

# CATS<sup>\*</sup>

## REPORT

### 2022



UK

\*Cats and Their Stats



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# Methodology

For the third year, we have commissioned an external and independent agency, Basis Research, to conduct the research contained in the CATS Report UK 2022. An online survey was used to collect information among a nationally representative audience of adults over the age of 18 in the UK, allowing us to estimate the proportion of cat owners in the UK. We also conducted a more detailed survey among cat owners. This was carried out between 3 March 2022 and 15 April 2022. ‘In the last 12 months’ within the report refers to the time period March 2021 to March 2022. Unless otherwise stated, comparative data in this survey uses data from the CATS Report 2021.

The research consisted of a nationally representative sample of 3,466 individuals and a boost of 6,349 cat owners with regional boosts to ensure accurate representation in these areas. Overall, 10,494 people participated in the study.

The logo for Basis Research, featuring the word "BASIS" in a large, bold, serif font. The letters are black and have a classic, slightly ornate design.

## Data presentation

We work with Basis Research to calculate estimates of the cat population annually. Three data sources are used in this calculation:

- nationally representative online survey panel to determine the percentage of UK households who own a cat (n=3,466)
- data from the survey of cat owners on the number of cats owned by each household
- data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on the number of households

Percentages throughout the report are rounded to the nearest whole number. Other figures, such as the estimated numbers of cats in the population, are rounded to two significant figures. When calculating cat estimates, we have taken the total estimated cat population figure and multiplied it by the whole percentage eg 11% of all cat owners have not registered their cat with a vet equating to 1.2 million cats (11% x 11 million cats = 1.2 million).

Statistics and population calculations are estimates based on owner-reported responses to the online survey.

Significance testing is undertaken on the data at 99% and 95% confidence intervals. When a finding is referenced as significant within the report it has found to be significant at a 95% confidence interval.

Due to rounding, there will be instances in the report where percentage calculations do not total 100%.

Cat acquisition: Throughout this report we look at recency of cat acquisition, typically looking at all those cats acquired in the last 12 months compared to another time period eg over a year ago. The data is sourced from the question 'when did you acquire your cat?' in the CATS 2022 Research Survey.

Nationally representative sample: The population of interest is the entire population of the UK. The nationally representative sample reflected its structure including gender, age, socio-economic groupings and regions.

More information available upon request



# Welcome to the third annual Cats and Their Stats (CATS) UK<sup>©</sup>

**Welcome to the CATS Report UK 2022 – the most comprehensive survey of cat owners undertaken in the UK.**

This year's survey saw many owners returning to their usual place of work and starting to feel the effects of the rising cost of living. This may have led to some challenges for cat owners in the last 12 months, with more cat owners reporting this year that they have found cat ownership to be a substantial commitment for them.

Despite this, cat acquisition has showed no signs of slowing, with slightly more people welcoming a cat into their home compared to 2021, after a pandemic surge in pet ownership. There are now approximately 11 million owned cats in the UK. It's heartening to see that this trend in cat ownership has lasted, perhaps indicating an increased awareness of the many benefits that owning a cat brings. That is certainly a sentiment that cat owners themselves share, with an overwhelming majority (89%) reporting that their cat brings joy to their life.

A growing population of cat owners will inevitably result in an increased demand for pet services and information, and we have seen that owners are increasingly thinking and worrying about their cat. This places considerable demand on pet service providers, and the CATS Report 2022 highlights some of the challenges that owners have encountered in accessing veterinary care and advice.

Some trends identified have the potential to impact on the welfare of cats. These include a significant shift towards the use of social media when sourcing a cat, along with a continued upward trend in the proportion

of pedigrees and purebred cats within the overall pet cat population. Non-purebred cats (commonly known as domestic short/long-haired cats or moggies) live longer on average than purebred cats and usually have fewer genetically related health problems and as such should be valued and celebrated.

The CATS Reports provide unprecedented insight into cat owners and the perceptions they have on the wellbeing of their cats. Understanding the current challenges that cat owners face and recognising trends early is important to help charities, veterinary professionals and the wider pet industry to provide the most appropriate support to cat owners.

We want to keep making the world a better place for cats. The more we know about them and their lives, the more effective our ongoing efforts will be to maximise cat welfare.

**Dr Maggie Roberts MRCVS**  
**Cats Protection Director of Veterinary Services**



"The combination of the COVID-19 pandemic and a general shift to buying pets online has brought in new challenges in the way we care for our cats. I would like to thank Cats Protection for their work in the CATS Report 2022, which shows we continue to love and appreciate our cats dearly as special companions. However, worryingly more people are struggling to access vet care and more cats are being purchased abroad. It also highlights a potential for unscrupulous sellers to take advantage of the increased online market to falsely sell cats as pedigree, or not look after their welfare properly. I welcome Cats Protection's work to raise awareness and help consumers understand what the risks are, so they can make the right decisions to better protect the health and welfare of our cats."

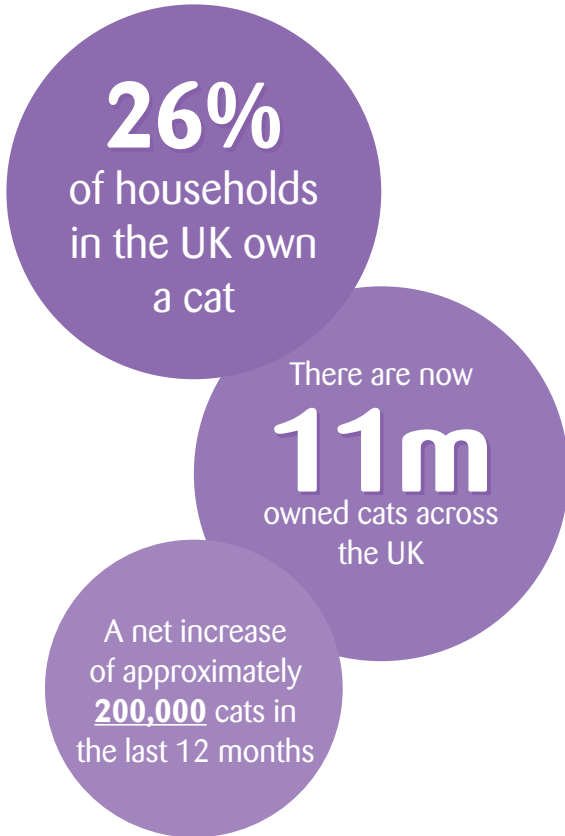
**Dr Christine Middlemiss MRCVS**  
**UK Chief Veterinary Officer**



# State of the nation

## Cat population<sup>1</sup>

Overall, the number of households owning a cat in the UK has remained largely stable this year.



The average number of cats per household has also remained stable at 1.5 cats, with 65% of cat-owning households having one cat, and 35% owning two or more cats.

## Household cat ownership across the UK<sup>1</sup>

Cat ownership levels vary across the UK, ranging from 24% of households in Scotland owning one or more cat, to 28% of households in Wales. Scotland and Northern Ireland saw a 4% increase in cat ownership in the last 12 months, while ownership in Wales fell from 32% to 28% over the same period.

Owned cat population

	In millions		% of cat-owning households	
	2021	2022	2021	2022
<b>Total UK</b>	10.8	11.0	26%	26%
<b>Scotland</b>	0.7	0.9	20%	24%
<b>Wales</b>	0.7	0.6	32%	28%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	0.2	0.3	22%	26%
<b>England</b>	9.4	9.2	27%	26%
East of England	1.1	1.2	27%	29%
East Midlands	0.8	0.9	23%	27%
Greater London	1.2	1.4	26%	29%
North East England	0.4	0.3	25%	19%
North West England	1.3	1.2	27%	24%
South East England	1.7	1.4	28%	25%
South West England	0.9	0.9	24%	26%
West Midlands	1.0	1.0	27%	26%
Yorkshire and the Humber	1.1	0.8	30%	22%

<sup>1</sup> Questions asked: Do you currently have a cat/s (that live with you)?/How many cats do you have in your household?

Example calculation: 26% own a cat in the UK x 28.1m UK households\* x 1.5 cats owned on average = 11m cats owned across the UK.

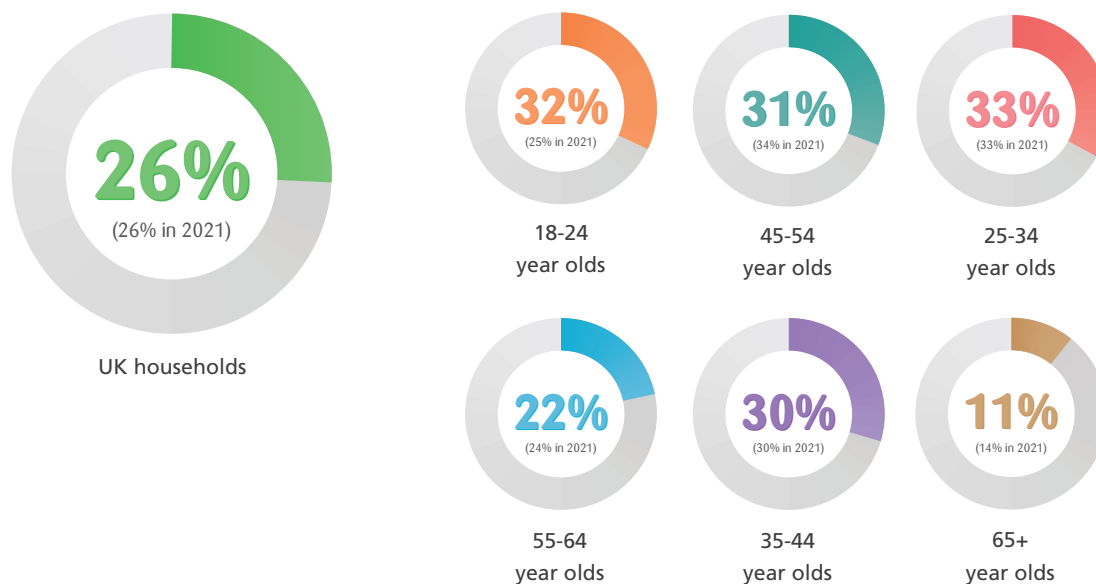
\*Source: [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/families/datasets/familiesandhouseholds](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/families/datasets/familiesandhouseholds) England regional breakdowns only. Sample size too small for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland regions.



## Profile of cat owners<sup>2</sup>

There is no such thing as a 'typical' owner, with the profile of cat owners remaining broad and relatively unchanged over the last 12 months. The only notable exception is that a higher proportion of younger people seem to be owning cats. Ownership has significantly increased within the 18-24 age group and fallen among those aged 45+.

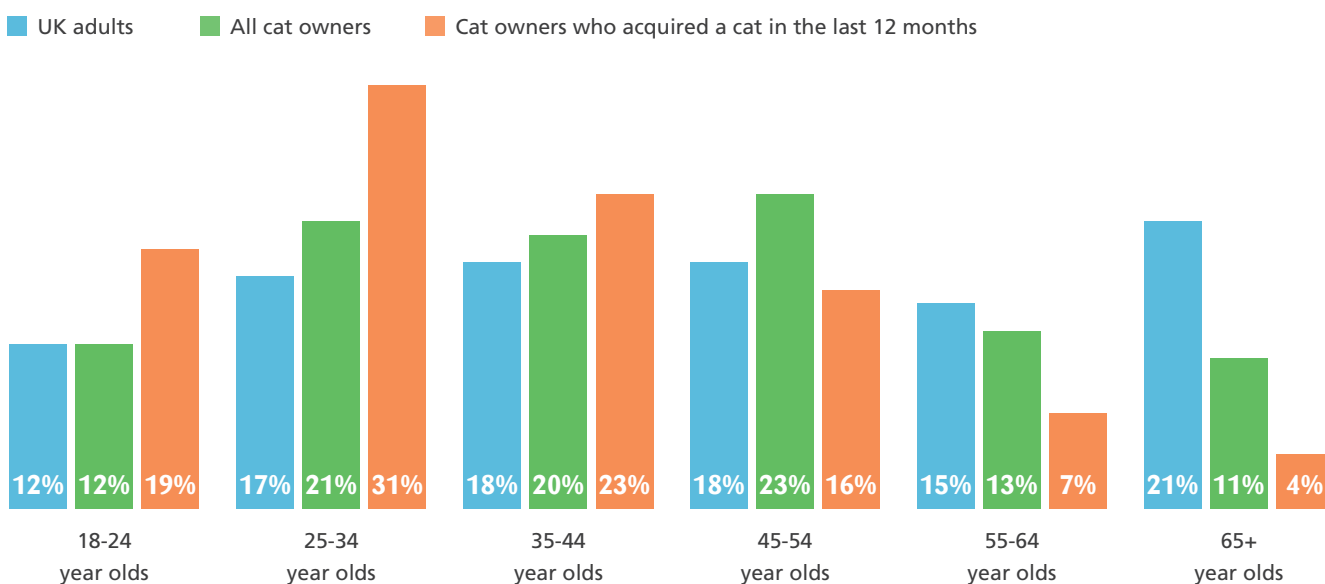
### Proportion of each age group that owns a cat



When compared to the general population, UK cat owners are less likely to be over the age of 65. 89% of UK cat owners are under 65 years old, compared to 79% of all UK households.

Those acquiring a cat in the last 12 months tend to be younger than the overall profile of cat owners with half (50%) aged 18-34, compared to one-third (33%) of all cat owners.

### The age of cat owners compared to UK households



<sup>2</sup> Questions asked: Do you currently have a cat/s (that live with you)?/How many cats do you have in your household?/When did you acquire (eg buy/adopt) your cat?



## Gender

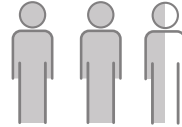
**27%**

of females in the UK  
own a cat



**25%**

of males in the UK  
own a cat



## Residence<sup>3</sup>

**32%** of residents in central urban areas own a cat

(28% in 2021)

**29%** of residents in urban areas own a cat

(26% in 2021)

**24%** of residents in semi-rural areas own a cat

(21% in 2021)

**23%** of residents in suburban areas own a cat

(26% in 2021)

**23%** of residents in rural areas own a cat

(29% in 2021)

**26%**

of those who rent a home own a cat

**26%**

of those who own a home own a cat

<sup>3</sup> Questions asked: Thinking about your main home (where you live most of the time), which of the following best describes its location?/Thinking about your main home, what is the ownership situation?

## Cats coming and going

For the first time, the CATS Report has collected data on relinquishment and loss of cats, as well as acquisition. A number of interesting themes were identified, possibly indicating that the cost-of-living crisis is starting to affect cat ownership.

### Cat acquisition<sup>4</sup>

Cats acquired in the last 12 months are less likely to have been young kittens when they joined their new household, compared to cats acquired over a year ago. Instead, a higher proportion of young adult cats were acquired over the past 12 months than were acquired more than 12 months ago.

Age of cats at the point of acquisition	Cat acquired in the last 12 months*	Cats acquired more than 12 months ago**
Kitten (< 4 months)	34%	43%
Kitten (4-6 months)	13%	14%
Juvenile (7-11 months)	6%	4%
Adult (1-2 y11m)	24%	18%
Adult (3-8y11m)	7%	10%
Senior (9+ years)	3%	2%

<sup>4</sup> Questions asked: When did you acquire (eg buy/adopt) your cat?/ How old was your cat when you first bought/adopted them?

\*The remaining 12% did not know the age of their cat at acquisition

\*\* The remaining 9% did not know the age of their cat at acquisition

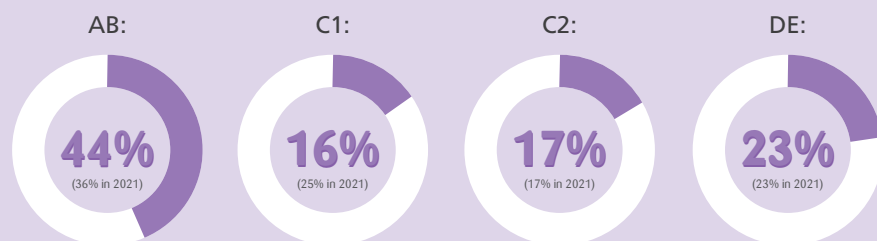




## Is the cost of living affecting who is acquiring cats?<sup>5</sup>

Compared to last year's data, more cats have been acquired in social grade AB and fewer in C1 in the last 12 months. Ongoing monitoring and investigation is required to establish the significance and possible causes of these changes, especially as the nation faces a cost-of-living crisis.

### Profile of cat owners that have acquired a cat in the last 12 months by social grade



<sup>5</sup> Question asked: Do you currently have a cat/s (that live with you)?

Approximated social grade is a socio-economic classification that has six categories: A, B, C1, C2, D and E. It applies to every UK household and is based on determining the employment category of the main income earner in a household.

## Cat relinquishment and loss

Thankfully, only a small percentage of cat owners had a cat in the last 12 months that they no longer own. A large proportion of these cats passed away, but some were relinquished by their owners, for a variety of reasons. Evidence suggests that the increasing cost of living may be having an effect here (see page 53 for more details).

Cats Protection believes that it is beneficial for the cat and their owner when cats can remain in a stable, caring environment, so it's important to understand why cats are leaving people's homes. This then allows the provision of the most appropriate support to try and keep cats and their owners united and the cat's needs sufficiently met.

8% of cat owners had a cat in the last 12 months that they no longer own<sup>6</sup>

12% of non-owners had a cat in the last 12 months that they no longer own<sup>6</sup>

### Why are cats no longer with their owners?<sup>7</sup>

Reason cat is no longer owned	Current cat owners	Current non-owners
Cat passed away	44%	61%
Gave cat to someone I know	11%	8%
Cat went missing	10%	19%
Relationship split – partner kept cat	8%	3%
Moved away from family home (cat owned by parents)	8%	6%
Cat given up for adoption to a rescue/rehoming centre/animal shelter	7%	3%
Cat was sold	6%	1%

Substantially more juvenile and young adult cats were relinquished from people that still own one or more cats, compared to those that don't own any other cats (25% vs 14%)<sup>8</sup>. This may be linked to the fact that more cats are being taken on in this age bracket over the last 12 months and the challenges of managing multi-cat households (acquisition of cats aged 1 year-2 years 11 months is 24%, up from 19% in 2021). Also, cats entering this age bracket are entering into a period of 'social maturity', which is known to make inter-cat conflict more likely in a multi-cat household<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Question asked: In the past 12 months, have you had a cat you no longer own?

