

# FOR PETS

The magazine for Blue Cross supporters

SPRING 2021

## BACK ON FOUR PAWS

**HIT-AND-RUN DOG BACK WITH  
COMA-SURVIVING OWNER**

Paralysed kitten walks

Miracle pony defies odds

Photo saves dog's life

The logo consists of a blue cross shape with the text 'BLUE FOR PETS CROSS' inside it. 'BLUE' is on the top arm, 'FOR PETS' is on the right arm, and 'CROSS' is on the bottom arm.

**BLUE FOR  
PETS  
CROSS**

Pets change lives  
We change theirs

# Struggling to cope with the loss of your pet?

**Our Pet Bereavement Support Service is here to help**

Call us on 0800 096 6606 (open 8.30am-8.30pm every day),  
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Find out more, and watch a video  
about this unique and important service at:  
[bluecross.org.uk/pet-bereavement-support](https://bluecross.org.uk/pet-bereavement-support)



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We change theirs



## COVER STORY

### 16 Dog back on his paws

Benji survived hit-and-run as his owner also fought for life

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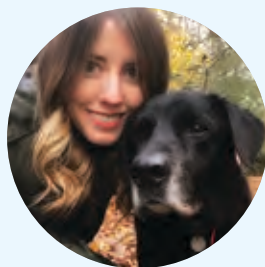
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# WELCOME

The past year has been tough for us all, but if there's one thing that has kept our spirits up – it's our wonderful pets! They really have been there for us in so many incredible ways, just as Blue Cross continues to be for them. Our vets and nurses were there for our cover star Benji when he was hit by a car, so that he could greet his owner with a wagging tail after she survived a Covid-19 coma and returned home. Kittens Mac and Cheese, who you'll read about on pages 10 to 12 were at death's door when we took them in, but now they're making their new family smile each day. And Flynn, featured on pages four to nine, is testament to the difference a remarkable bond can make to both pet and owner's life. Because, it's at times like these, we treasure that unconditional love the most.

**Aimee Brannen, Editor**

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## FEATURES

### 4 Stroke of luck

Flynn was saved by a photo

### 10 At death's door

Sick kittens are safe now

### 13 Rabbit emergency

Stuck in a mouse trap

### 14 Laminitis survivor

Piglet's miracle recovery

### 24 Paralysed kitten

Takes her first steps

### 26 A fresh start

Heidi is now a local celebrity

### 28 TV show cat

See Nelson now

## REGULARS

### 19 Take me home

These pets need loving families

### 20 Pet advice

Summer survival

### 22 Get involved

DIY fundraising

### 23 Pet postbag

Your letters

### 30 News

The latest from Blue Cross

### 34 Competition

Win a cat fence

### 35 Contact us

Get in touch

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# LIFE CHANGED BY A PHOTO

Unwanted and advertised online for free, Flynn's future looked bleak until a stroke of luck landed him in Blue Cross care...

**T**

hey say a picture speaks a thousand words, but in Flynn's case, it probably saved his life.

The photo of his forlorn face appeared in an internet advert giving him away to anyone who could collect him 'urgently' that evening. Thank goodness it was a kind soul who came across it first.





The alarm was raised with Hope Rescue, a dog rescue charity Blue Cross often works with, and a volunteer rushed to pick him up. Days later, the greyhound-staffie-cross was in the care of our

rehoming and advice unit in Newport, Wales.

Not only was the one-year-old so thin you could see his ribs, but he had a poorly stomach that wouldn't heal and was carrying mental scars from the miserable conditions we suspect he had endured in his past.

Flynn, who we believe had been living tethered outside, spent his days in

the cosy home rooms of our Newport unit and nights at a nearby kennels while he looked for a home.

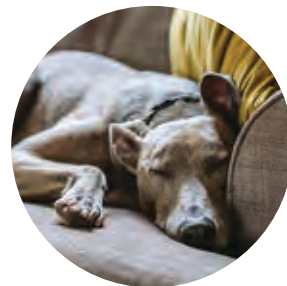
And it wasn't long before his snap caught the eye of Jade Fleuriot, 30.

### A BIT OF LOVE

"I think what drew me to him was that he looked like he just really needed a bit of love," she said.

Jade and her partner at the time took the bus all the way from their home in London to visit Flynn – they clicked with him instantly and collected him the following weekend.

They knew that Flynn had many issues to overcome but, having volunteered for a dog rescue charity before, Jade was confident that she could handle anything thrown at her.



“

**I think what drew me to him was that he looked like he just needed a bit of love.**

”











It wasn't plain sailing, though. It took months to overcome his tummy troubles, which were caused by allergies, but eventually they found – through trial and error – the food that kept him happy and well.

