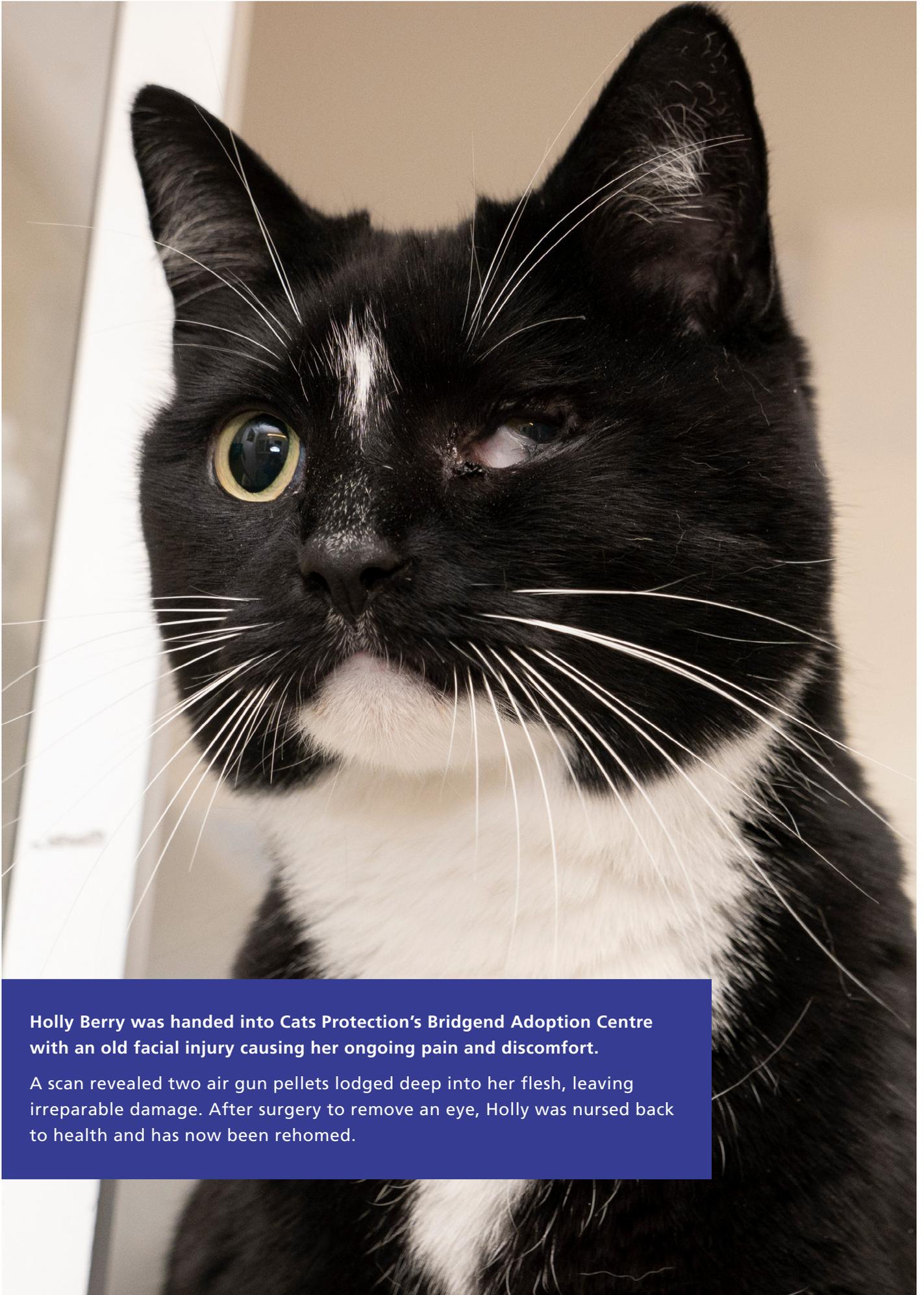
The benefits

Air gun legislation would prevent random attacks on much-loved pets within our communities, and ensure that only those with a legitimate reason can own such a lethal weapon.

The RSPCA received 767 reports of animals being shot in 2018 across England and Wales. Pet cats were the most frequent victims, accounting for 258 shootings, followed by species of wild birds².

Continue on to read Holly's story





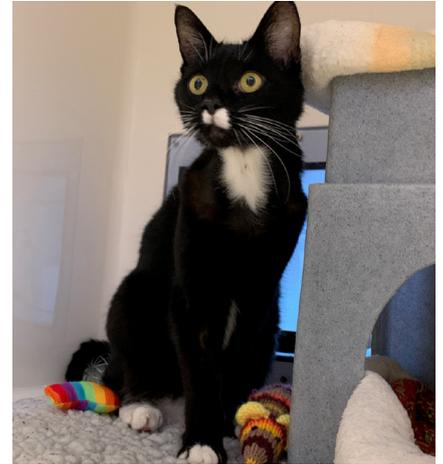
Holly Berry was handed into Cats Protection's Bridgend Adoption Centre with an old facial injury causing her ongoing pain and discomfort.

A scan revealed two air gun pellets lodged deep into her flesh, leaving irreparable damage. After surgery to remove an eye, Holly was nursed back to health and has now been rehomed.

Encourage more private landlords to allow pets

Why it matters

Increasing numbers of people now rent their homes. Yet many tenants are denied the chance to own a cat, simply because their landlord will not allow pets. Worse still, cat-friendly housing is in such short supply that many owners have to make the heart-breaking decision to rehome their much-loved pet if they move into rented accommodation. 'No pets' policies are especially unfair on vulnerable people and those who rent alone, whose cat may be a great source of companionship.