<sup>7</sup> Question asked: Thinking about the cat(s) that left your company within the last 12 months, what happened to them?

Base: All current cat owners who also had a cat in the last 12 months that they no longer own/All non-owners, who had a cat in the last 12 months but don't anymore

<sup>8</sup> Question asked: Thinking about the cat(s) that left your company within the last 12 months, what age was the cat(s) when they left your company? Cats aged 7m-2y.

<sup>9</sup> Hoyumpa Vogt A, Rodan I, Brown M, Brown S, Buffington CAT, LaRue Forman MJ, Neilson J and Sparkes A. AAFP-AAHA: Feline Life Stage Guidelines. *Journal of Feline Medicine & Surgery*. 2010;12:43-54

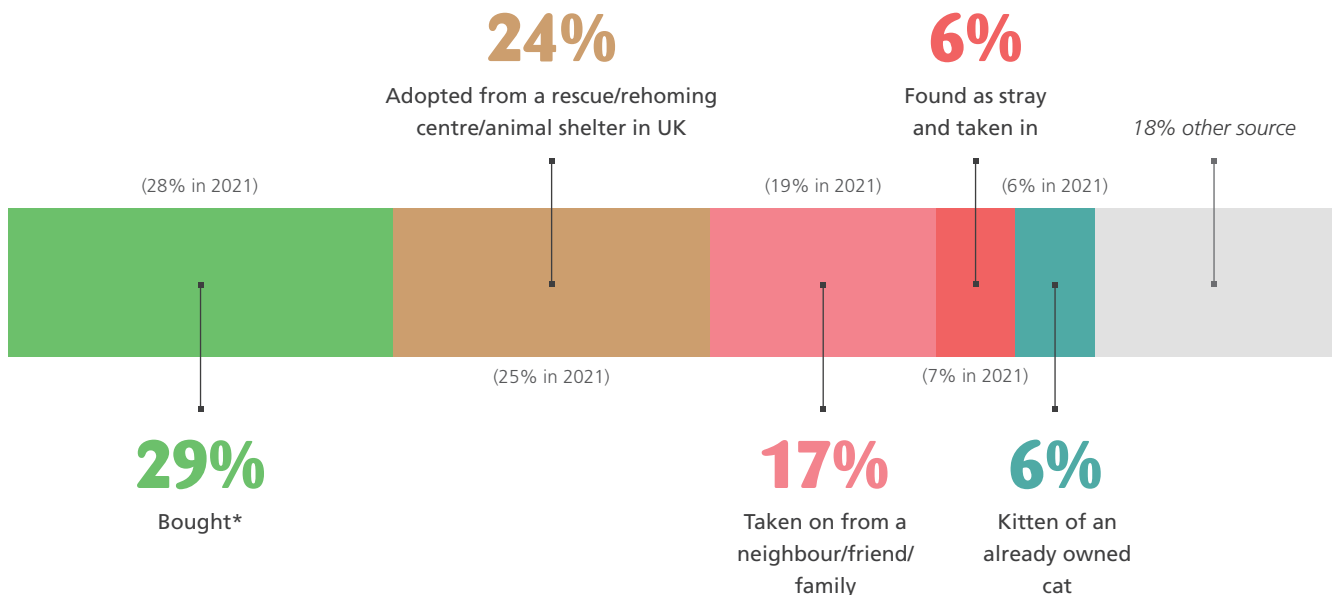
# The cat market

The analysis conducted for the CATS Report 2021 highlighted some significant factors relating to cat ownership, including where people source their cats from. Cats Protection responded with the Big Kitten Con campaign, highlighting the dangers of buying a cat online without taking adequate precautions and calling for the introduction and or enhancement of cat breeding regulations across the UK.

The CATS Report 2022 has once again produced some important findings around the impact of social media on the cat market, which require attention from the animal welfare sector, social media companies and politicians.

15%<sup>10</sup> of the current cat population were acquired during the last 12 months, equating to around 1.6 million cats, compared to 1.4 million last year.

## How cats were acquired (all cats in current cat population)<sup>10</sup>



This equates to a current UK pet cat population where around:

**3.2 million** were bought\*

625,000 in the last 12 months

**2.6 million** were adopted from UK rescue/rehoming centres/animal shelters

320,000 in the last 12 months

**2.5 million** were taken on or taken in\*\*

320,000 in the last 12 months

*The additional 2.7m cats were acquired from other sources.*

Find out more about  
Cats Protection's  
Big Kitten Con campaign:

[www.cats.org.uk/kitten-con](http://www.cats.org.uk/kitten-con)



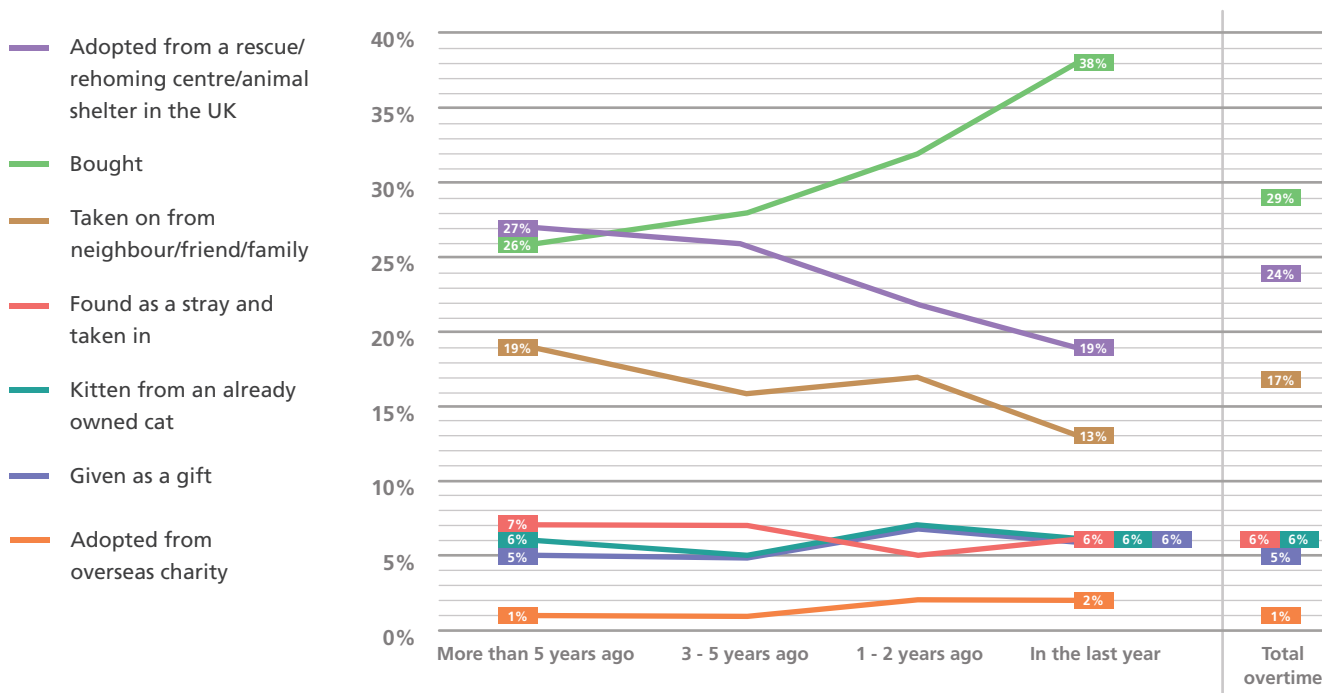
SCAN Me

10 Questions asked: Where did you get/adopt your cat from?/When did you acquire (eg buy/adopt) your cat? Excluding those who say they bought their cat but didn't pay anything. The remaining 18% of cats were acquired in one of the following ways: given as a gift, my cat adopted me (eg started coming in for food and stayed, from an individual I did not know offering them for free, other).

\*Bought from a specialist breeder in the UK, Bought from someone I know but not a specialist breeder, Bought from a neighbour/friend/family, Bought from a pet shop, Bought from a specialist breeder overseas  
\*\* Taken on from a neighbour/friend/family and Found as a stray and taken in

The long-term upward trend for people to buy, rather than adopt their cat seems to be continuing, with the proportion of **bought cats increasing by 12% in the last five years**. There doesn't appear to be a single particular purchase source driving the shift from adoption to purchase though.

### How are people acquiring cats over time?<sup>10</sup>



The reasons for this preference for purchase over adoption are likely complex and varied in nature, but the data collected for the CATS Report 2022 does give some insight. For example, **pedigrees seem more popular than ever** and many of the reasons that people say ultimately motivated them to buy their cat are more easily delivered by online sources, which have also grown in popularity.



"The CATS Report 2022 has shown a worrying uplift in the purchase of cats online. Of course, there are many responsible sellers out there but there are also unscrupulous ones who hide behind the anonymity of the internet to sell kittens that are far too young to have been taken from their mothers, or that are in poor health. I am pleased to work with Cats Protection on their campaigns to highlight the risks of buying online and would urge potential owners to seek their advice before buying a cat or kitten."

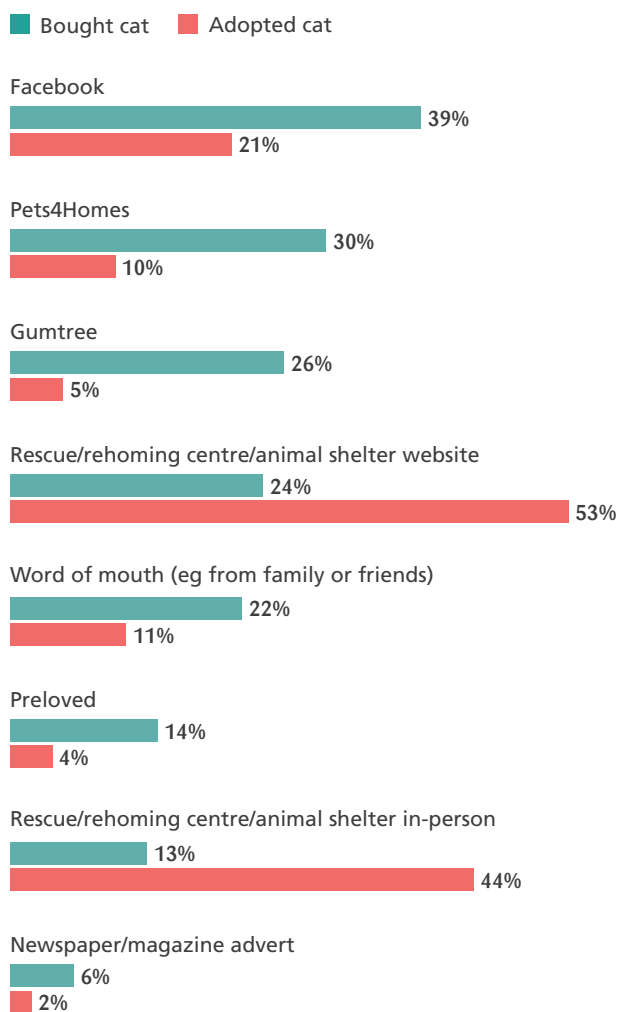
**Dr Fabian Rivers MRCVS**  
**BVA Young Vet of the Year 2020 and star of *The Pets Factor***

<sup>10</sup> Questions asked: Where did you get/adopt your cat from?/When did you acquire (eg buy/adopt) your cat? Excluding those who say they bought their cat but didn't pay anything. The remaining 18% of cats were acquired in one of the following ways: given as a gift, my cat adopted me (eg started coming in for food and stayed, from an individual I did not know offering them for free, other).

## Where do people look to find cats?

It is clear that online destinations are popular right from the very start of people's journeys to welcome a cat into their home – especially for those looking to purchase, rather than adopt. Almost a quarter of those who eventually bought a cat did look at a rescue/rehoming centre/animal shelter website, however.

### Sources used when looking for a cat<sup>11</sup>



<sup>11</sup> Question asked: Which of the following sources did you use to look for a cat before you bought/adopted them?

<sup>12</sup> Why did you end up buying/adopting your cat/kitten from this source?

a. Convenience showing net of 'It was the easiest, most hassle-free option' and 'It was the quickest way of getting a cat'

Popular reasons that cat owners gave for buying their cat may have acted as barriers to adoption. These include wanting a particular cat (25%), wanting a certain breed (16%) and specifically wanting a kitten, with the chosen source being the only place they could get one from (17%). 'Falling in love with a photo or video of my cat' was given as a reason for purchase by proportionally more 18–34-year-olds (29%), compared to the other age groups<sup>12</sup>. Convenience is also a key factor, with a large proportion (29%) of those that chose to buy rather than adopt doing so because they perceived this to be the easiest or quickest way to get a cat<sup>12a</sup>.

While welfare needs to be at the forefront for charities and rescues, barriers to adoption, whether real or just perceived by the public, need to be addressed.

The majority of those that adopt do so because they want to support a cat charity (57%) but there may be many more that are lost from this group, due to the online purchase process better meeting their needs. This necessitates rehoming charities to look at ways to better streamline and then promote the adoption process, in a way that will affect a shift in consumer behaviour towards adoption while still ensuring the welfare of the cat.



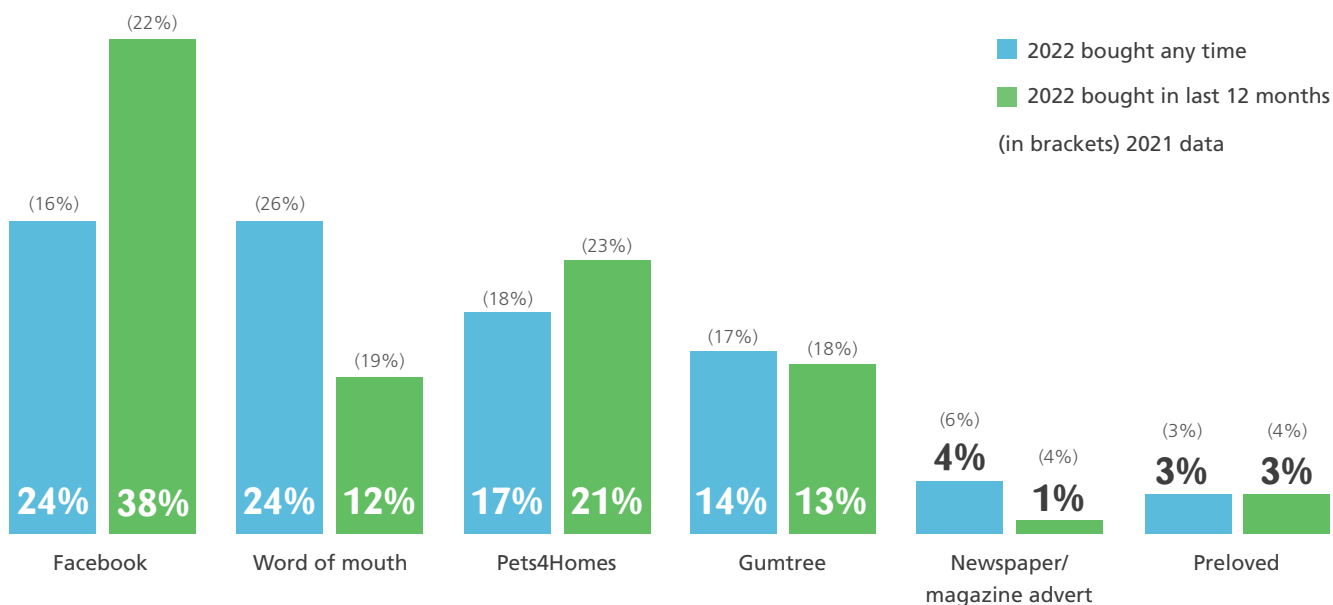


## How are people finding cats to buy?<sup>13</sup>

With the increasing trend to buy, it is important to understand where people are sourcing their cats from. **61% of cats that were bought at any time were found online**, up from 58% in 2021<sup>13a</sup>. For cats bought in the last 12 months, 76% were found online.

This growth seems to have come most significantly from Facebook, which is the source location for almost a quarter (22%) of cats bought at any time, up from 15% last year. Of the cats bought in the last 12 months, **a staggering 38% (200,000 cats) were found on Facebook**.

### How did people find the cats they went on to buy?<sup>13</sup>



"Cats Protection is keen to ensure that the adoption process and matching the right cat with the right owner is as easy as possible, but also flexible for the different needs of those who wish to adopt cats. We still have face-to-face appointments at our centres, and have already established our online hands-free homing process, but are looking to other methods as we create new ways of working post-pandemic. One example is direct homing where cats would be homed straight from the person giving up the cat to the adopter, with Cats Protection facilitating the process."

**Peter Shergold**  
Cats Protection Head of Operations

<sup>13</sup> Question asked: Where did you buy/adopt your cat from?/And where did you find the cat or kitten you went on to buy/adopt?/When did you acquire (eg buy/adopt) your cat – filtered by bought cats and excludes those that say 'don't know/can't remember'?

a. Figure calculated through those selecting Pets4Homes, Facebook, Gumtree, Preloved and Other website.

## Facebook – the wild west of the online pet market?

As a social media platform, rather than a classified advertising site, Facebook has not signed up to the Pet Advertising Advisory Group's (PAAG) voluntary advertising standards. These standards include guidance for the content of online pet adverts to protect animal welfare, including banning the sale of pregnant or injured animals and the sale of kittens less than eight weeks old.

Facebook has indicated that it does recognise its responsibility to protect animal welfare by making the decision in 2017 to ban private sales of any live animals on the platform. It does however explicitly allow businesses that sell animals from a shop front or website to operate on the platform. Registered rescue charities, such as Cats Protection are allowed to promote the availability of cats through the platform.