What the government can do

1. **Update the government model agreement clauses on pets** for assured short-hold tenancies in England to encourage more landlords to allow well-behaved pets.
2. **Signpost tenants to tools and information which will help prove they will be responsible cat owners and reliable tenants** – for example, Cats Protection has a template Pet CV that tenants can use: www.cats.org.uk/private-tenants
3. **Hold a government round table with stakeholders in the private rented sector** to share best practice and ensure pet-friendly policies work for both landlords and tenants.
4. **Raise awareness with organisations such as landlord and letting agent associations** to encourage use of new pet-friendly model clauses.

Landlords not allowing pets is one of the top five reasons cats are given to Cats Protection for rehoming.

Eleven-year-old Pushak was handed into the charity's National Cat Adoption Centre in Sussex for rehoming because her owners were moving into a rented property which didn't allow pets.

Cats Protection's research shows that currently, a third of landlords in England don't actively choose to ban pets, but either follow letting agents' advice or use a standard template¹.

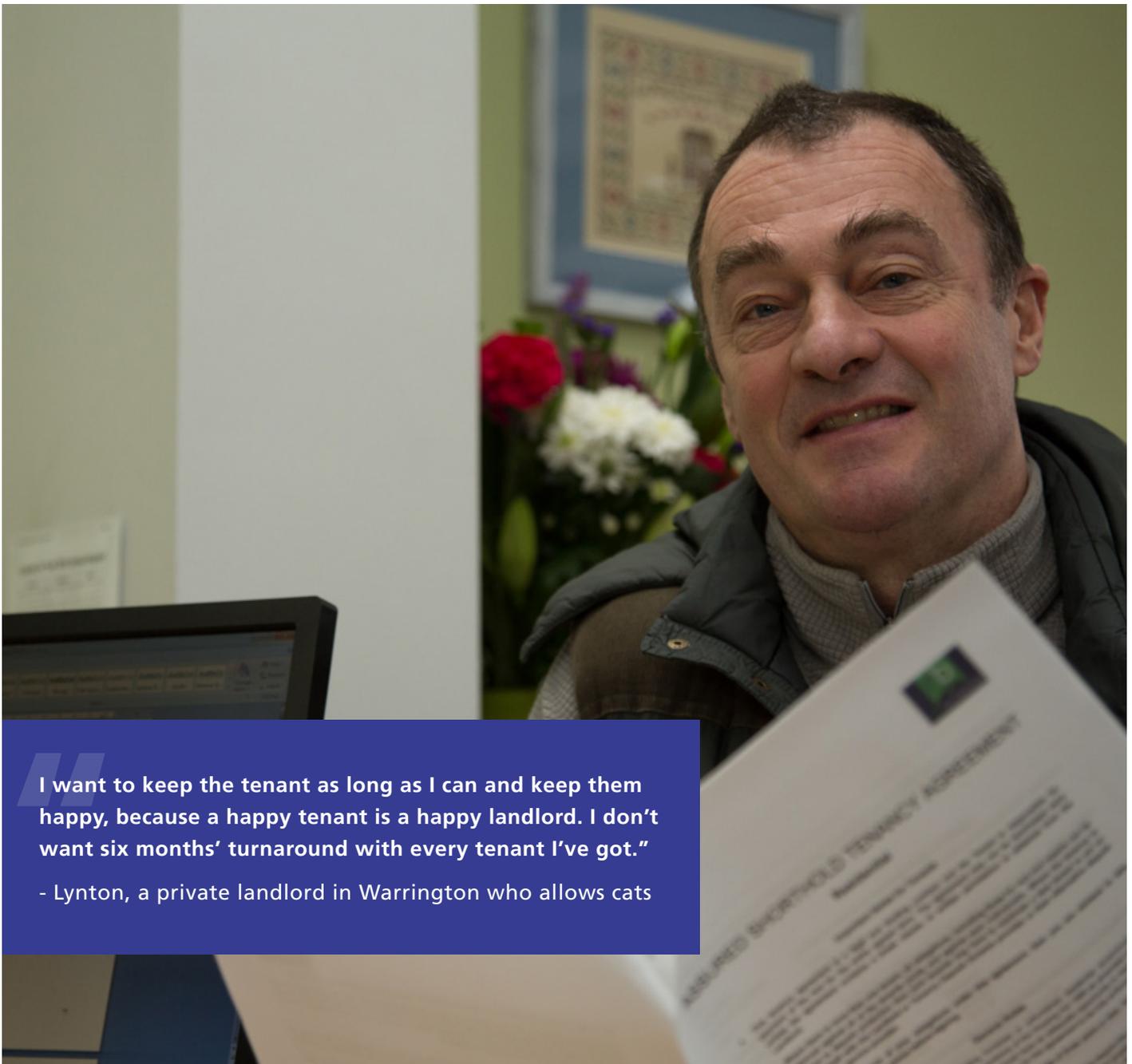
Continue on to read Lynton's story



The benefits

1. Cats Protection's research shows 95% of private tenants in England who have been able to own a cat report a positive impact on their lives, with benefits such as improved mental health, companionship and happiness¹.
2. Landlords who allow cats report that such tenants are often much more likely to settle, stay for longer and be reliable payers. Having longer term tenants avoids additional tenant search fees or losing income while a property is vacant¹.