As the CATS Report 2022 highlights though, Facebook's popularity continues to grow as a source for cats, whether advertised within Facebook's rules or not. The significant audience of cat buyers on Facebook, combined with the absence of PAAG advertising standards means that unscrupulous sellers may be more drawn to Facebook. This will likely be further exacerbated if welfare standards increase on other classified sites – something PAAG is quite rightly always striving to achieve.

Cats Protection does not recommend the use of social media platforms to purchase a cat. If adoption from a reputable source such as Cats Protection is not possible or someone simply wishes to buy a cat or kitten – for whatever reason, expert advice on buying a cat or kitten can be found at [www.cats.org.uk/buying-a-kitten](http://www.cats.org.uk/buying-a-kitten)



## Where are cats found on Facebook in the last 12 months bought from?<sup>14</sup>

Someone I didn't know, but not a specialist breeder

27%

Pet shop

23%

Specialist breeder in the UK

21%

Neighbour/friend/family

21%

Specialist breeder overseas

9%

"Cats Protection has significant concerns around the rise in people sourcing their cats from Facebook. However, there is some positive news. Following the launch and subsequent nationwide media coverage of Cats Protection's Big Kitten Con campaign\*, Facebook responded, saying that it has taken down a number of ads that went against their rules. In addition, Facebook now has a full-screen alert when someone searches on the platform for a kitten to buy, informing the user of Facebook's rules. Cats Protection will seek to work with Facebook to review existing strategies and implement new ones that help further protect cats and prospective cat owners."

**Stefan Blakiston Moore**  
Cats Protection Senior Advocacy & Digital  
Campaigns Officer

<sup>14</sup> Question asked: Where did you get/adopt your cat from?/And when did you acquire (eg buy/adopt) your cat? Filtered all bought cats found on Facebook

\*[www.thesun.co.uk/news/18368204/cat-kitten-sales-online-breeders-dangers-auction/](http://www.thesun.co.uk/news/18368204/cat-kitten-sales-online-breeders-dangers-auction/)

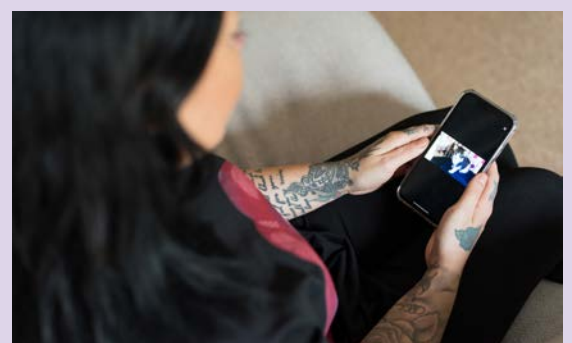
## Cats on Facebook – Samantha's story

Samantha was looking for a kitten to join her household, so a photo of playful kittens on Facebook, with a caption saying '10-week-old kittens ready to go' naturally caught her eye.

When Samantha went to see them, she was shocked to see that the kittens and their home were not as they had seemed online. Samantha was given a frail and limp kitten who wouldn't open his eyes. "I handed over the money just so I could get the poor thing to the vet."

It was confirmed that Franky was just four weeks old and had a neurological condition, caused by his mum having a preventable virus during pregnancy. Following her vet's advice, Samantha started bottle feeding and nursing Franky at home. Despite her dedicated efforts, the tiny kitten took a turn for the worse and was rushed to the vet, where he sadly continued to deteriorate. The difficult decision had to be made to put Franky to sleep.

Last year, Action Fraud saw a 500% increase of reported kitten and cat fraud. As prices for kittens have soared and breeding in England and Wales continues unregulated, this dangerous and devastating practice continues to play out on local social media groups with little intervention. "I reported the incident to Facebook," says Samantha. "All I've noticed is that the selling group that I had seen Franky on has changed its name."



## Cats from overseas<sup>15</sup>

As was found in the Cats Report 2021, a large number of cats are being imported into the UK. In total, 2% of all cats (220,000) came from overseas (1% adopted from overseas charities and 1% bought from specialist breeders located outside the UK).

Of cats acquired in the last 12 months 2% were adopted from overseas charities and 3% were bought from specialist breeders located outside the UK. This means that a total of 5% of cats acquired in the last 12 months (82,000 cats) came from abroad.

The most recent PDSA Animal Wellbeing (PAW) Report identified that 5% of cat owners who got their cat from abroad, chose to because they wanted them to be declawed<sup>16</sup>. Scratching is a natural behaviour for cats, and by surgically removing a cat's claws their ability to express this behaviour is denied; also the process frequently results in chronic pain so declawing is therefore an illegal procedure in the UK.

## What types of cats do people have?

### Moggies vs pedigrees<sup>17</sup>

Although moggies (non-pedigree or non-purebred cats) are still the most commonly owned type of cat (63%), the popularity of pedigrees has continued to increase, with 26% of the UK cat population (up from 23% in 2021) defined by their owners as a specific breed. The remaining cats were identified as cross-breeds (6%) or the owner did not know (6%).

Of those cats acquired in the last 12 months, 38% were identified by their owners as a specific breed. Evidence suggests that pedigree cats may be at greater risk of breed-related disorders which can have a significant impact on their health and welfare<sup>18</sup>.

### Percentage of cat breeds obtained over time<sup>17</sup>

	Total pet cat population	Cats obtained in the last year	Cats obtained 1-2 years ago	Cats obtained 3-5 years ago	Cats obtained more than 5 years ago
Moggy/domestic longhair or shorthair	63%	47%	50%	62%	76%
Pedigree	26%	38%	39%	26%	15%
Pedigree with paperwork	17%	27%	26%	16%	7%
Pedigree without paperwork	10%	12%	12%	10%	8%
Cross-breed (non-moggy)	6%	8%	6%	6%	5%
Don't know	6%	7%	6%	6%	4%

<sup>15</sup> Questions asked: Where did you buy/adopt your cat from?/When did you acquire (eg buy/adopt) your cat? Some responses cleaned from data.

<sup>16</sup> PDSA Animal Wellbeing (PAW) Report 2022, pg 10

<sup>17</sup> Questions asked: What breed is your cat?/When did you acquire (eg buy/adopt) your cat?

<sup>18</sup> Farnworth (2016), Gunn-Moore (2008), Sandøe (2017)

"Prospective cat owners appear motivated to seek out pedigree cats, often with rare and unusual physical characteristics. This has no doubt been fuelled by the positive social media attention these cats often enjoy.

"The effect of breed-related health problems has received widespread publicity in the dog world – and led to the BBC pulling out of the Crufts dog show in 2009 – but many cat lovers remain largely unaware of similar problems in feline breeds. One example is the Scottish Fold, a breed that has grown in popularity in recent years. These cats suffer from

a genetic mutation that is known to cause significant painful disease due to severe abnormalities of the bone cartilage (osteochondrodysplasia)<sup>19</sup>.

"As cat breeds become more varied and exotic, there is a risk that welfare problems will continue to rise. Breeders have a duty to sell kittens which are healthy and well-suited to life in a domestic setting, but perhaps ultimately it is the kitten buyers themselves who have the most power to effect a change in encouraging positive cat breeding welfare."

**Dr Sarah Elliott MRCVS**  
**Cats Protection Central Veterinary Officer**

19 Chang, et al. 2007, Farnworth, et al. (2017), Gunn-Moore, et al. (2008), Takanosu, et al. (2008), ICC & BVA #HealthOverLooks Campaign



## Pedigree vs purebred

**Purebred:** a specific breed of cat produced through selective breeding, and both parents are of the same breed.

**Cross-breed:** A breed of cat produced through breeding with different breeds, for example two different purebreds or a purebred and a non-purebred/moggy cat.

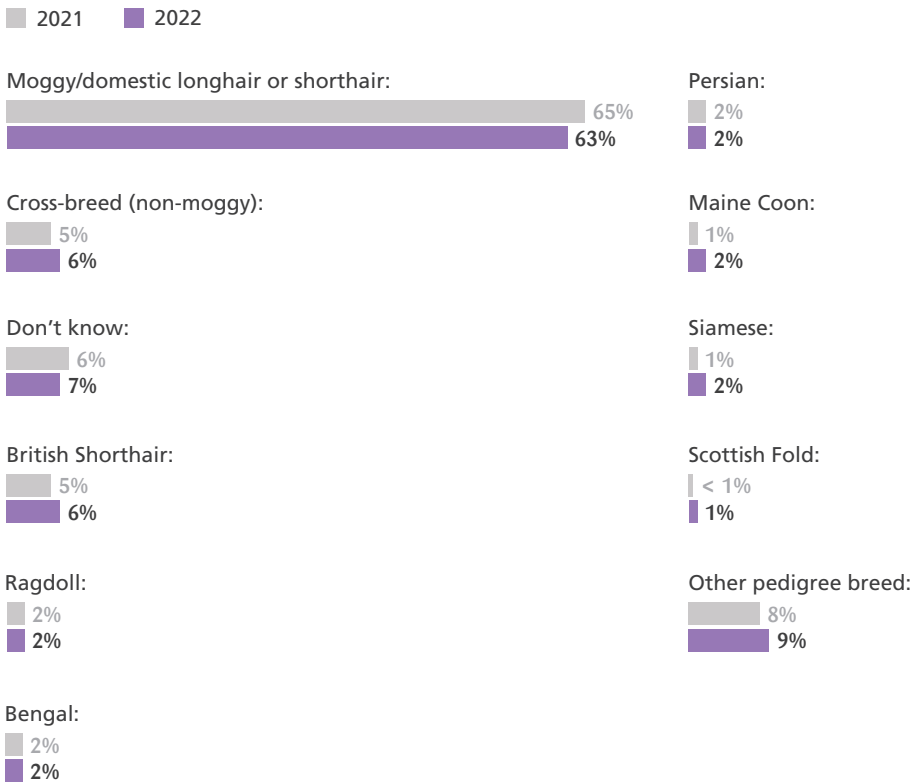
**Pedigree:** A purebred or cross-breed cat that is registered with a governing body, and the ancestry is recorded.

In this report, pedigree and purebred cats are included in the description of 'pedigree', with purebred cats referred to as 'pedigree without paperwork', where relevant.

# Popular breeds in the UK

British Shorthair, Ragdoll, Bengal and Persian cats remain some of the most popular pedigree breeds, with Maine Coon and Siamese cats seeing a rise in popularity over the last 12 months to join them. There has been a rise in the number of Scottish Fold cats in the last 12 months, which now represent 1% of all cats. Due to the many health problems associated with this breed, Cats Protection, along with other feline welfare organisations, are campaigning for breeding of Scottish Fold cats to be banned. This follows the example set in the Flemish region of Belgium, where breeding of Scottish Fold cats is no longer allowed.

## Overall cat population by breed (as indicated by their owners)<sup>17</sup>



Following last year’s findings on the growth in the market for pedigree cats, a new question was added to the CATS Report 2022 survey asking cat owners to indicate which breed association the cat was registered with.

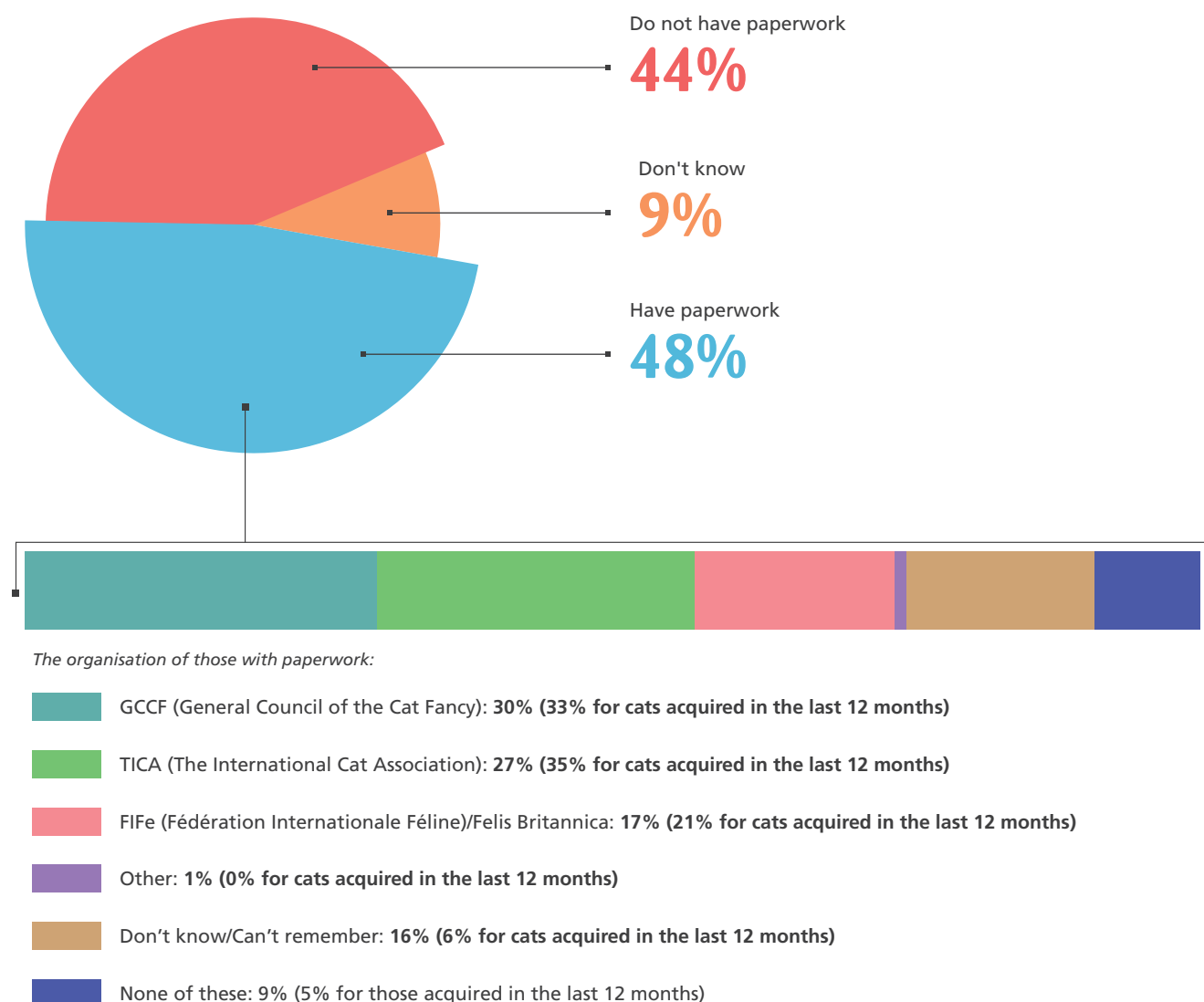
The expectation was that a significant percentage of cats claimed to be ‘pedigree with paperwork’ would in fact be mis-sold moggies or simply ‘cross-breeds’, with owners not being aware of the breed association that had provided the paperwork. However, the vast majority of those that claimed to have paperwork indicated that their cat was registered with one of the three main breed associations (75%). This rises to 89% for owners who acquired their cat in the last 12 months<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> Questions asked: What breed is your cat?/When did you acquire (eg buy/adopt) your cat?

<sup>20</sup> Questions asked: When you bought/adopted your cat were you given any paperwork or certification to confirm their breed?/And is your cat registered with one of the following pedigree registration bodies (filtered by all those who received paperwork confirming breed of cat)?/ When did you acquire (eg buy/adopt) your cat?

The growth in the number of pedigree cats this year does come from actual pedigree cats – ie ‘pedigrees with paperwork’. Owners of pedigree cats acquired in the last 12 months are more likely to have breed authentication paperwork for their cat (59%, compared to 48% of all pedigree cat owners). Breed registration with a reputable organisation is one way of ensuring the health and welfare of a breed. For example, the GCCF (General Council of the Cat Fancy) have breeding policies in place to improve welfare practices among breeders and won’t recognise breeds where health issues cannot be bred out, such as the Scottish Fold and Munchkin. Breeders who are unregistered are not subject to these checks and measures.

### Owners of pedigree cats that received breed confirmation paperwork/certification for their cat (and from which organisation)<sup>20</sup>



<sup>20</sup> Questions asked: When you bought/adopted your cat were you given any paperwork or certification to confirm their breed?/And is your cat registered with one of the following pedigree registration bodies (filtered by all those who received paperwork confirming breed of cat)?/ When did you acquire (eg buy/adopt) your cat?

# Veterinary care

## Vet registration<sup>21</sup>

89% of cat owners have their cat registered with a vet, which is the same as last year. This means that approximately 1.2 million cats remain unregistered with a vet.



## Vet visits<sup>22</sup>

60% of cat owners take their cat to the vet routinely each year, but over a third (36%) only go when they feel they need to and 4% never go to the vet. This means that around 4.4 million cats are potentially not getting access to routine health checks, risking health conditions going unnoticed until they are advanced enough to seriously impact welfare.

Those cats who do visit the vet routinely each year are also more likely to be neutered, microchipped and up to date with their vaccinations.

## Barriers to vet access

The reasons that cat owners do not attend the vet as much as they would like are varied, but often centre around the stress of going to the vet for cat or owner (26%). For almost a quarter (24%) of cat owners though, cost was the biggest barrier to making vet visits<sup>23</sup>. This is understandably magnified for those with greater financial concerns.



Higher for:



21 Question asked: Is your cat registered with a vet?

22 Question asked: Which of the following best describes how often you tend to go to the vet?

23 Question asked: Which of the following, if any, prevents you from taking your cat to the vet as often as you might like to?



"The CATS Report 2022 reveals owners are becoming increasingly concerned about the cost of veterinary care for their cat. More owners are relying on charitable aid in the form of neutering vouchers and food banks to help with the cost of cat ownership. As the cost of living continues to rise in 2022 and beyond, both the veterinary profession and veterinary charitable sector will be faced with increasing numbers of cat owners in difficult financial circumstances. We must develop proactive strategies to reduce the impact on animal welfare brought about by this crisis."