Landlords want to protect their investment, and research shows cats rarely cause any issues. 74% of cat-friendly private landlords in England report no problems at all from cats in their properties¹.



I want to keep the tenant as long as I can and keep them happy, because a happy tenant is a happy landlord. I don't want six months' turnaround with every tenant I've got."

- Lynton, a private landlord in Warrington who allows cats

Cats can benefit wellbeing and help with loneliness

Why it matters

Loneliness affects millions of people across the country¹. Both young and old can suffer its debilitating effects and the government has produced a loneliness strategy to help address the problem. However, the benefit of pets for those experiencing loneliness has still not been fully explored.

Owning a cat can bring companionship, laughter and comfort into people's lives. But those struggling with loneliness may not be aware of the benefits owning a cat can bring or may need support to enable them to care for a pet. Others may not be in a position to own a cat themselves, perhaps due to financial or health reasons, but could benefit from volunteering with an animal charity like Cats Protection.

What the government can do

1. Commission further research on how pet ownership can help combat loneliness so that the benefits of pets can be properly understood.
2. Encourage health and social care workers to consider the role of pets in social prescribing. This can include volunteering with an animal welfare charity.
3. Ensure that individual care plans include consideration of pets. This should include recognising how important pets can be to those with chronic health problems or limited mobility, and liaising with animal welfare charities. It should also include ways to provide practical support with pet care and prevent relinquishment when a pet is clearly providing companionship and enhanced wellbeing.



Nine out of 10 cat owners think that owning a cat has a positive effect on their mental wellbeing.

Nearly two thirds of owners who regularly worked from home said their cat helps them by calming them down².

Continue on to read
Amy's story



¹ www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/action-on-loneliness

² Survey of 2,000 cat owners was conducted for Cats Protection by 3 Gem Research and sights during August 2019

Cats Protection's Cat Watch scheme has developed community hubs in deprived areas across the country, bringing local people together to monitor stray cat populations. The scheme in Everton has been praised for building a social support function, with over half of residents in the area saying the project had achieved a positive impact for cats and the community.

Cats Protection Community Neutering Officer for the Everton Cat Watch, Rachele

Follini said: "The volunteers and helpers that come along to our weekly hub meetings tell us it's been a great way to meet new friends in the community. Many have told us it gives them something to look forward to each week and a chance to learn new things. It's been great to see so many cats benefit from the scheme, but also to see the camaraderie develop between people who may otherwise have never met or become involved in a community activity."



After completing a law degree, Amy Griffin found herself at a difficult crossroads in her life and returned to live with her parents in Andover, Hampshire. Finding it hard to adjust and missing the familiarity and routine of university life, she found comfort from family cats, Harry and Holly.

She said: "The company of the cats was just what I needed – they didn't ask me stressful career questions or expect me to have a life plan. They helped me take one day at a time, and calmed my mind when everything seemed on top of me." Five years later, Amy now works in financial services and is a volunteer for Cats Protection.

Regulation of cat breeding and extreme cat breeds

Why it matters

Cat breeding is currently unregulated, with no adequate safeguards to protect cats and their kittens. Female cats in ill health may be overbred, giving birth to repeated litters in poor conditions and producing kittens that are sick and diseased.

Worryingly, there is a market in the breeding of cats with extreme characteristics, such as ultra-flat-faced Persians who may suffer from breathing difficulties or Scottish Fold cats with floppy, bent-over ears arising due to a genetic disorder affecting cartilage development in the whole body. Such breeds look cute and can generate a large profit for breeders, but the cats themselves are left facing a lifetime of suffering and possibly a shortened life. Health conditions including kidney disease and breathing difficulties are common in extreme breeds leaving owners with expensive veterinary bills and pets with complex needs.



Lily was gravely ill when she came into Cats Protection's National Cat Adoption Centre. A vet confirmed she had suffered years of neglect and had given birth to repeated litters for all of her 10 years of life.

Having never had the chance to fully recover, Lily's kidneys were failing. Despite her ill health Lily was still an attentive mum, desperately trying to feed her kittens even when she was too sick and weak to eat herself. Sadly, despite Lily's best efforts, she died, leaving four kittens behind.

Most companion animal vets (86%) have treated conformation-related health problems in brachycephalic, flat-faced breeds of cat, such as Persians and exotic shorthairs¹.

Continue on to read about the Scottish Fold breed

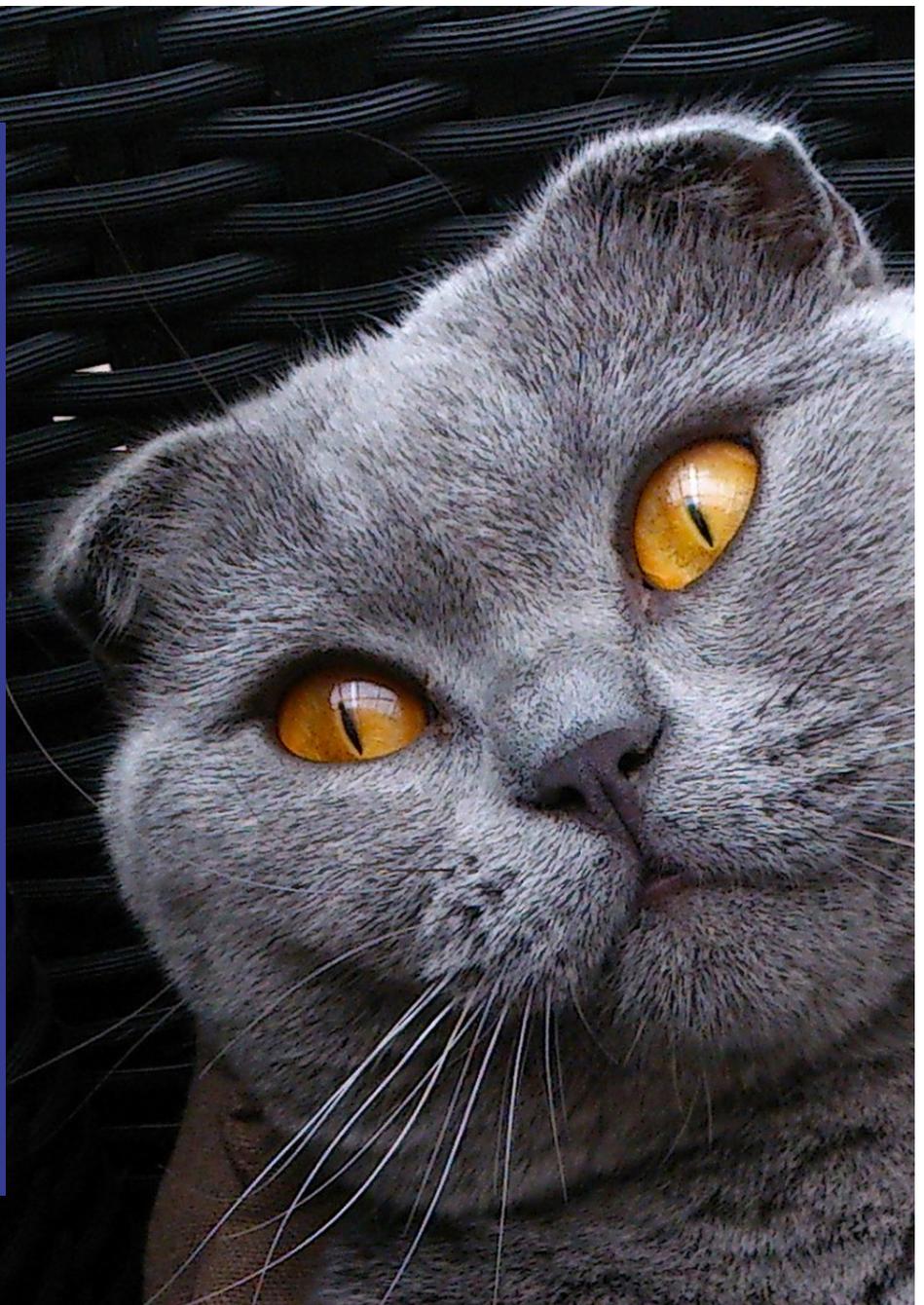


What the government can do

1. Regulate cat breeding, as is already the case for dog breeding. Regulations should require regular inspections of licensed breeders. Regulations should also set limits such as the number of litters a female cat can have and a maximum age after which breeding should cease.
2. Ban the commercial breeding of certain extreme breeds such as the Scottish Fold, Munchkin and ultra-flat-faced Persians, and introduce compulsory testing for known inherited diseases.
3. Work with animal welfare organisations to raise public awareness of the welfare and behavioural issues of certain extreme breeds and wildcat hybrids.

A crippling defect: the painful life of a Scottish Fold

Ruthlessly bred for their misshapen and deformed ears, Scottish Fold cats are virtually guaranteed to lead a life of suffering and pain. The intentional inbreeding of these cats has resulted in an inherited defect that causes abnormalities with joints and bone growth, an inflexible tail and short, stiff legs. Arthritis is rife among the breed and many Scottish Folds will be unable to perform normal cat behaviours like pouncing and jumping due to painful early-onset arthritis. Long-term pain relief is frequently required to cope. Quality of life can become so poor that euthanasia of young Scottish Fold cats is not uncommon¹.



¹ www.ufaw.org.uk/cats/scottish-fold-osteocondrodysplasia

Kitten and cat sales, including online

Why it matters

For too long, unscrupulous sellers motivated purely by money have been selling kittens which are sick, diseased and too young to be sold. This is especially the case online, where classified sites make it easy and cheap to advertise pets for sale, often with misleading descriptions. Those looking to buy a kitten need to be more aware of these unethical sellers and follow advice to ensure they purchase a healthy cat or kitten.

The problem is made worse by cat breeding, unlike dog breeding, not being regulated. As those selling kittens commercially are also often the breeder, a joined-up approach to dealing with both cat breeding and selling is needed to safeguard the welfare of cats and kittens.

Current regulations

Cats Protection welcomes The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018, which:

- banned the commercial sale of kittens under eight weeks old
- closed loopholes, ensuring that those running commercial businesses selling kittens from home required a license

These regulations have now been strengthened. From April 2020 the government made it illegal for anyone other than the breeder to commercially sell kittens. This effectively ends the sale of kittens in pet shops and by dealers.

But there is still more that can be done to protect cats and kittens



Adopt, not shop

Cats Protection rehomes around 40,000 cats every year. Across the country the charity has thousands of cats and kittens looking for new homes. While kittens are undoubtedly appealing, older cats are often overlooked but can be a more suitable choice. Kittens need lots of attention and stimulation, whereas older cats are generally calmer and can settle more easily into a busy household.