**Dr Maggie Roberts MRCVS**  
**Cats Protection Director of**  
**Veterinary Services**

## Can't afford the vet?

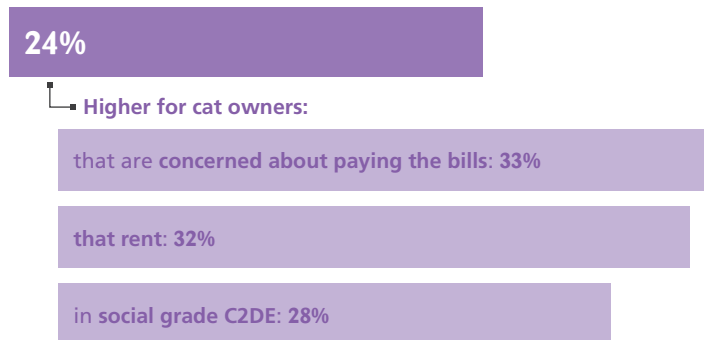
Only a quarter (25%) of the cat owners who are concerned about bills and other living costs go to the vet as often as they would like, compared to 64% of cat owners that are not concerned about living costs. A concerning minority (7%) worry that vets will 'upsell' treatments for their cat, particularly among those who are concerned about living costs (13%)<sup>23</sup>.

With growing concern over the cost of living, there is the risk that more cat owners will hesitate or choose not to visit their vet, or not follow their recommendations, putting cat health and welfare at risk.

Many vets already offer much-appreciated support via subsidised veterinary healthcare, and this will likely grow in importance. It is also essential that vets make clear explanations as to why veterinary recommendations are being made, to encourage compliance through reassurance.

### Top reasons for not visiting the vet as much as owner would like<sup>23a</sup>

The cost



My cat finds it too stressful



I find it too stressful getting my cat into the carrier/basket



### Looking for advice on cat carrier training?

[www.cats.org.uk/how-to-choose-and-use-a-cat-carrier](http://www.cats.org.uk/how-to-choose-and-use-a-cat-carrier)



SCAN ME

<sup>23</sup> Question asked: Which of the following, if any, prevents you from taking your cat to the vet as often as you might like to?

a) Only responses above 7% are shown

For some cat owners, access to their vet is a problem, with 37% having experienced trouble accessing their vet in the last 12 months. This rises to 58% of those who have acquired a cat in the last 12 months. The data suggests that this is partly down to wait times increasing for registering a cat with a practice, with 7% of all cat owners saying that their vet was not taking on new customers, rising to 15% of cat owners that acquired their cat in the last 12 months. Access to veterinary services seems to be a bigger problem for those in urban areas too, with almost half (49%) of owners living in central urban areas having difficulties here<sup>24</sup>.

### Reasons cat owners have had difficulties accessing veterinary services<sup>24</sup>

I've had to wait longer than normal to book in surgeries for my cat because my vets has had to reduce service

12%

I've struggled to make appointments with my vets because they're too busy

11%

I've struggled to make appointments with my vets because their opening hours were reduced

10%

I've had appointments cancelled by my vets

8%

I had to wait longer than I wanted to neuter my cat because my vets has had a reduced service

8%

I had to wait longer than I wanted to register my cat because my vets was not taking on new customers

7%

<sup>24</sup> Questions asked: Still thinking about the vet, have you experienced any of the following over the last 12 months in relation to your cat? Which of the following best describes how often you tend to go to the vet?



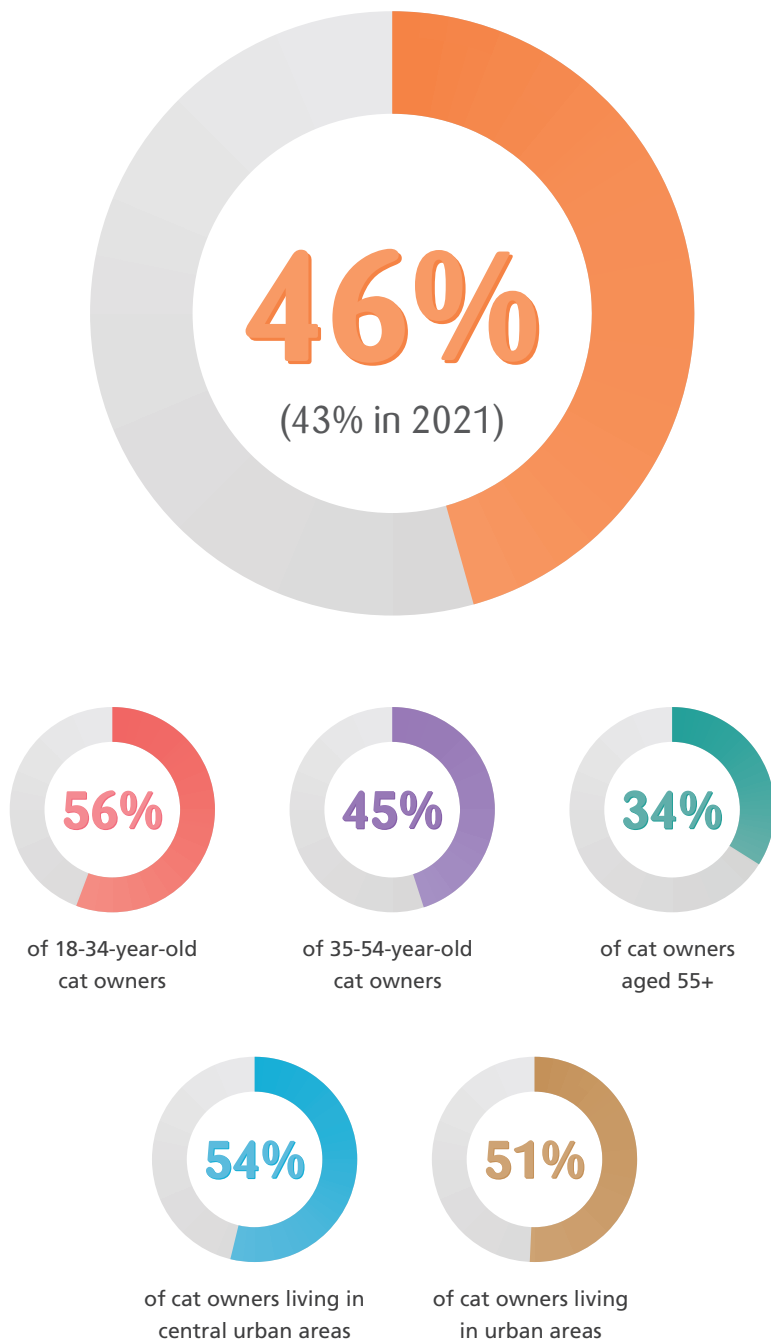
"Access to veterinary care is an essential part of cat ownership. Addressing barriers to accessible veterinary care must remain a top priority issue for the veterinary charitable sector and veterinary profession as a whole."

**Dr Alison Richards MRCVS**  
Cats Protection Head of Clinical Services

## Insurance<sup>25</sup>

More owners are investing in insurance – 46% of all cats are insured, compared to 43% in 2021. This is hugely positive for cat health overall, as those with insurance tend to more readily visit their vet (78% of insured cats visit the vet routinely each year v 46% of uninsured cats). Compared to all cat owners, there is a significantly higher proportion of insured cats among younger cat owners and those living in urban areas. This may be linked to the fact that more younger people live in urban areas, and also that cats from urban areas are more likely to have sustained an injury in the past (36% for central urban/urban, compared to 29% for rural/semi-rural) potentially acting as a strong motivator for owners to insure their cat.

### Owners who have taken out insurance for their cat



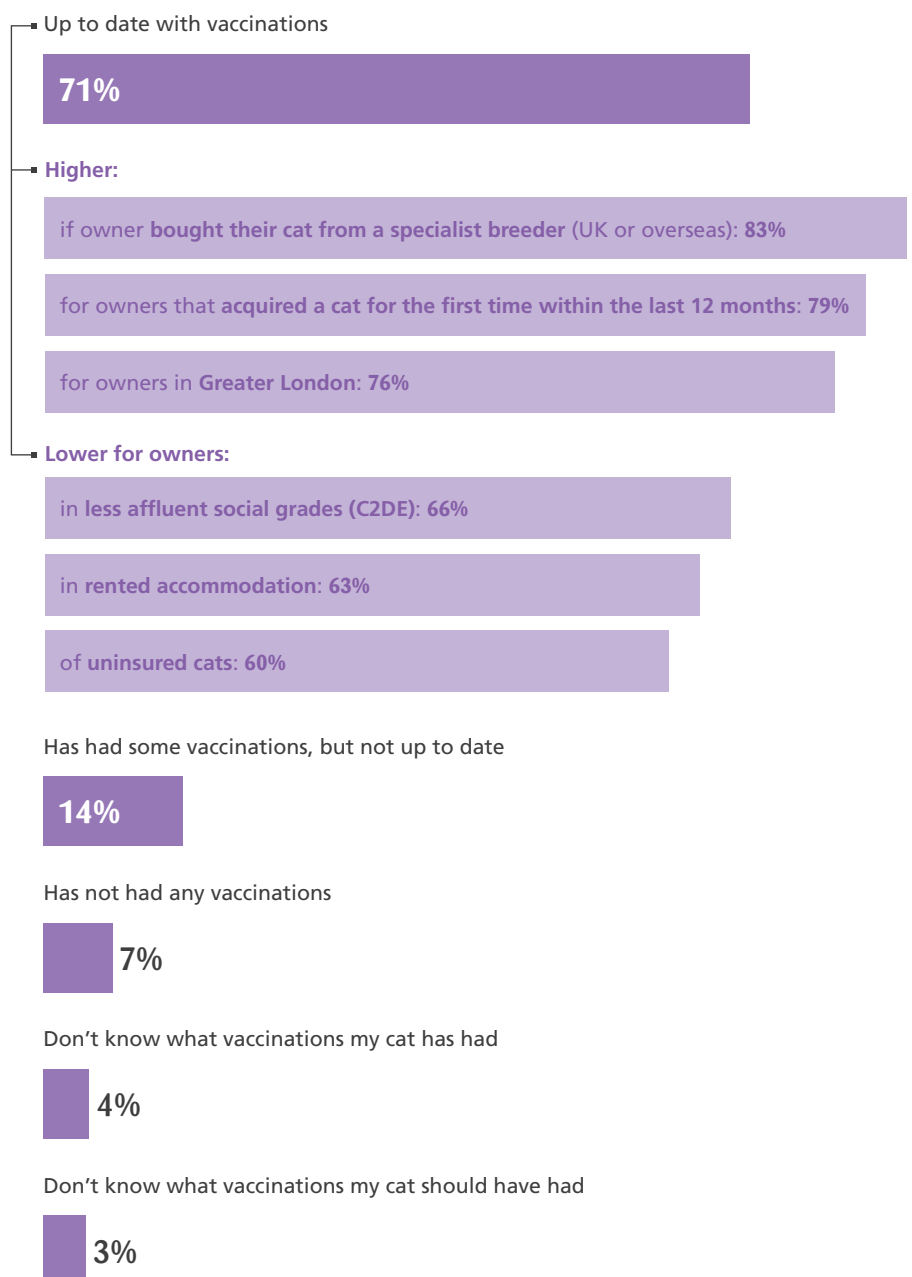
<sup>25</sup> Question asked: Do you have pet insurance for your cat?

## Vaccinations<sup>26</sup>

71% of cats (7.8 million) are up to date with their vaccinations, according to their owners, which is up from last year (69%). It may be that more veterinary practices are once again offering preventative treatments such as vaccination, compared to last year when many practices needed to run reduced services under COVID-19 restrictions. 14% of owners say that their cat has had some vaccination but are not up to date and 7% (770,000) have had no vaccinations at all.

Up to 3.2 million cats are not protected against diseases that are preventable with vaccination<sup>26</sup>.

### How owners reported their cat's vaccination status



<sup>26</sup> Question asked: Is your cat up to date with their vaccinations (ie has had their booster vaccinations as relevant to their age)?

## Preventative treatments<sup>27</sup>

Less than two thirds of owners are protecting their cats against parasites such as fleas (60%) and worms (59%) throughout the year, as per the advice from their vet or the parasite treatment label. This is lower than last year (63% for fleas and 61% for worms). These figures are lower for indoor cats (55% for both fleas and worms) and higher for those who visit the vet regularly (70% for both fleas and worms).

7% treat their cat for fleas less than once a year or not at all; this figure is 13% for worms. 10% of owners only treat their cats for fleas during the summer months, yet they can remain in our homes year-round, thanks to central heating and soft furnishings.

There can be a variety of reasons that owners chose not to regularly use parasite prevention products. Veterinary surgeons are best placed to make recommendations on the frequency of parasite treatment for each individual cat under their care. They may recommend treating less often if the cat's risk of infection is very low due to their environment and lifestyle. With growing concerns over issues like cost of living and the environmental impact of parasite products, a careful balance must be reached to ensure cat health and welfare.

<sup>27</sup> Questions asked: How often do you tend to protect your cat from fleas?/How often do you tend to give your cat a worming treatment?

Cats should be protected against parasites according to their individual and household risk. Cats Protection therefore recommends following the European Scientific Counsel for Companion Animal Parasites (ESCCAP) guidelines for all cats.

[www.esccapuk.org.uk/guidelines-uk/](http://www.esccapuk.org.uk/guidelines-uk/)



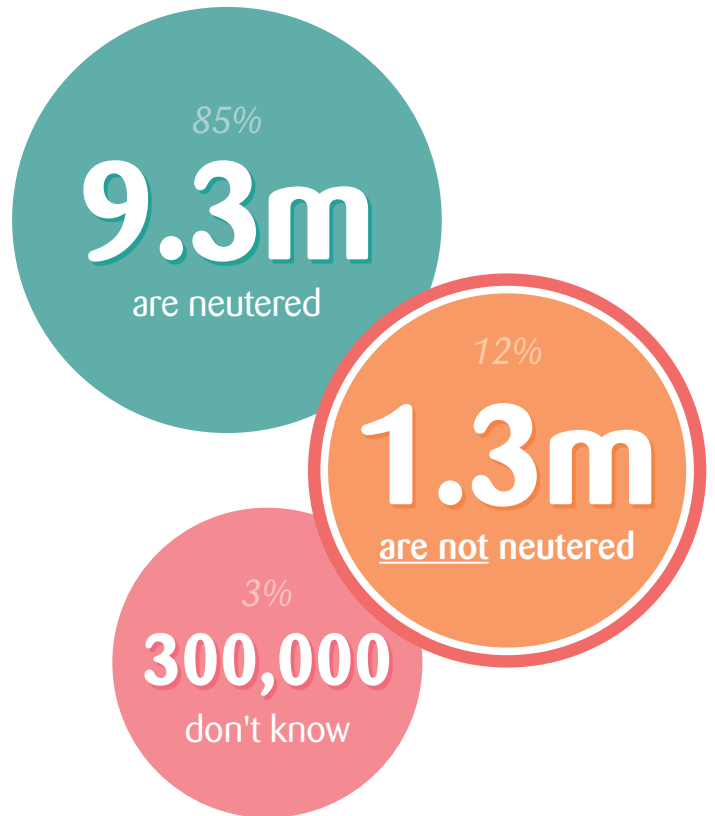
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## Neutering<sup>28</sup>

85% of cats (9.3 million) are neutered, which is relatively unchanged from last year (86%). The proportion of cats that are neutered is lower among cats acquired in the last 12 months (69% are neutered, 28% aren't, 3% don't know).



### The cats less likely to have been neutered

Younger cat owners aged 18-34 are less likely to have neutered their cat at the time of reporting (76%), compared to 86% of 35-54-year-olds and 96% of those aged over 55. Indoor cats are also less likely to be neutered (79%) than those who have outdoor access (89%).

Neutering rates appear to be highest in the South West and East of England (91% and 90%), and lowest in Greater London (75%). Those living in central urban areas are also less likely to have neutered their cat (76%), which may be linked to there being more indoor cats in these areas<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> Question asked: Is your cat neutered/spayed?

To better understand why 1.3 million cats remain unneutered, cat owners were asked the reason that they chose not to neuter their cat for the first time this year. The fact that 13% of owners think that their cat is too young for neutering is potentially concerning. All female cats over the age of four months are at risk of accidental pregnancies, yet 39% of female cats remain unneutered by the time they reach a year old<sup>28</sup>. Indoor cats are still at risk of accidental pregnancies in the event of an escape and are also subject to all the risks of remaining unneutered, including pyometra (an infected uterus) and mammary cancers.

### Top reasons cat owners choose not to neuter their cat<sup>29</sup>

My cat doesn't go outside

20%

I want my cat to have kittens

14%

My cat is too young to be neutered

13%

I don't agree with neutering

11%

I've been meaning to but haven't got around to it yet

11%

"Unwanted litters result in the suffering of many thousands of cats and puts a huge strain on charitable resources. The number of unneutered cats continues to be concerning for charities like Cats Protection, particularly during the cost-of-living crisis, when owner relinquishment rates are predicted to rise.

"The timing of neutering is crucial in preventing accidental and unwanted litters of kittens. CatKIND (of which Cats Protection is a founding member) is calling for all vets to embrace pre-pubertal neutering as standard neutering practice."

**Jane Clements**  
Cats Protection Head of Neutering

[www.cat-kind.org.uk](http://www.cat-kind.org.uk)

<sup>29</sup> Question asked: What are the reasons your cat is not neutered? Filtered by owners of cats that are not neutered. Only responses over 10% shown



# Breeding

14% of owners have chosen not to neuter their cat because they want them to have kittens, showing that many owners are proactively choosing this<sup>29</sup>. However, 37% of litters in the last 12 months were due to accidental mating<sup>30</sup>. Pregnancy and birth present great health risks for female cats and accidental litters add additional pressure to the rehoming challenges already seen across the sector. This is why Cats Protection is calling for cat breeding regulations to be introduced or enhanced across the UK.

19% of owners of neutered female cats say that their cat has had kittens before, with an average of 2.1 litters<sup>31</sup>.