What the government can do

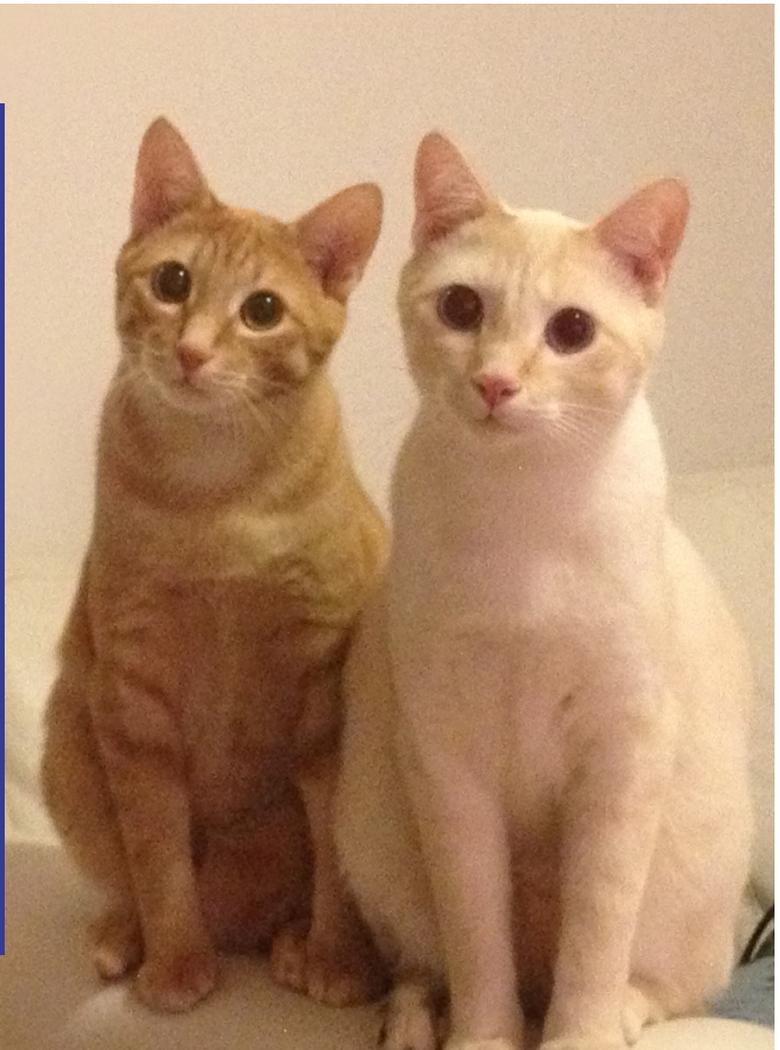
1. Collaborate with charities like Cats Protection and members of the Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG) to continue to raise awareness of the new laws governing pet sales.
2. Continue to promote widespread use of the expert-approved Kitten Checklist which guides those seeking to purchase a kitten, especially online.
3. To work with local authority licensing teams to review the effectiveness of the new regulations governing pet sales.

Cats Protection worked with other charities and veterinary organisations to create the Kitten Checklist, designed to help those seeking to purchase a kitten. The checklist suggests basic questions to ask of the seller and has a dedicated section for those seeking a pedigree cat.

To view the checklist visit: www.cats.org.uk/buying-a-kitten

Hannah responded to an online advert for kittens, suggesting they were the offspring of a family pet. But when she arrived at the seller's home, the kitten's mother was nowhere in sight, and Hannah saw up to 15 kittens in one room. Hannah chose two part-pedigree kittens, paying a total of £360 and naming them Simba and Deify.

Within hours of arriving home, Deify became very ill and was admitted to a vet with severe sickness and diarrhoea. Vets confirmed both kittens were younger than eight weeks old and too young to be away from their mum. After receiving critical vet care costing £2,000 Deify did eventually recover but it was a very worrying time for Hannah and her husband.



Regulation of animal welfare establishments

Animal welfare establishments (AWEs) include individuals or organisations that take in vulnerable animals on a regular basis – whether companion, farmed, wild or other animals – with the intention of rehabilitating, rehoming, providing long-term care, or releasing them back into the wild.

Why it matters

Those who take animals into their care usually do so with the very best of intentions. But sometimes the standards of animal welfare in such settings can fall short, perhaps due to a lack of training, resources or equipment, or because of a desire to help more animals than can be coped with.

While anyone caring for animals in England and Wales must meet the welfare standards and duty of care set out in the Animal Welfare Act 2006, there is no specific regulation of AWEs. Ensuring the highest standard of care in these settings is important not only for the welfare of cats and other animals, but also to give new owners confidence they are adopting a healthy rescue pet.

What the government can do

Introduce regulation of AWEs through a system of licence conditions and inspections. This should run alongside training and support for local authority inspectors to ensure effective enforcement.

In addition, the public should have access to a national database of licenced AWEs. This should outline relevant conditions – for example, the number and type of animals permitted – and detail any breach or revocation of licence.



Aerial view of our Chelmsford Adoption Centre

Continue on to read the benefits



The government should also consider a ban on cats being transported from abroad for rescue. Such journeys can be stressful for cats, risk the introduction of disease and make it more difficult to rehome the many cats already in need of a home in the UK. A more effective way to help cats in need abroad is to support local charities running neutering and education programmes.

The benefits

1. Minimum welfare standards would safeguard the health and wellbeing of cats waiting to be rehomed.
2. Regulations would help distinguish genuine rescue centres from back-street breeders and third-party sellers attempting to bypass laws on commercial kitten sales.
3. Greater confidence for would-be owners in adopting a rescue cat, with the knowledge that any concerns over a licenced centre could be reported to the local authority.

The Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH) is made up of 143 organisations, including Cats Protection, which take in around 250,000 animals each year¹. As the UK's largest cat charity, Cats Protection helped draft its minimum standards, a set of guidelines for members to ensure best welfare practices. Although important, this voluntary code is only followed by ADCH members, and the legal framework of regulation is needed to ensure good welfare standards in all settings.

Cats Protection rehomes over 40,000 cats every year across the UK through its centres and volunteer-run branches.



Dangerous dogs and attacks on cats

Why it matters

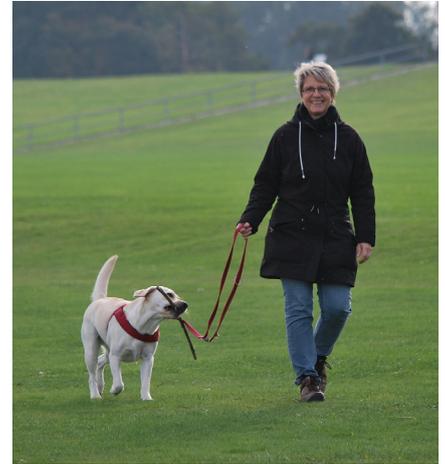
Dog attacks on cats are a terrifying experience for the cat, their owner and the wider community. Such attacks often result in the death of a cat and witnesses can be left with long-lasting trauma. When vicious attacks take place in public, it can be deeply worrying and upsetting for the whole community.

Currently, there is confusion among local authorities, the police and the public about the law relating to dog attacks on cats. Furthermore, there are no official statistics about dog attacks on cats, despite many of them happening in a public place. In the absence of this, press reports give a small snapshot of the problem. Over the past five years, 270 cases of dog attacks on cats have been reported in the press in the UK, 80% of which were fatal¹. Of these reports, only 10% resulted in prosecution².

Community Protection Notices (CPNs) can be issued to owners whose dogs have not been adequately controlled, but there is a lack of official information on the effectiveness of CPNs in encouraging responsible dog ownership and reducing dog attacks. Cats Protection has been supportive of community policing initiatives such as the Local Environmental Awareness on Dogs (LEAD), believing that prevention is preferable to prosecution. However, initiatives like LEAD need to be rolled out much more widely with the support of government and the police.

What the government can do

Introduce a specific offence within existing legislation on dangerous dogs to allow for prosecution of dog owners whose dogs attack, injure or kill cats.



The vast majority of dog owners are responsible and keep their dogs under control. When a dog does attack a cat, it is usually because the owner fails to control their dog. An attack by a dog on a cat can be an indication of a dog that is dangerous and needs control. There have been reported instances of dogs that attack cats going on to attack children.

Continue on to read
the benefits



¹ Cats Protection monitoring of press reports in UK between 2015 to 2019

² Includes civil prosecution and community resolution orders

The benefits

1. Reduce the number of cats killed and injured by dogs.
2. Establish a consistent response from police and local authorities across England in relation to dog attacks on cats.
3. Allow cat owners to achieve action and closure for their injured or killed cats.
4. Encourage more responsible dog ownership.



The London Borough of Sutton recognise the significant impact dog-related issues can have upon the local community, their perception of safety and actual levels of crime. In response we have worked with Sutton Police to support the development of the LEAD initiative which provides a cost-effective early intervention framework to address owners' behaviour as well as providing appropriate risk management tools to more serious cases. We will continue to work with police colleagues through the LEAD initiative to further improve community safety outcomes for our residents."

- Community Safety Manager at Sutton Council/London Borough of Sutton¹

Banning snares

Why it matters

Snares are inhumane and cruel, causing agonising injuries to cats and other domestic and wild animals. Because of their free-roaming nature, cats are particularly likely to step into and become trapped in snares. Cats not only suffer horrible injuries from being caught in a snare but a long, painful death if they do not manage to get free, or are trapped and not discovered.

The current code of practice on the use of snares is not working, with snares frequently left unchecked, and poor compliance by landowners. Changes to the code will not solve this problem, or prevent unintended species such as cats becoming trapped.

What the government can do

Introduce an outright ban on snares. This is the only way to prevent them causing unnecessary suffering to cats and other animals. Regardless of whether they capture target or non-target animals, snares are outdated and inhumane. Specialised fencing is a more modern deterrent for rabbits and foxes.

Snares: the painful truth

- A report by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on snares found that almost 30% of rabbit snare operators had caught a cat¹
- 53% of those using snares took no measures to avoid the capture of non-target animals¹
- Over the last five years, there have been 88 reports in the media of cats being caught in snares. Press reports are likely to show just a fraction of the real number of cat victims, with most snarings going undetected and/or unreported³