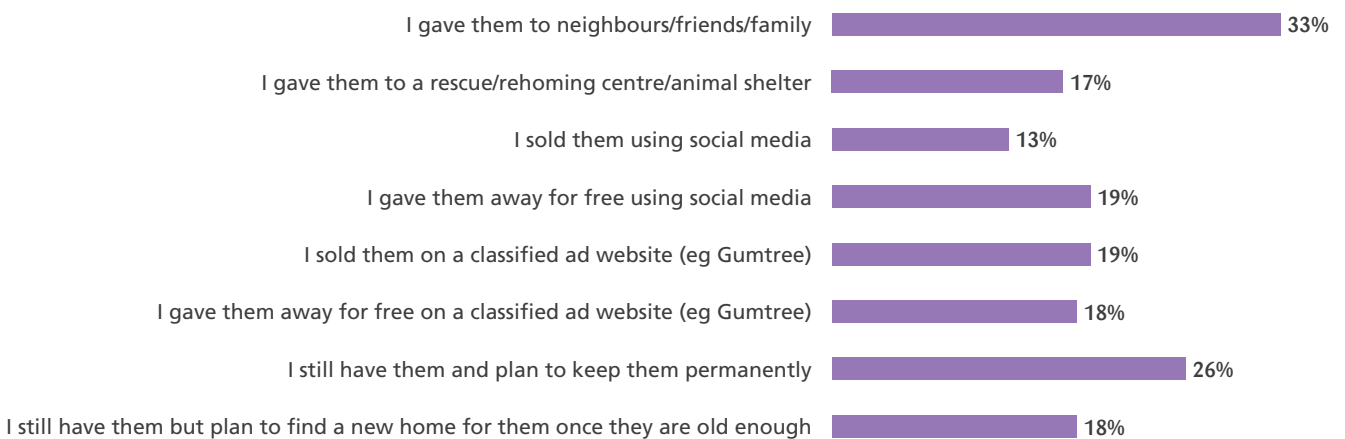
"Last year, Scotland introduced cat breeding regulations to protect cats and kittens.

"The new rules in Scotland mean that anyone breeding three or more litters of kittens in a 12-month period requires a licence. The regulations are also aimed at preventing kittens being intentionally bred to have extreme traits that have a negative impact on their welfare, such as Munchkins and Scottish Folds.

"Cats Protection is delighted that these regulations have been put in place but would like to see them extended further, so that three litters is reduced to two and to ensure that breeders are subject to regular inspections with stricter welfare standards. Cats Protection hopes that the new regulations will improve the welfare of cats and kittens and urges governments in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to introduce similar requirements."

**Alice Palombo**  
**Cats Protection Advocacy & Government Relations Officer (Scotland)**

## Where are kittens born in the last 12 months going?<sup>32</sup>



30 Question asked: Which of the following best describes this litter/these litters that your cat has had in the past 12 months? Filtered for all cats and all litters

31 Question asked: Has your cat had kittens?/How many litters of kittens? Filtered by owners whose cat is neutered/spayed and female

32 Question asked: What happened to the kittens your cat had in the last 12 months?

## Microchipping

7.8 million cats (71%) are microchipped, 2.8 million cats (26%) are not microchipped and 4% of owners do not know if their cat is microchipped. This is largely in line with last year's figures (70% were microchipped, 26% were not and 4% did not know)<sup>33</sup>.

### The cats less likely to be microchipped

A lower proportion of male owners reported their cat was microchipped, compared to the proportion of female owners reporting the same (68% v 73%). The same is true for owners aged 18-24 (63%) and those in rented accommodation (64%). Cats of first-time owners are also less likely to have a microchip (61%), compared to all cat owners. Less than one third of cats not registered with a vet are microchipped (29%)<sup>33</sup>.

### Top reasons cat owners choose not to microchip their cat<sup>34</sup>

My cat doesn't go outside

27%

I can't afford it

11%

My cat doesn't stray/go far

17%

My cat has a collar instead

11%

I just haven't thought about microchipping my cat

12%



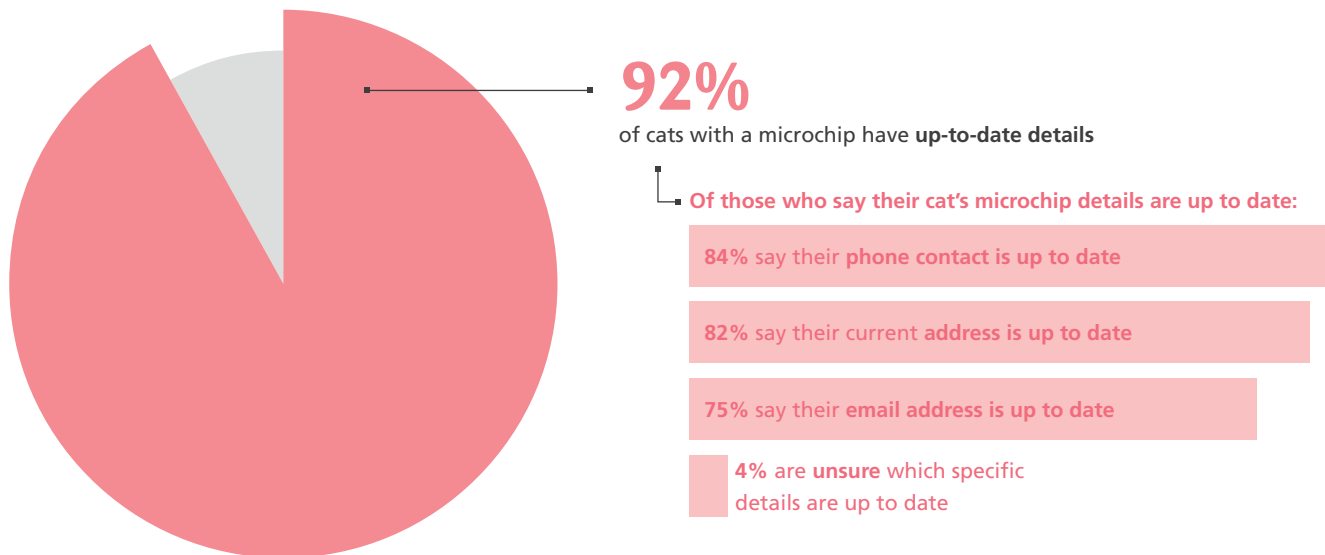
With imminent new laws making it compulsory to microchip owned cats, it is important to acknowledge that some owners may find the cost of microchipping prohibitive. Improving accessibility to microchipping services, including through provision of appropriate financial support, is therefore important, and is something that Cats Protection is proactively looking at. It is also likely that many owners are not aware of the impending change in legislation, so a national awareness campaign would be beneficial to achieving the goal of ensuring all cats are microchipped.

<sup>33</sup> Question asked: Is your cat microchipped?

<sup>34</sup> Question asked: Which of the below best describes the reasons why your cat is not microchipped?

## Microchips and keeping details up to date<sup>35</sup>

Reassuringly, 92% of owners that have microchipped their cat (7.2 million cats) say that their cat's microchip details are up to date. This is really positive, as it means that in most cases of a cat being injured or lost, their owners will be contactable.



"It is disappointing to see that the microchipping rates for cats has remained almost the same for the past two years. This means over a quarter of cats remain unchipped, giving them only a small chance of being identified and returned to their owners if they are lost or stolen. The lack of increase in microchipping rates may also suggest that many cat owners remain unaware of the imminent change to legislation regarding compulsory microchipping for cats. A coordinated effort, including clear communication to cat owners and support both from and for the veterinary community, will be an essential part of achieving this for all cats.

Microchips are safe, easy to implant, effective and a permanent method of identification. Following campaigning from Cats Protection the government has committed to introduce the compulsory microchipping of owned cats and we are urging them to push ahead with the implementation of these legislation changes."

**Madison Rogers**  
**Cats Protection Acting Head of Advocacy  
& Government Relations**

<sup>35</sup> Questions asked: Are your cat's registered microchip details up to date?/Which of the following microchip details are up to date?

## Health and diet

### Health conditions<sup>36</sup>

The level of diagnosed disease in the nation's cats (as reported by their owners) remains relatively stable. Over three quarters of owners (76%) say that their cat has no health conditions at all. 26% of cat owners that visit the vet regularly report that their cat has at least one diagnosed health condition, compared to just 11% of those that never visit the vet. This could mean that some health conditions are potentially going unnoticed in those cats that don't receive veterinary care.

Dental disease remains the most commonly reported diagnosed condition (3%). There has been a rise in cases of feline lower urinary tract disease (FLUTD), such as cystitis and other bladder problems (FLUTD: 3%, up from 2% last year). FLUTD can be a consequence of stress in cats, so this may be linked, possibly due to changes in household dynamics over the last 12 months.

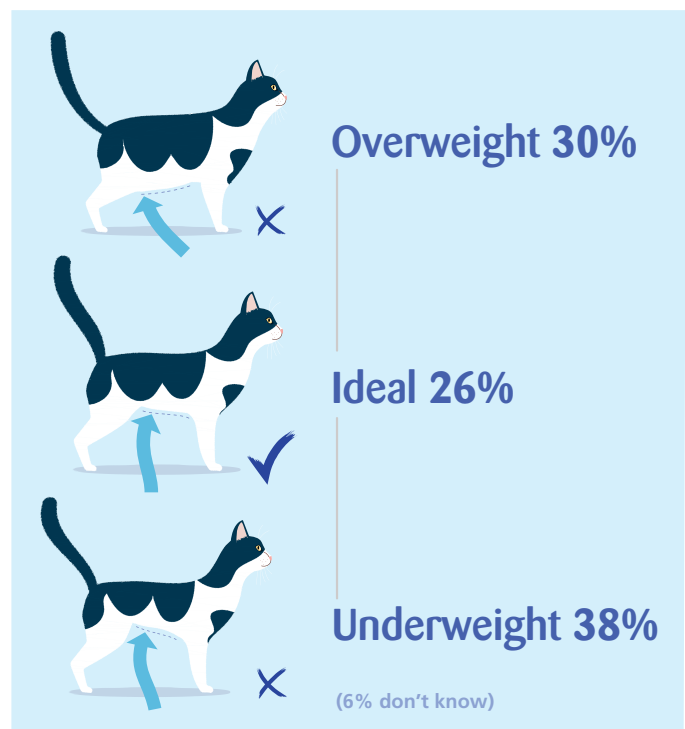
### Diet and body weight

More owners think that their cat is underweight (38%) compared to last year (35%), and are less likely to think that their cat is an ideal weight (26%, down from 29% in 2021)<sup>37</sup>.

Those that are worried about living costs are significantly more likely to perceive their cat as underweight (44%, compared to 35% of those who are not worried about living costs). Younger owners also report their cat as underweight with more frequency than older owners (18-34: 43%, 35-54: 39%, 55+ 32%).

Obesity does continue to be a health issue for cats however, with 30% of owners recognising their cat as overweight (31% in 2021). Moggies are more likely to be reported as overweight than pedigree cats (31% vs 26%).

As well as diet, exercise is a key component of managing body weight and younger owners are more likely to actively play with their cat regularly (18-34%: 36%, 35-54: 30%, 55+: 35%)<sup>38</sup>.



<sup>36</sup> Question asked: Does your cat have any of the following diagnosed health issues/ conditions?

<sup>37</sup> Question asked: Which of the following descriptions and images would you say best reflects your cat in relation to their size?

<sup>38</sup> Question asked: In an average week, how often do you do each of the following with your cat (Actively play together - eg with toys, balls, treat balls, fishing rod toy etc)?

## Age and owner-reported body condition of cats<sup>37</sup>

	Underweight		Ideal		Overweight	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
<b>Juvenile (7-11 months)</b>	50%	46%	27%	28%	19%	18%
<b>Adult (1 year to 10 years 11 months)</b>	35%	39%	30%	27%	31%	29%
<b>Elderly (11+ years)</b>	33%	35%	27%	26%	34%	35%

It must be emphasised that the CATS Report 2022 data is owner reported. Vet-reported figures for feline obesity in the UK vary, with some studies finding that up to 44% of cats are overweight<sup>39, 40</sup>. It is also noted that obesity is likely dramatically under-reported in primary care vet practices<sup>40</sup>. It isn't that vets are more likely to see overweight cats either – 66% of those who report their cat as underweight see their vet regularly, compared to 59% of cats that are ideal and 56% who are overweight.

"The CATS Report 2022 indicates that there may be some confusion from owners about assessing their cat's weight. Vets and nurses are perfectly positioned to help educate owners about weight and weight management. Every routine visit a cat has to a vet practice is a perfect opportunity for us to communicate the cat's body condition clearly for the owner. Weighing cats each time we see them is a key component to monitoring individual case trends and discussing any changes found with owners."

**Dr Lucinda Alderton-Sell MRCVS**  
**Cats Protection Senior Field Veterinary Officer**  
**(East of England)**

## The rising cost of food

Food prices rose 6.3% between April 2021 and March 2022<sup>41</sup>, and based on economic predictions, this trend is set to continue. Although the full impact of the cost-of-living crisis likely won't be seen in this year's report, 5% of owners have had to reduce spend on cat necessities such as cat food and litter to save money and 4% of owners have used a food bank or charity to help them feed their cat in the last 12 months, which is up from 3% in 2021<sup>42</sup>.

Having to make difficult decisions about how to feed their cat can come with complicated emotions for an owner. It is vital that cat owners feel able to make the best choices for their cat, and have access to practical and emotional support, regardless of their individual circumstances.

<sup>39</sup> Horwitz; BSAVA Manual of Canine and Feline Behavioural Medicine, chapter 4

<sup>40</sup> O'Neill (2014)

<sup>41</sup> Food Foundation, Food Prices Indices Tracker, 2022

<sup>42</sup> Question asked: And thinking about the last 12 months, which of the below, if any apply to you?

# Behaviour and welfare

## Sources of information

### Pre-acquisition research

The proportion of all owners that are claiming to have done lots of research before getting a cat has increased, from 28% to 33% in the last 12 months. This is more likely in those aged 18-34 (46%)<sup>43</sup>.

"With the increased demands on veterinary practices, not every owner feels able to approach their local veterinary practice when they have questions or concerns about their cat. Veterinary practices may not be the primary source of advice for many owners, yet veterinary professionals are the very people owners should be able to turn to first when they have questions about the health, safety, comfort, nutrition and overall welfare of their cat."

**Dr Kit Sturgess PhD, FRCVS**  
**Cats Protection Chair of Trustees**

<sup>43</sup> Question asked: To what extent do you agree with the following statement (I did lots of research before getting my cats/ find it easy to find high quality and reliable information about cats)? Top two response boxes included (1 = strongly agree, 7 = strongly disagree)

<sup>44</sup> Question asked: To what extent do you agree with the following statement (I find it easy to find high quality and reliable information about cats)? Top two response boxes included (1 = strongly agree, 7 = strongly disagree)

<sup>45</sup> Question asked: Which of the following would you do if you were seeking information or advice about your cat/s?

\*[www.cats.org.uk/media/3722/the-kitten-checklist.pdf](http://www.cats.org.uk/media/3722/the-kitten-checklist.pdf)

## Cat advice

Almost three quarters of cat owners (73%) agree that quality, reliable information about cats is increasingly accessible<sup>44</sup>.

### Where are people seeking their cat advice?<sup>45</sup>



The source of cat advice is increasingly NOT a vet however (63% in 2020, 59% in 2021 and 55% in 2022). This could be a hangover from last year's COVID-19 restrictions when access to vets was sometimes limited. Those who adopted their cat are more likely to contact their vet for advice or information about their cat (62%) than those who bought their cat (56%). This may be linked to the fact that adopters tend to be older, less worried about the cost of living and more likely to be in a higher social grading<sup>46</sup>. Many rehoming charities, including Cats Protection, advocate a vet being the first point of contact for any queries too, so adopters may also be more aware of the vet as the best primary source of information.

Internet searches for cat information are also down, from 53% of owners choosing search engines such as Google to source cat information in 2021, to 49% in 2022.

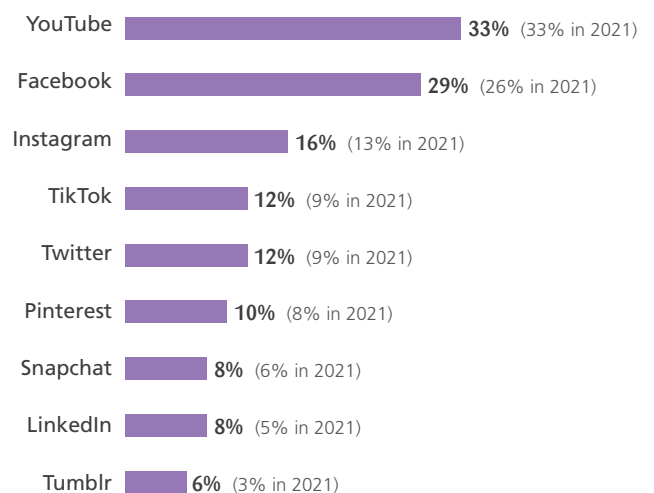
"While there is plenty of great cat content on the internet, there are certain trends that blur the lines between victimless candid moments and very real pet abuse. Cats Protection is aware of 'pet challenges' on social media that involve cats having tape stuck to their feet, being dressed up in human clothing, their ears forced into headbands, owners donning masks to deliberately scare their pet, and even worse...

"Animals are not here for our entertainment and should not be inflicted with psychological trauma and extreme stress for a laugh. Cats Protection urges social media users to educate themselves about the signs of animal stress to ensure they are not consuming, or creating, content that is cruel and causes distress to animals."

**Nicky Trevorrow**  
**Cats Protection Behaviour Manager**

Social media continues to be an important source of cat information for many people, with almost all social media platforms seeing increases in popularity for this purpose. Facebook continues to be one of the most popular social platforms as a source of information about cats, being used by 29% of cat owners for this purpose<sup>47</sup>. This increases to 38% in those aged 25-34 and 37% for those aged 35-44. This high level of engagement with social media as a source of information about cats makes it important that a variety of social media platforms continue to be utilised by animal welfare organisations as a way to disseminate accurate and reliable information.