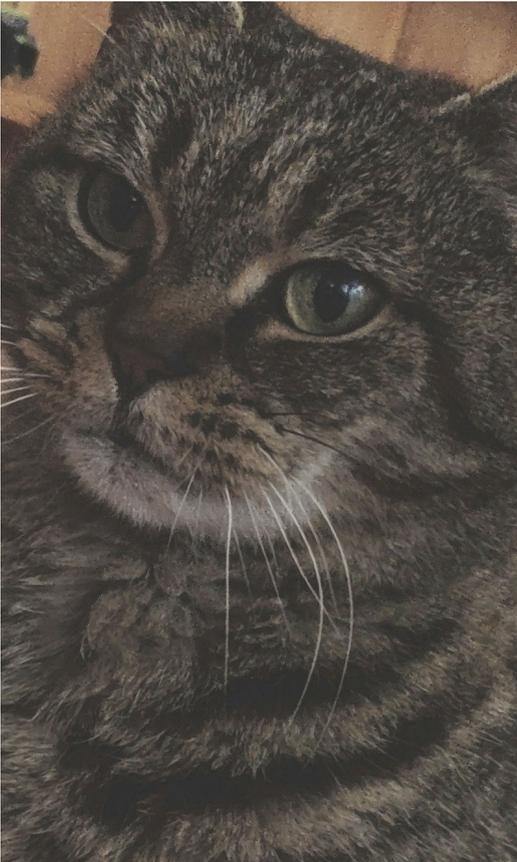


“Cats which have been caught in a snare often sustain serious, life-changing injuries. Many will require extensive veterinary treatment for wounds around the body, neck or a limb. It is not uncommon that limbs are damaged beyond repair and have to be amputated. Cats and other animals may also suffer pain and injury in a desperate attempt to free themselves, and many, sadly, do not survive the ordeal.”

- Dr Maggie Roberts
BVM&S MRCVS Director
of Veterinary Services,
Cats Protection.

Continue on to read
Tala's story





Tala was found with a serious injury to her paw after being missing for nine days from her home in Northamptonshire. Vets, who confirmed the injury had been caused by a snare, at first feared the 11-year-old tabby would need to have a leg amputated as the wound was so severe. After extensive treatment, vets managed to save her leg but needed to remove two toes from her paw.

Tala did make a slow recovery from her ordeal but is likely to suffer ongoing pain due to arthritis in the damaged limb.



Animal welfare in the National Curriculum

Why it matters

Children are the pet owners of tomorrow and it's essential they leave school with a basic understanding of how to respect and care for animals. This can be achieved by including animal welfare as a mainstream topic in the National Curriculum. Such teaching would have additional benefits to a child's emotional development, enabling greater discussion and understanding about caring for others, empathy and responsibility.



Cats Protection's commitment to animal welfare education

Across the UK, Cats Protection volunteers provide talks to children in schools, youth organisations and community groups to help them learn how to care for cats. Our dedicated website at education.cats.org.uk is packed full of resources for teachers and fun, educational activities for children.

What the government can do

1. Include animal welfare in the National Curriculum for all children.
2. Commission research into the links between animal welfare education and preventing problems of animal cruelty and neglect, and reducing anti-social behaviour in adults.
3. Assess the case for including animal welfare in the National Curriculum as part of the 2020 review of the Department for Education strategy 2015-2020.

"Our talks outline the five welfare needs and through stories, props and discussion, promote responsible pet ownership. The children love finding out how the basic welfare needs apply to both humans and animals. The regular feedback from talks shows that the audience enjoy the talks and that the messages are followed up in discussions about animal welfare and responsible pet ownership."

- Jenny, Cats Protection volunteer

Continue on to read about the benefits



The benefits

Helping children understand responsible pet ownership would improve some of the biggest animal welfare issues impacting on society. This includes the increasing number of abandoned and unwanted cats, as well as cases of cruelty.

Research on the effectiveness of animal welfare programmes shows wide-ranging benefits to the personal development of young people, including:

- increasing animal welfare knowledge^(1,3-7) and improving attitudes towards animals^(2,7,9)
- improving pro-social behaviours and empathy^(2,8,9). In children as young as three, discussing animals enabled them to develop their capacity for empathy, increasing their ability to relate the needs of animals to the needs of people⁽¹⁰⁾
- in older children (9-11 years), teachers reported a significant increase in pro-social behaviours such as friendliness and showing empathy and compassion for the feelings of others⁽⁹⁾



In 2019 Cats Protection gave 1,500 cat welfare talks to 41,000 adults and children.

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Lilies and cut flowers that are toxic to cats

Why it matters

Cut flowers including lilies and daffodils can be deadly if nibbled by a curious cat, yet many owners are unaware of the risk until it's too late. Despite some flowers being highly toxic to cats, supermarket, shop-bought and online bouquets are generally sold without any warning to alert consumers of the dangers of certain flowers.

This lack of clear labelling means many owners are unwittingly exposing their beloved cat to a potentially fatal reaction simply by purchasing a bunch of flowers.

While some retailers may display a warning on bouquets, this is often in small print, hard to spot or included on a peel-off price sticker which is normally removed before flowers are gifted.

What the government can do

Introduce a mandatory 'pet safe' sticker scheme for all retailers to use on bunches of cut flowers sold in stores and online which are safe for pets. Stickers should be clearly displayed on bouquet packaging, with a universal logo that consumers can easily recognise and trust.



Lilies are particularly dangerous for cats, with all parts of the plant containing a toxin which can lead to rapid and severe kidney failure. Simply licking pollen off their fur or drinking water from a vase containing lilies is enough for a cat to suffer a potentially fatal reaction.



Continue on to read
Luna's story



The benefits

1. Reduce the number of cats that die or suffer severe reactions from toxins in cut flowers.
2. Increase consumer awareness of the risks posed by certain flowers.
3. Help consumers easily identify cut flowers that are safe to have in their house or give to cat-owning family or friends.

Photograph reproduced with kind permission of PDSA.

Luna was lucky to survive after she ingested lily pollen from a birthday bouquet which had been given to her owner. Having put the flowers on a table, Luna's owner thought they would be out of harm's way, but returned home to find pollen around the four-month-old kitten's mouth. Aware of the dangers of lilies, Luna's owner rushed her to a PDSA Pet Hospital where she needed intensive treatment to help remove toxins from her body. Thanks to her owner's quick-thinking actions and the skill of vets, Luna was able to return home after two nights and made a full recovery.

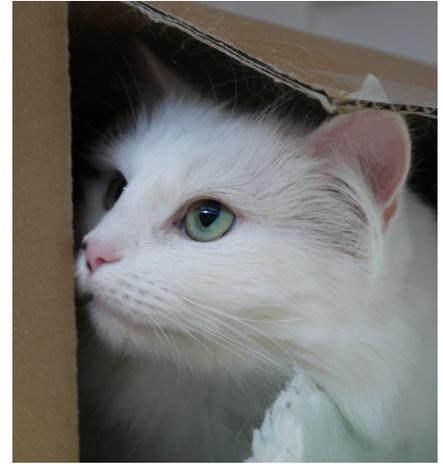


Protecting animals from the unrestricted use of fireworks

Why it matters

Fireworks can be incredibly stressful for cats and other animals, especially if their owners have not had the chance to ensure their cats are safely indoors. Even if they are inside many cats still get stressed and frightened and need extra reassurance and help from their owners to cope with the noise of fireworks.

Cats associate sudden loud noises and flashes of light with imminent threat and their natural instinct is to flee. If they are outdoors during a firework display, cats can quickly become disorientated, run into traffic or become lost. For many cats that are not microchipped it can be especially difficult for them to be reunited with their owners.



A recent RSPCA poll found that 54% of cats show signs of distress during fireworks².

What the government can do

Restrict the unplanned use of fireworks to allow owners to anticipate displays and take action to keep their cats safe. Reduce the maximum noise level of fireworks to help ease the stress to cats and other animals.

Helping the whole community

Current restrictions on firework usage are very relaxed, allowing displays any day of the year between 7am and 11pm, with extended hours for Bonfire Night, New Year's Eve, Diwali and the Chinese New Year¹. This can be difficult for both pets, their owners and other members of the community who struggle with loud, sudden noises. Requiring notice for displays would help everyone plan ways to reduce the impact of fireworks.

¹ www.gov.uk/fireworks-the-law

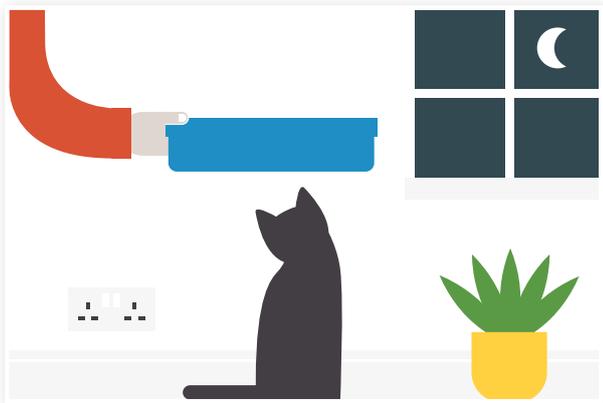
² RSPCA - This study was conducted in England and Wales via Kantar OnLineBus, an internet omnibus survey. A sample of 1,137 adults aged 16+ were interviewed. 345 dog owners and 320 cat owners responded to the question: 'Does your pet/animal show signs of distress during the fireworks season?'

Read our top tips

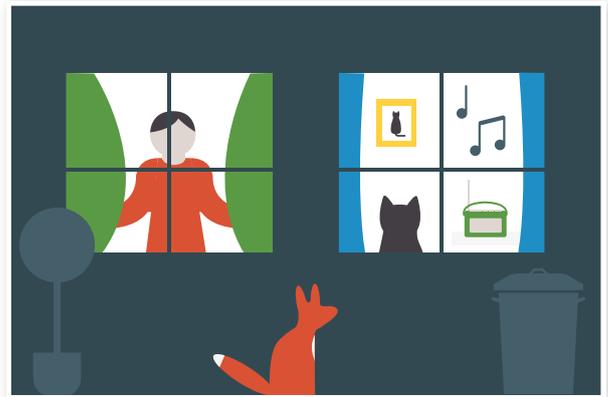


Fireworks frighten cats

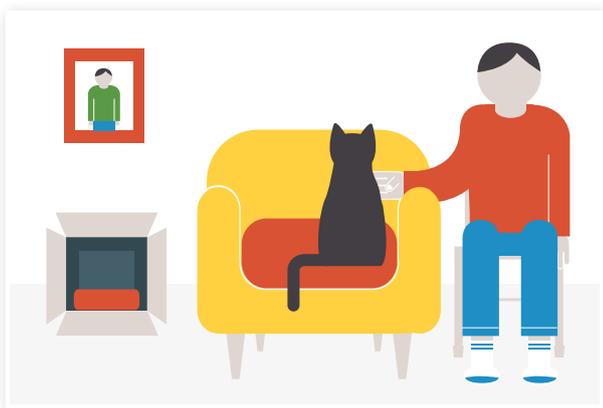
Our quick guide to keeping your cat safe and calm during fireworks season:



1. Keep your cat in after dark, provide them with a litter tray and securely fasten all doors and windows.



2. Reduce outside noise by keeping curtains drawn and playing soothing music.



3. Provide a safe, comfy place in familiar territory for your cat to hide.



4. Create a comforting environment with a Feliway® plug-in diffuser.



Visit www.cats.org.uk/timeismeow

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