### Social media platforms as sources of information about cats<sup>47</sup>



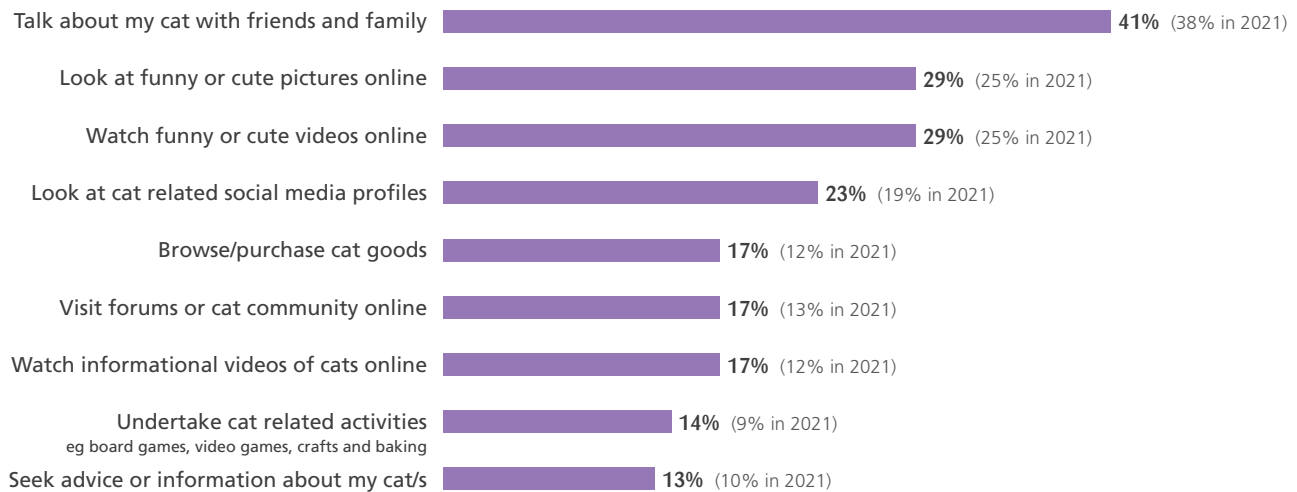
It's not just serious information about cats that cat owners access online though, with increases across the board in cat-related activities, both on and offline. Social media continues to be a popular source of 'fun' cat content, with 39% heading to Facebook and 41% visiting YouTube to get their fill of cat videos, memes and cute photos<sup>48</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> Question asked: Where did you get/adopt your cat from?

<sup>47</sup> Question asked: Which of the following, if any, do you use/visit on a regular basis when looking for the following content related to cats (information/advice)?

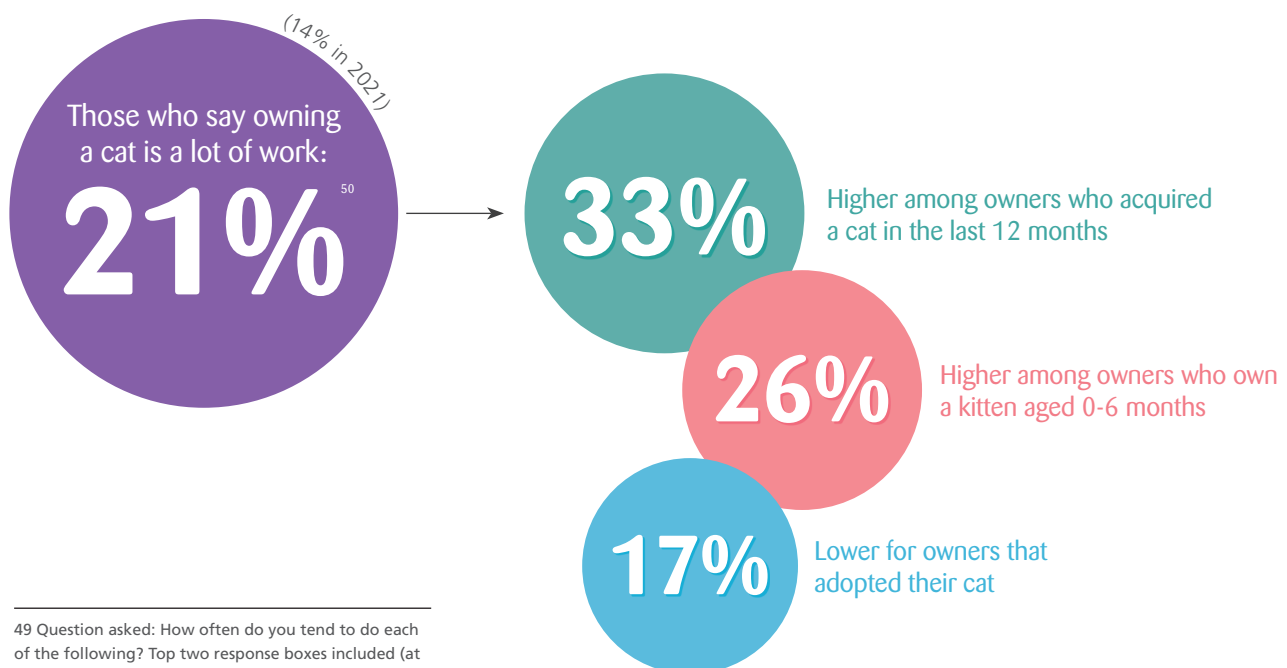
<sup>48</sup> Question asked: Which of the following, if any, do you use/visit on a regular basis when looking for the following content related to cats (fun content)?

## Cat-related interests<sup>49</sup>



## Cats – a big responsibility

Owners are increasingly perceiving owning a cat as hard work, this is particularly felt by new cat owners and those that own pedigrees. Those who adopted, rather than purchased their cat feel this less, which perhaps reflects the benefits of the support that is often available when a cat is adopted, rather than bought. Having realistic expectations about the requirements of owning a cat prior to acquiring one is inevitably going to be positive for cat welfare. The opposite, having the realisation that owning a cat is more of a commitment than initially thought after the cat has entered the home, is more likely to create problems with the bond between that cat and their owner and increase the risk of relinquishment. This is why Cats Protection places such importance on education, to increase the likelihood of cats remaining happily in life-long homes.



<sup>49</sup> Question asked: How often do you tend to do each of the following? Top two response boxes included (at least once a day, several times a week)

<sup>50</sup> Question asked: To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements about having a cat/s (Having cats is a lot of work)? Top two response boxes included (1 = strongly agree, 7 = strongly disagree)

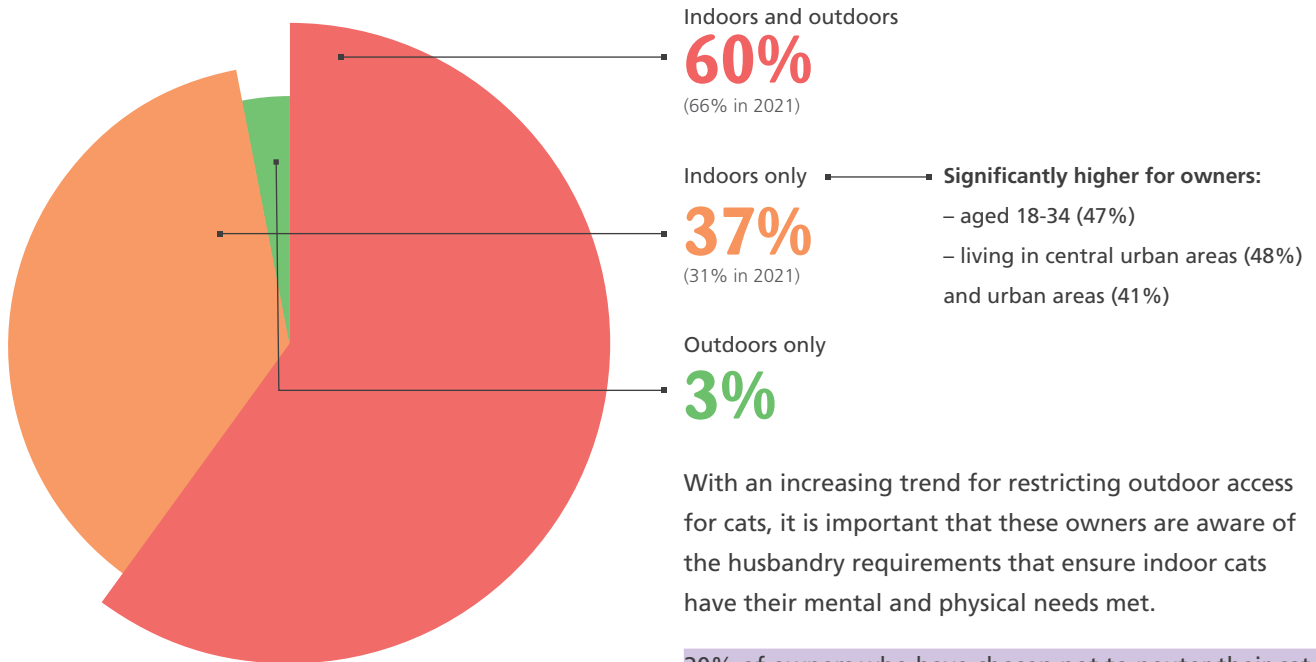


# A cat's environment

## Indoor vs outdoor cats

The majority of cats still have access to an outdoor space, but more cats are being kept indoors only, particularly by younger owners, those who live in urban areas and those who rent. These people are perhaps less likely to have gardens, so the fact that they have an indoor cat may not necessarily be by choice.

## Cat living arrangement<sup>51</sup>



With an increasing trend for restricting outdoor access for cats, it is important that these owners are aware of the husbandry requirements that ensure indoor cats have their mental and physical needs met.

20% of owners who have chosen not to neuter their cat made that choice because their cat lives indoors<sup>52</sup>.

This means that those cats aren't protected against health issues such as pyometra and mammary carcinoma and may also be more likely to display behaviours owners find problematic. Although unwanted pregnancy is obviously less likely for unneutered indoor cats than unneutered outdoor cats, it remains a risk in the event of an escape. It is also highly likely to occur among unneutered cats of the opposite sex that are housed together, even if related.

Having an indoor cat is the reason that 27% of owners haven't had their cat microchipped<sup>53</sup>. This is worrying, as escaped indoor cats are likely to be disorientated by their sudden new surroundings and therefore get lost more easily. Microchipping acts as a permanent means of identification, helping to reunite owners and their cats (as long as contact details are kept up to date!), and laws to make it compulsory for all pet cats are expected soon.

"The CATS Report 2022 suggests there are increasing numbers of cats being kept as indoor-only pets. Owners often make this choice to reduce the risk of accidents outdoors or to protect the health of their cat. However, a life lived exclusively indoors brings its own risks, particularly to the emotional wellbeing of the cat. Cats may be more at risk of experiencing boredom and frustration, and cats experiencing these negative emotions are more likely to display unwanted or stress-linked behaviours such as scratching, inter-cat aggression in multi-cat households and aggression towards people. This can have negative implications for the cat-owner bond."

**Rae Foreman-Worsley**  
**Cats Protection Feline Welfare Associate**  
**Researcher**

<sup>51</sup> Question asked: Which of the following best applies to your cat?

<sup>52</sup> Question asked: What are the reasons your cat is not neutered?

<sup>53</sup> Question asked: Which of the below best describes the reasons why your cat is not microchipped?



## Cats at night

For those cats who do have outdoor access, 42% are able to come and go freely at night, down from 46% in 2021<sup>54</sup>. Cats tend to be most active at dusk and dawn, choosing this time to hunt, explore and venture into other cats' territories.



Cats Protection recommends that cats are kept in overnight, to reduce the risk of injury from road accidents, fights with other cats/animals and predation of wildlife. However, and especially for 'high energy' cats or those that are most active at dusk and dawn, it's very important that the cat is provided with sufficient cognitive and physical enrichment (ie toys and feeding puzzles) to prevent boredom and frustration during these periods of confinement.

## Resources for cats<sup>55</sup>

Adequate resource provision for cats is a hugely important part of meeting their physical and emotional needs. This is also a very important aspect of promoting harmony and reducing conflict within multi-cat households.

In single-cat households particularly, resource provision seems to have increased since last year. However smaller increases in resource provision were seen in multi-cat households, where inadequate resource provision can generate inter-cat aggression.

### Average number of resources per household

						
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
Food bowls	2.4	3	3.2	3.6	4.4	4.8
Water bowls	2.0	2.5	2.4	2.7	2.7	3.1
Litter trays	1.5	2.1	1.9	2.3	2.3	2.6
Scratching posts	1.7	2.3	2.2	2.5	2.4	2.8
Cat beds	1.9	2.4	2.5	2.8	3.1	3.6
Hiding places	2.4	2.9	3.1	3.3	3.7	4.2

<sup>54</sup> Question asked: Does your cat have access to the outside overnight?

<sup>55</sup> Question asked: How many of each of the following, if any, do you have in your home and are currently available for your cat/s to use at any one time?

## Resources matter - Gimli's story

Gimli was on a waiting list to be relinquished into a rehoming centre because she had been urinating outside of her tray. Her owners were incredibly reluctant to rehome Gimli but felt they were running out of options.

As is always essential, Gimli was taken to her vet and any underlying medical causes of the toileting behaviour were ruled out. The Cats Protection Behaviour team then assessed Gimli and discovered she was an anxious cat who shared her home with another cat (Frodo). As well as putting in measures for stress reduction, one of the key pieces of advice for resolving Gimli's issues was to increase the number of litter trays from two to three. Placement of these trays was also essential, it was recommended that the cats be set up with their own different 'territories' within the house so they could avoid each other and use their resources in peace should they want to.

Although the owners were already doing well by providing one litter tray per cat, having that additional tray made all the difference. It gave Gimli more opportunity to choose to toilet where she felt most comfortable.

Three months after implementing the recommended changes, Gimli's owner got back in touch and said: "Gimli has become a completely different cat! It's unreal, (touch wood) she has been using her litter box every time with no little accidents since creating her safe place where her litter tray is."

Gimli's owners were able to keep their beloved pet but more importantly, Gimli was clearly more comfortable with her toileting options. So, with some simple stress reduction measures, increase in resources and owners who were really willing to listen to advice, it all ended positively.



## Preventing cats from harm<sup>56</sup>

31% of cat owners said that their cat has been injured in the time that they have owned them. 22% of injuries were sustained during fights with other cats or other animals – 12% were with cats from another household. 5% of injuries were sustained due to a road traffic accident, rising to 6% in urban areas.

## Behaviour and stress<sup>57</sup>

Nearly three-quarters of cats (72%) are reported to exhibit at least one behaviour that may indicate stress. This is a concerningly high proportion of cats, although it must be acknowledged that identifying stress in cats can be challenging, with context often required to properly understand and interpret behaviours.

For example, the most reported behaviour was scratching furniture, carpet or walls. Scratching is a natural and self-soothing behaviour for cats, and provision for them to express this behaviour in the home is essential. However, when cats feel stressed, they will exhibit this behaviour more, leading to excessive scratching, often of household objects. Interpreting whether this behaviour is normal or due to stress requires an understanding of normal behaviour.

72%

of cats exhibit at least one stress-associated behaviour

24%

of cats exhibit 3+ stress-associated behaviours



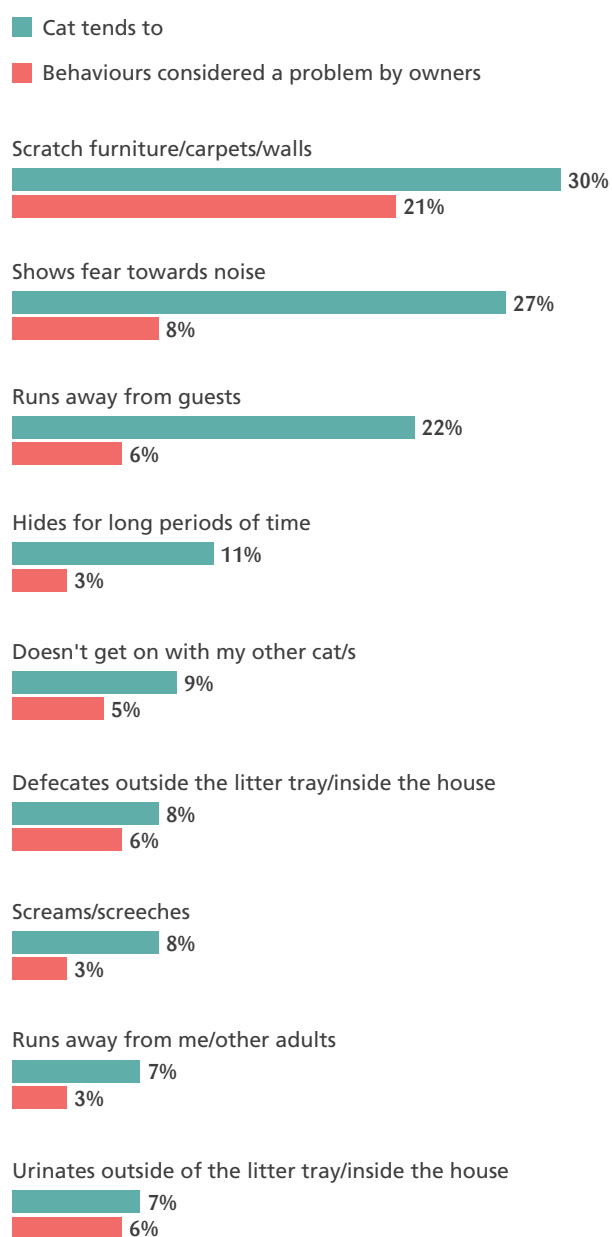
<sup>56</sup> Question asked: Since having your cat, has your cat ever been injured?

<sup>57</sup> Questions asked: Thinking about the past 12 months, which of the following does your cat tend to do, at least some of the time?/Which of the following do you consider problem behaviours that you would like to change?

The behavioural stress indicators that owners tend to be most aware of and consider a problem are those that are more overt and which negatively impact them. More subtle stress-linked behaviours may go unrecognised by owners, so it is possible that more cats are exhibiting stress-linked behaviours than reported. This is why owner education and awareness about how cats exhibit stress, and even better, how to avoid stress for cats in the first place, is key to ensuring cat welfare.

Due to the use of a more comprehensive and representative list of behaviours this year, it is hard to draw direct comparisons with last year's data.

### Cat behaviour and owner concern



"The CATS Report 2022 suggests that when asked about the prevalence of a range of behaviours that are potentially associated with stress, owners are most likely to report their cat displaying overt behaviours and those that owners might find 'problematic' or 'undesirable', such as obvious signs of fear or scratching of furniture. Many stressed cats may display their stress in much more subtle ways though, and it's important that we are aware of and pay attention to these subtle indicators, even if they don't necessarily cause a problem for us per se."

**Dr Lauren Finka**  
Cats Protection Feline Welfare Scientist

### Seeking help for 'problem' behaviours<sup>58</sup>

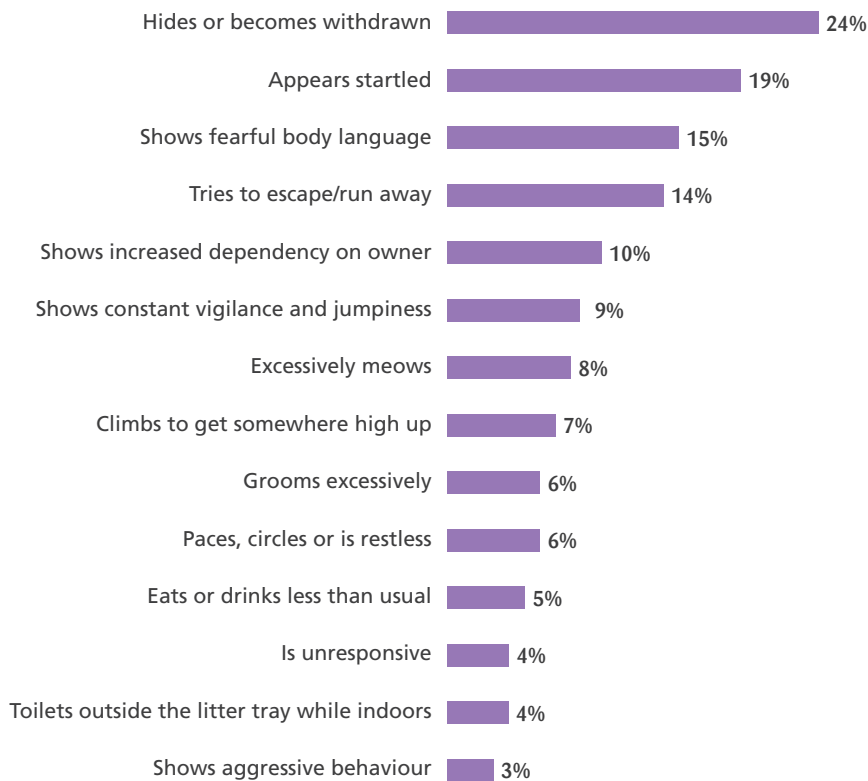
Only 31% of owners that identified their cat's stressed behaviour as a problem have sought professional help for these behaviours, and nearly half (49%) have self-sought information or advice themselves. Owners of indoor cats are more likely to seek professional help for behaviours that they feel are problematic (44% have sought professional advice for their cat's problem behaviour). This may reflect that those behaviours are observed more readily and more regularly in indoor cats, as well as being harder to 'escape' in the household setting. The same is true for those that have pet insurance (44% have sought professional advice for their cat's problem behaviour), perhaps suggesting affordability concerns about addressing behavioural concerns.

<sup>58</sup> Question asked: And have you or someone in your household sought help for these behaviours? (Professional help/Self-sought info)?

## Fireworks<sup>59</sup>

Fireworks can be hugely distressing for many animals and of those cat owners who have seen their cat experience fireworks, almost two thirds (64%) say that their cat is affected by them. Considering many cats may be outside and therefore unobserved by their owners, the actual figure for cats affected may be higher. Cats' reactions to the same stressors can be varied, from avoidance behaviours, to appearing extremely fearful.

### The impact of fireworks on cats, as reported by owners that have witnessed their cat experience fireworks



Cats Protection continues to call on government to restrict the unplanned use of fireworks and restrict maximum noise levels, to help owners anticipate displays and take appropriate action, and ease the stress of all animals, including cats.

<sup>59</sup> Question asked: Does your cat tend to show any of the following signs of stress as a result of hearing fireworks? Filtered for owners that have seen their cat experience fireworks





All these behaviours can be indicative of stress in cats. For more advice about fireworks and stress in cats, visit:

[www.cats.org.uk/fireworks](http://www.cats.org.uk/fireworks)



scan me

# Companionship, challenges to ownership and cost of living

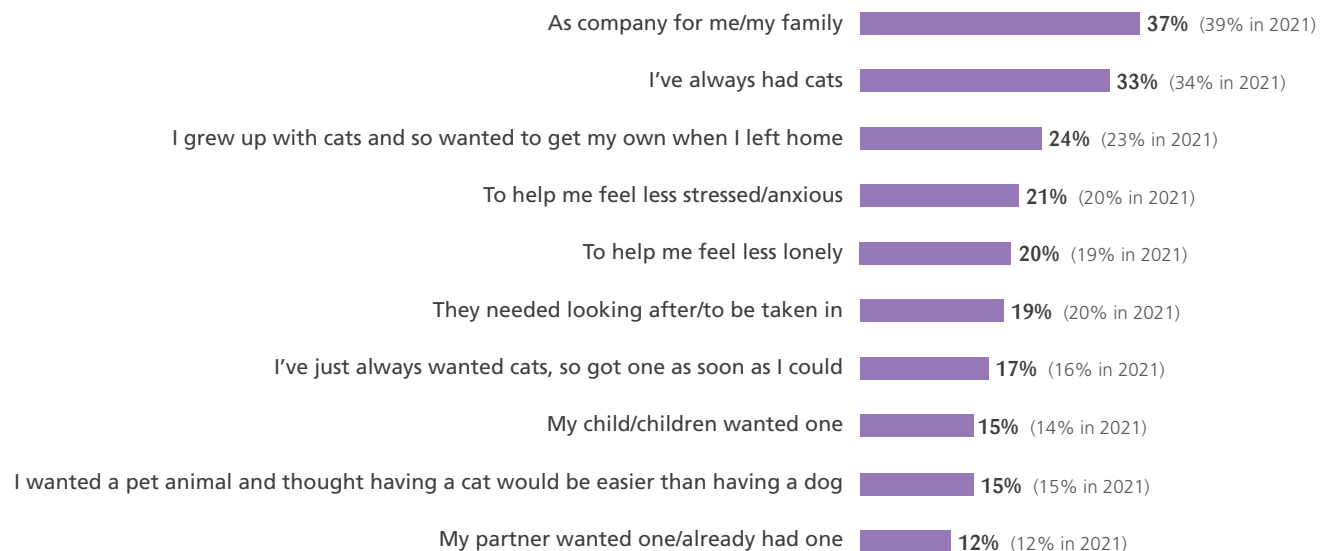
## Why we have cats

For the third consecutive year, companionship, reducing loneliness, and reducing stress were collectively the top reasons for owning a cat (51%).

This highlights the continued importance of pet cats for the wellbeing of their owners.

Cat ownership does seem to have become slightly less centred on companionship however, with the proportion of those owning a cat as company for them/their family dropping from 46% in 2020, to 39% in 2021, to 37% in 2022. Females, and those aged over 35 are more likely to primarily own a cat as company for them/their family, however.

### Reasons for owning a cat<sup>60</sup>



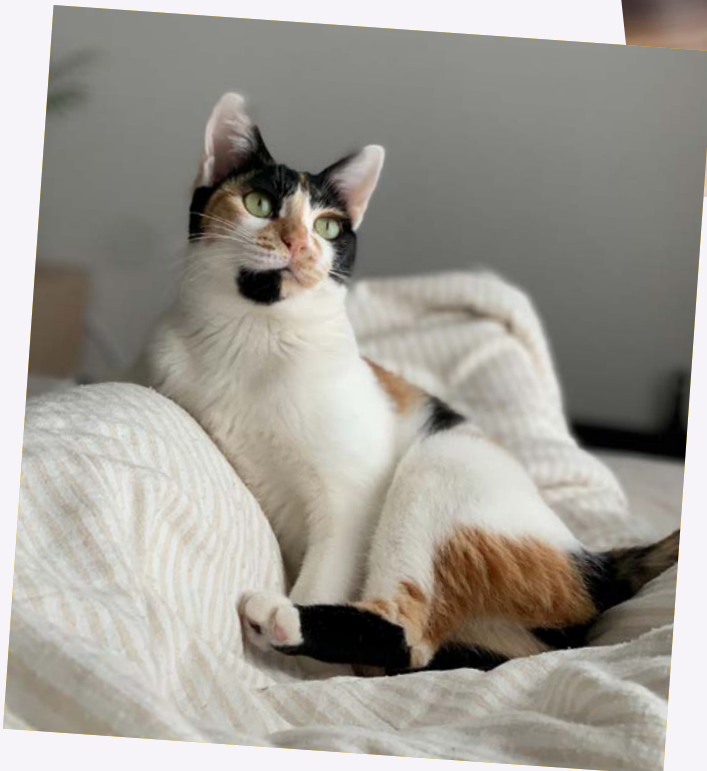
<sup>60</sup> Question asked: What are the main reasons you have a cat/s? Multiple answers allowed





"They [cats] are marvellous company." - Age 64,  
Greater London

"I can't imagine a life without  
a cat." - Age 63,  
Northwest England



"My life has changed since  
I got my cat. She's been by  
my side always and is very  
loyal." - Age 46,  
East Midlands

## What are the benefits of cat ownership?

21% of cat owners say that the main reason that they have a cat in their life is to help them feel less stressed<sup>60</sup>. Research supports that owning a cat has a positive effect on the emotional state of their owners<sup>61,62</sup>. 87% of owners spend time stroking their cat or sitting together every day<sup>63</sup>. Studies have shown that simply stroking a pet can lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels<sup>64</sup>.

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61 Hodgson (2015)

62 Nagasawa (2020)

63 Question asked: In an average week, how often do you do each of the following with your cat (Spend time stroking your cat/sitting together)? Top two response box answers included (A few times a day, Once or twice a day)

64 Christian et al. (2020)

## Cat ownership - a benefit to society as a whole?

A number of owners referenced the positive 'life lessons' that owning a cat offers children, with studies supporting that pet ownership improves emotional health and social behaviour in children<sup>64</sup>. There is evidence that pet ownership can improve the outcomes of a wide variety of health interventions and even play a part in the prevention of some health problems<sup>61</sup>.

"Our cat helps show our children how to look after and love animals." **Age 54, East of England**

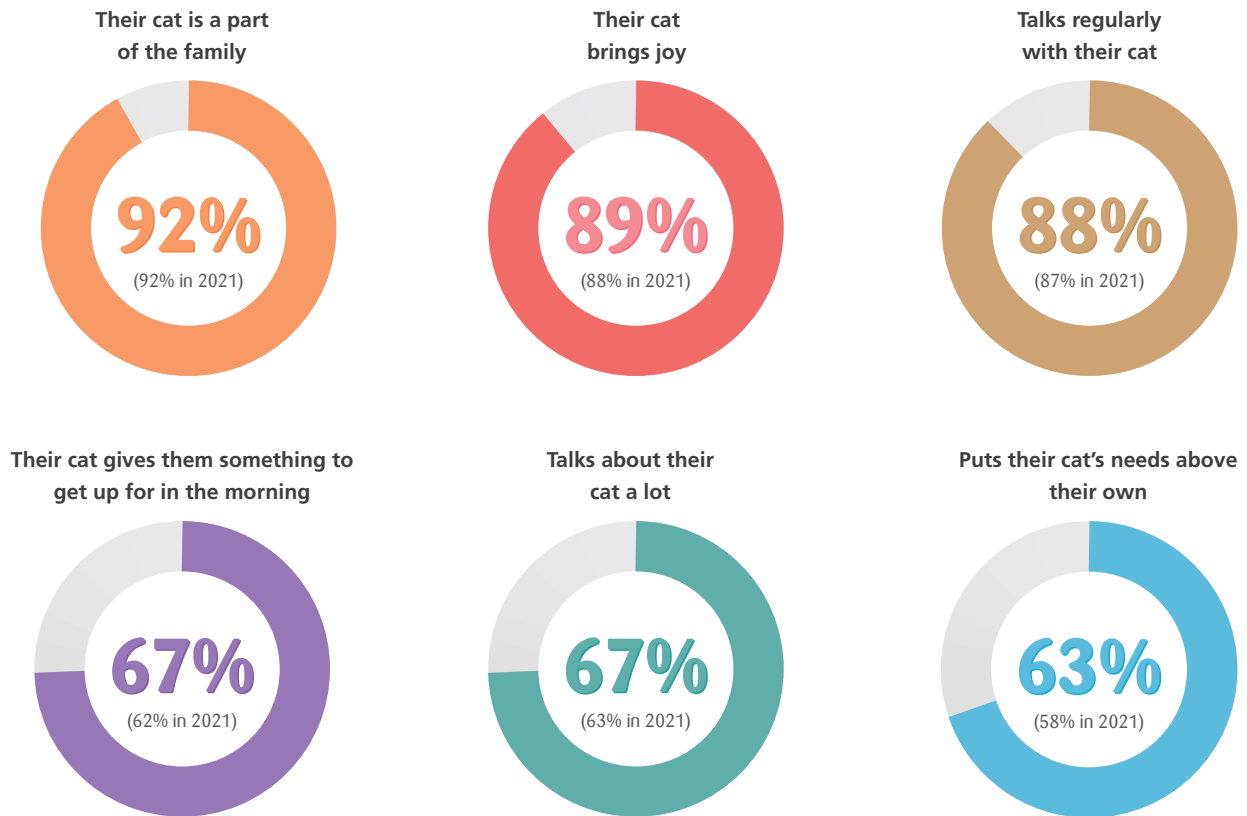
"Our cat has helped our children be less afraid of animals." **Age 42, East of England**



# Cats are part of the family and important in our everyday lives

Since the CATS reports began, more cat owners than ever say that their cat gives them something to get up for in the morning (67%, up from 62% in 2021 and 58% in 2020) and 63% say that they put their cat's needs above their own (58% in 2021). These increases over the last 12 months suggest a heavier reliance by owners on their cats for emotional wellbeing and further reiterates the strength of their reciprocal bond.

## The emotional relationship that owners enjoy with cats<sup>65</sup>



<sup>65</sup> Question asked: To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements about having a cat/s? Top two response boxes included (1 = strongly agree, 7 = strongly disagree).

"It's no surprise that cats continue to be important companions for people, bringing associated benefits for everyone. As the UK's leading cat rehoming charity, we are proud to help create strong companion animal bonds that are more important than ever in times of uncertainty.

"To achieve this, we carefully match cats and new owners by considering everyone's needs. It's not just the cats and their new owners that we want to have a life-long relationship too – we stay in touch post-adoption, offering support when needed, and love receiving updates."

**Mike Elliott**  
Cats Protection Director of Operations

## Barriers to cat ownership

Despite all the benefits of owning a cat, some people unfortunately feel unable to share their lives with one.

### Accommodation issues

For people who say that they would like a cat soon but can't have one, almost a quarter (24%) say that the fact that they live in rented accommodation is one of the reasons<sup>66</sup>. This equates to an estimated 1 million households in the UK and it is therefore estimated that up to 1.5 million more cats could be rehomed if ALL landlords allowed pets\*.

## Feline tenants allowed!

Cats Protection is campaigning to change rental agreements, so that owners moving to rented accommodation don't have to fear giving up their cat, everyone who wants to enjoy the companionship of a cat can, and more cats can find loving homes.

Read more about the Purrfect Landlords campaign at

[www.cats.org.uk/purrfectlandlords](http://www.cats.org.uk/purrfectlandlords)



### Purrfect Landlords – Caroline's story

When Caroline was looking for a short-term rental, she found it difficult to find properties that allowed pets, making the experience incredibly stressful. After discovering and using the Cats Protection Pet CV tool<sup>†</sup> for her three rescue cats (Susie, Tia Maria and Sadie), she applied for a property she liked, despite the listing not mentioning allowing pets. Her letting agent thought the CVs were a great idea, showing Caroline to be a responsible cat owner, giving them the confidence to put her forward for the property. She successfully rented the property with no problems and most importantly was able to keep her cats with her.



\*Based on 4.9% of non-cat owners. Calculated from number of households in rented accommodation x 1.5 average number of cats per household

†The charity's Purrfect Landlords CV tool is available to download for free, and helps owners create a summary to show their cat is responsibly owned and well cared for. Owners can also include references from previous landlords to confirm their cat has not caused any problems.

## Cost-of-living concerns

Affordability concerns may cause people to defer adopting or buying a cat. Among those who want a cat soon but can't have one right now, 19% state that not being able to afford a cat is the reason.

### Reasons for those who want a cat soon but can't<sup>66</sup>

I live in rented accommodation and am not allowed to have a cat

24%

Others in my household do not like cats/do not want to have a pet

22%

I live in accommodation unsuitable for a cat

20%

I can't afford a cat

19%

I have other pets and having a cat would not be suitable

14%

Having a cat/s does not fit my lifestyle

13%

Health reasons specific to having a cat prevent me from doing so

13%

## Age as a barrier to ownership

For 13% of all current non-owners that used to have a cat, the owner's age was given as a reason why they no longer own them<sup>66</sup>. For those aged over 65, this figure was 31%. Overall, over 65s are under-represented among cat owners (11%), compared to all UK households (21%)<sup>67</sup>.

<sup>66</sup> Question asked: You said that you would like to buy/adopt a cat soon but can't, why is this? Filtered for Non-cat owners who have never had a cat, and would like one soon but can't

<sup>67</sup> Question asked: Do you currently have a cat/s (that live with you)? Filtered by age

## Cat Guardians – continued care when you're gone

For 14% of over 55s that would like to have a cat but can't, concern over what would happen to their cat after they have gone was the reason.

To ensure that no cat is left without a loving home in the sad circumstance that their owner passes away, Cats Protection set up Cat Guardians. This free service guarantees that if a cat's owner dies, Cats Protection will take that cat into its care and ensures that their future welfare needs are met, using vital information provided by their owner about their cat's needs, likes and dislikes.

This is just another way that Cats Protection is trying to reduce barriers to cat ownership, so that more people and cats can benefit from each other's company.

## The affordability of cats

Spiralling costs are affecting almost all aspects of people's lives and although the cost-of-living crisis was still in its infancy between March 2021 and April 2022, aspects of this year's data suggest that the effects are already being felt by cats and their owners.

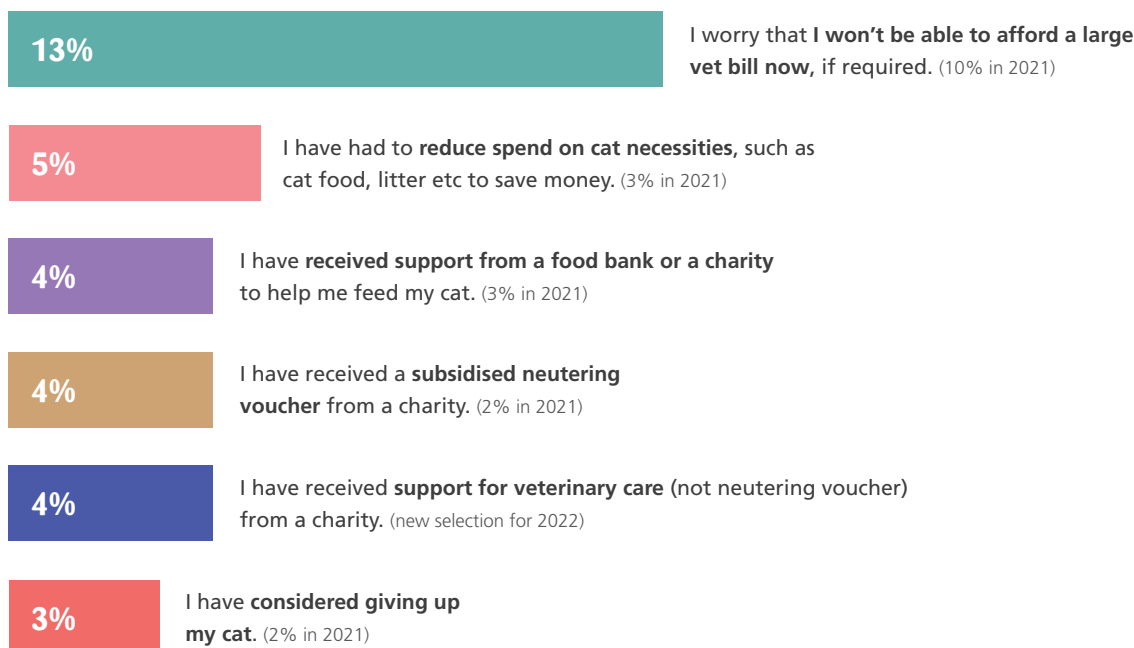
This is particularly the case for younger cat owners.

30% of all cat owners expressed considerable concern over being able to afford bills and other living costs over the next 12 months due to price increases, with this figure higher (39%) among younger owners, aged 25-44<sup>68</sup>. Younger owners, who are more likely to have lower incomes, are also more likely to give up their cat<sup>69</sup>. Understandably, cat owners who are more concerned with the cost of living were also more likely to have given up their cat in the last 12 months<sup>70</sup>. 3% of all cat owners have considered giving up their cat in the past 12 months – that's equivalent to over 300,000 households<sup>71</sup>. To put that into perspective, Cats Protection (the UK's largest rehoming charity) usually rehomes 36,000 cats in an average year.

Cats Protection provides a range of services that aim to support cat owners. These include subsidised neutering and microchipping, support with cat behavioural problems, curriculum-linked school and community talks, grief support, pet fostering for owners fleeing domestic abuse and rehoming of cats after the death of their owner.

For further details, please see page 59 of this report.

### Cost concerns for cat owner<sup>71</sup>



68 Question asked: To what extent do you agree with the following statement (I am concerned that I won't be able to pay bills/living costs over the next 12 months because of price increases)? Top two response boxes included (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

69 Question asked: Thinking about the cat(s) that left your company within the last 12 months, what happened to them? Filtered for All current cat owners who also had a cat in the last 12 months that they no longer own and non-owners, who had a cat in the last 12 months but don't anymore

70 Questions asked: Thinking about the cat(s) that left your company within the last 12 months, what happened to them?/To what extent do you agree with the following statement (I am concerned that I won't be able to pay bills/living costs over the next 12 months because of price increases)?

71 Question asked: And thinking about the last 12 months, which of the below, if any apply to you?

# Where do we go from here?

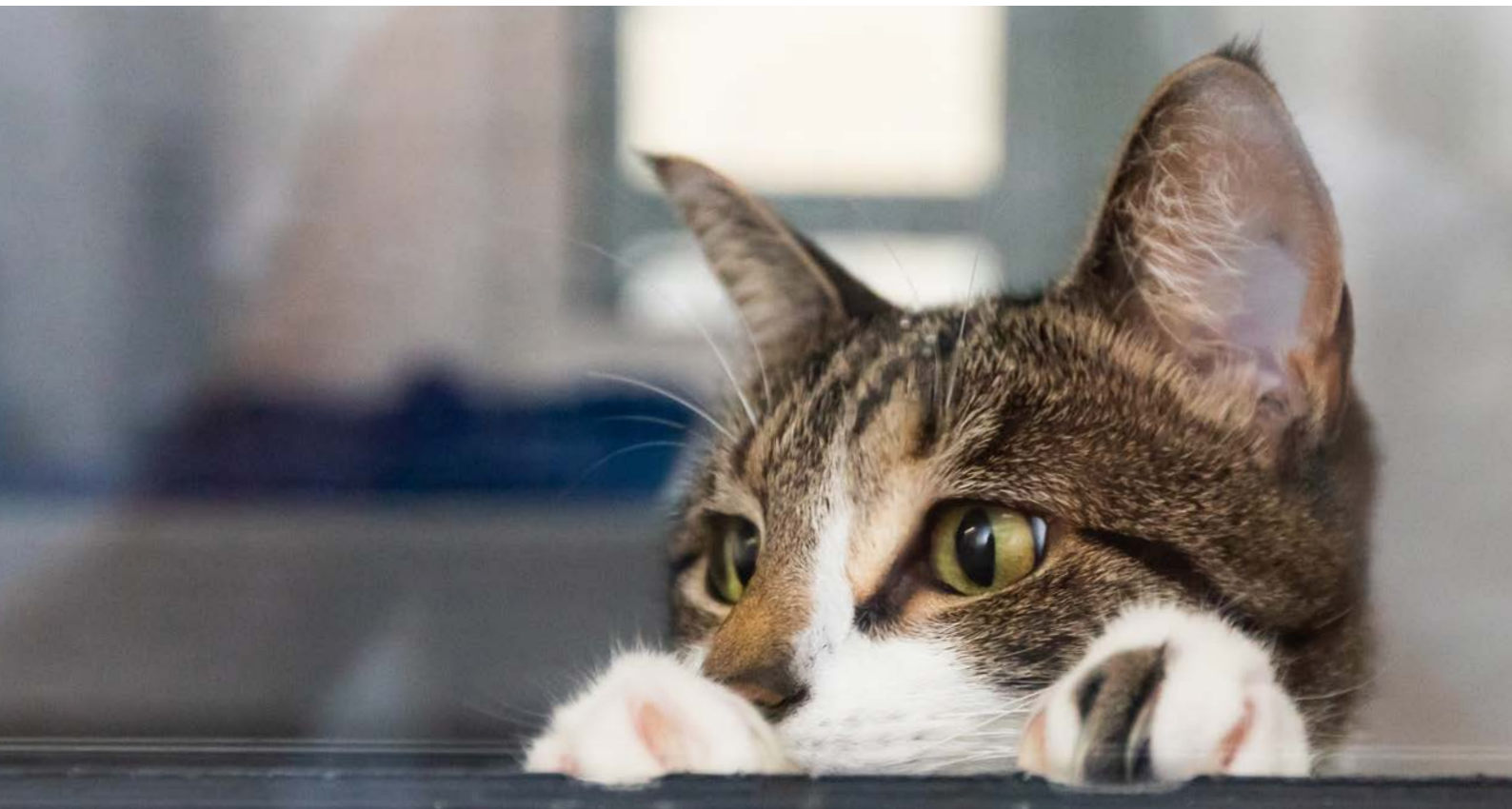
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This year, we've seen a continuation of many of the trends that were seen during the height of the pandemic, with more people estimated now than ever to be enjoying the benefits of cat ownership. This demonstrates that the UK is still very much a society of cat lovers, with the majority of cat owners appearing to be motivated to provide the best life they can for their much-loved pet.

While it is fantastic that more people than ever are enjoying the many benefits of cat ownership, an increase in the overall number of cats does present some challenges. An increased demand for veterinary services puts pressure on veterinary practices, at a time when many may not yet have recovered from pandemic staffing losses. Many of the owners surveyed have started to feel the pinch of the rising cost of living, with substantial numbers reporting concerns around the affordability of veterinary care.

As the cost-of-living crisis looks set to continue, the sector must do all it can to support the pet-owner relationship through this difficult and demanding time. Understanding the specific pinch points for cat owners helps better direct support interventions. For example, the CATS Report 2022 has highlighted that the estimated number of younger cat owners has risen. While this group appears to be well engaged with many aspects of their cat's health and welfare, they also seem to worry more about their cat and face some challenging financial hurdles.

Cats Protection will continue to review ways in which the charity can help support cat ownership wherever this can be achieved, and to ensure as many owned cats as possible experience good welfare.



# Summary of statistics

## Cat population

- There are around 11 million owned cats in the UK, an increase of around 200,000 since 2021
- Half (50%, 5.5 million) of owned cats are female and half (50%, 5.5 million) are male
- Just over one in four UK households (26%) own a cat
- Each cat-owning household has an average of 1.5 cats
  - 65% have one cat
  - 35% own two cats or more
- According to owners, 63% of cats are moggies, 26% are pedigrees and 6% are cross-breeds. Owners did not know the breed for the remaining 6%
  - This is a shift from 65% moggies and 23% pedigrees in 2021
  - 38% of cats acquired in the last 12 months are pedigree
  - 48% of owners of non-moggy cats have breed certification for their cat, 44% do not and 9% do not know
- 8% of current cat owners had a cat in the last 12 months that they no longer own
  - Juvenile and young adult cats were more commonly relinquished by owners that still had one or more cats than those who no longer own a cat (25% vs 14%)
- 12% of current non-owners had a cat in the last 12 months that they no longer own

## Cat owners

- A higher proportion of younger people seem to be owning cats
  - The proportion of 18-24-year-olds that own a cat has increased significantly (32%, up from 25% in 2021)

- UK cat owners are less likely to be over the age of 65 (11%), compared to all UK households (20%)
- 25% of UK males own a cat and 27% of UK females own a cat
  - 44% of cat owners are male and 56% of cat owners are female

## The cat market

- Owned cats tend to be bought (29%), adopted from a UK rehoming charity (24%), or have been taken on from a neighbour, family member or friend (17%)
  - For cats acquired in the last 12 months, 38% were bought and 19% were adopted from UK rehoming charities
- An estimated 82,000 cats have been brought into the UK from overseas in the last 12 months (either through adoption from an overseas charity or from a specialist breeder overseas)
- This represents 5% of all cats acquired in the last 12 months
- Overall, 61% of cats that were purchased were found online, up from 58% in 2021
  - For those purchased in the last 12 months, 76% were found online
  - Almost a quarter (24%) of all cats that were purchased were found on Facebook, up from 16% in 2021
  - 38% of cats bought in the last 12 months that were purchased were found on Facebook

## Neutering, breeding and microchipping

- 85% of cats (9.3 million) are neutered, 12% of cats (1.3 million) are not neutered. The remaining 3% of owners don't know if their cat is neutered
  - The top reasons that cats are not neutered are that the cat does not go outside (20%), the owner wants the cat to have kittens (14%) and the owner thinks that the cat is too young to be neutered (13%)
- 39% of female cats remain unneutered by the time they reach a year old
  - Cats Protection recommends that cats should be neutered from four months of age, which is when they reach puberty and are capable of reproducing



- 37% of litters born in the last 12 months were as a result of an accidental mating
- An estimated 7.8 million cats are microchipped (71%), 2.8 million (26%) are not microchipped and 4% of owners do not know if their cat is microchipped
  - The top reasons for a cat not being microchipped are that the cat does not go outside (27%), the cat doesn't stray or go far (17%) and that the owners simply hadn't thought about getting their cat microchipped (12%)
- 92% of cat owners that have microchipped their cat say that their contact details are up to date

## Health

- Over three quarters of owners (76%) say that their cat has no diagnosed health conditions at all. 21% say their cat has at least one diagnosed health condition
  - Dental disease remains one of the most commonly reported health conditions (3%)
- 89% of cat owners have registered their cat with a vet
  - Approximately 1.2 million cats remain unregistered with a vet
  - 60% of cats go to the vet for a routine visit every year, but around 3.9 million cats only go as and when their owner feels they need to (36%), or never go to the vet (4%)
- 37% of cat owners have experienced trouble accessing their vet in the last 12 months. This rises to 58% of those who have acquired a cat in the last 12 months
  - 7% of all cat owners say that their vet was not taking on new customers, rising to 15% of cat owners that acquired their cat in the last 12 months
- 46% of all owners have insured their cat, up from 43% in 2021
  - Rates of insurance are higher in younger owners (56% for 18-34-year-olds) and those living in central urban (54%) and urban (51%) areas
- 71% of owners (7.8 million cats) say that their cat is up to date with their vaccinations, up from 69% in 2021
  - Up to around 3.2 million cats are not fully protected against diseases that are preventable with vaccination
- Less than two thirds of owners are regularly protecting their cats against parasites such as fleas (60%) and worms (59%). This is lower than last year (63% for fleas and 61% for worms)
- 30% of owners identify their cat as overweight, 26% think their cat is an ideal weight and 38% worry that their cat is underweight. The remaining 6% say that they do not know
  - The number of owners that worry their cat is underweight is up from 35% in 2021. The number of owners that think their cat is overweight remains similar to last year (31%)

## The role that cats play in our lives

- For the third consecutive year, companionship, reducing loneliness and reducing stress were collectively the top reasons for owning a cat (51%)
  - 21% of cat owners say that the main reason that they have a cat in their life is to help them feel less stressed
- 92% of owners consider their cat part of the family
- 87% of owners spend time stroking their cat or sitting together every day
- 88% of cat owners regularly talk to their cat
- 67% of cat owners say their cat gives them something to get up for in the morning
  - Up from 62% in 2021
- 63% of cat owners put their cat's needs above their own
  - Up from 58% in 2021

## Threats to the safety of cats

- 31% of cat owners said that their cat had been injured in the time that they had owned them
  - 22% of injuries were sustained during fights with other cats or other animals – 12% were with cats from another household
- 5% of injuries were sustained due to a road traffic accident, rising to 6% in urban areas
- Of those cat owners who have seen their cat experience fireworks (78%), 64% say that their cat is adversely affected by them, including hiding (24%) or trying to escape/run away (14%)

## Cost-of-living concerns

- 30% of all cat owners expressed significant concern over being able to afford bills and other living costs over the next 12 months due to price increases
  - Higher (39%) among younger owners, aged 25-44
- 5% of owners say that they have had to reduce spend on cat necessities such as cat food and litter to save money in the last 12 months
  - Up from 3% in 2021
- 4% of owners have used a food bank or charity to help them feed their cat in the last 12 months
  - Up from 3% in 2021
- For almost a quarter (24%) of cat owners, cost was the biggest barrier to making vet visits as often as they would like
  - 13% of cat owners worry that they wouldn't be able to afford a large vet bill right now (10% in 2021)
- 3% of all cat owners have considered giving up their cat – that's equivalent to over 300,000 households

# Cats Protection services

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**Rehoming cats** – For those looking to adopt a cat or to have theirs rehomed.

[www.cats.org.uk/contact-us](http://www.cats.org.uk/contact-us) or 03000 12 12 12

**Neutering support** – Providing thousands of people each year with financial assistance for neutering.

[www.cats.org.uk/neutering](http://www.cats.org.uk/neutering)

**Education talks** – Free talks to schools (curriculum-based) and community groups, advising both adults and children about cat behaviour and responsible pet ownership.

[www.cats.org.uk/education](http://www.cats.org.uk/education)

**Cat Guardians** – A free service aimed at giving peace of mind to cat owners that are concerned about what might happen if they were to pass away before their cat.

[www.cats.org.uk/catguardians](http://www.cats.org.uk/catguardians) or 01825 741 291

**Paws to Listen** – A free grief support service run by trained volunteer listeners, for those dealing with the loss of their cat whether through death, going missing or separation.

[www.cats.org.uk/paws-to-listen](http://www.cats.org.uk/paws-to-listen) or 0800 024 9494

**Paws Protect** – A free and completely confidential pet-fostering service for families fleeing domestic abuse.

[www.cats.org.uk/paws-protect](http://www.cats.org.uk/paws-protect) or 0345 260 1280

**General advice** – A helpline for those with any questions regarding their own cats, or cats in general.

[www.cats.org.uk/contact-us](http://www.cats.org.uk/contact-us) or 03000 12 12 12



**For further information contact [stats@cats.org.uk](mailto:stats@cats.org.uk)  
or visit [www.cats.org.uk/stats](http://www.cats.org.uk/stats)**

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