Meanwhile, having had little to no training in his previous life, months of hard work also went into shaping Flynn into a confident, well-behaved boy who was ready to trust.

Jade, who now works for Blue Cross, explained: "When we first got him, he didn't understand that food would always be readily available to him. So as soon as we left, he would be sniffing at anything and everything to try to get any food he could, in a panic. He would go into complete survival mode."

### SURVIVAL MODE

Routine was key; feeding him bang on time every day, and slowly and carefully building up his time alone.

But the biggest challenge was teaching Flynn to stop mouthing. He'd never been taught as a puppy not to do this, so it took a huge commitment from Jade and support from the Blue Cross Behaviour Team to kick the engrained habit.

"It was always just play but that type of play would come out when he was anxious," explained Jade.

She tried all kinds of approaches, such as redirecting Flynn's play onto balls, but the breakthrough came with teaching him the

'watch me' command and rewarding his focus on her.

She said: "It was a struggle and it took a lot of consistency, but I just wasn't willing to give up on him.

"He was amazing in every other aspect and I knew he deserved so much more than what he was given from the start."

### TRANSFORMED

Flynn has now been with Jade for four years. And just as she has transformed his life, he's been by her side as she adapted to big changes in her own. After her relationship ended two years ago, Jade moved into a house share with Flynn.

"We sort of found each other at the right moment in our lives," she said. "I was about to go through a really big change and Flynn just needed someone who was patient enough and could give him love."

The pair now live in south London with four other housemates and Jade says that he has come out of his shell even more since they moved in.

"It's a really unconventional family but there are four more people to love him," said Jade.

"We may not be a husband, wife and two-point-five children, but we're better. He goes into each of their rooms, he gets cuddles, he greets them at the door. He just loves them all and would never have been this sociable otherwise."

And it's clear that the duo would be lost without each other.

"I had wanted a dog for years but hadn't been in the right position. And I felt like a little piece of me was missing until Flynn came in. It all just clicked into place when I got him.

"And if you think about how far he has come, it's beautiful to see. He's amazing and I love him so much."



# DUMPED KITTENS SAVED FROM THE BRINK

Partially blind and in a desperate state, Mac and Cheese were at death's door when they were found by chance, abandoned in a cardboard box...



**T**hey wouldn't have survived another 24 hours," said Vanessa Margrave, Animal Welfare Assistant at the Blue Cross rehoming centre, Burford.

Kittens Mac and Cheese were on the brink of death; starving hungry and suffering with an appalling case of untreated cat flu, which had ulcerated and destroyed an eye belonging to each of them.

The sisters were found dumped in the countryside by a family out walking and brought to Blue Cross in the nick of time.

Vanessa continued: "They were in an absolutely horrendous state. They were tiny, six to seven weeks old and only weighed 450g, half of what a healthy kitten should have done."

Mac and Cheese were so poorly that they continued to lose weight for two days after arriving at our centre in Oxfordshire, where they were given emergency vet treatment and



Find out more about preventing cat flu at [bluecross.org.uk/catflu](https://bluecross.org.uk/catflu)





care, in August last year. It really was touch and go.

But, after a few days in our care, they turned a corner – and Vanessa volunteered to foster the duo at home to give them the very best shot at a healthy, happy life.

She said: “They started picking up hand over fist, they were absolutely amazing – so cuddly and loving. They really thrived in a warm, home environment.”

### THRIVING

Mac and Cheese made firm friends with Vanessa’s 10-year-old Labrador, Rosie, and nine-year-old rescue lurcher, Gypsy.

“They would cuddle up with the dogs,” she explained. “It helped them. They really loved having that

animal interaction and socialisation.”

When the siblings were strong enough, they had the surgery they needed to remove their damaged eyes, which could not be saved.

The operation – known as an enucleation – went well for both of them, and they soon bounced back.

But the pain they endured could have all been prevented with a simple vaccination.

Vanessa said: “They would have lost their eyesight quite early on as the eyes were so badly ulcerated. It develops over time.

“But it honestly never bothered

them. They were just the happiest, sweetest, most affectionate little things and, when they got their strength, they just wanted to play.”

### AFFECTIONATE

After five weeks in Blue Cross care, Mac and Cheese were able to be rehomed together.

They are now loving life with their new family, which includes another canine friend.

“They’re getting on amazingly well,” said Vanessa. “They’re still as cuddly as ever and running around playing like little monkeys.”



# ACCIDENT HIGHLIGHTS GLUE TRAP DANGERS

**B**lue Cross has issued a warning on the dangers of glue traps after a pet rabbit became stuck.

Little Cookie's owners were shocked to find their much-loved pet struggling to break her paws free from the sticky cardboard device, designed to catch mice and rats.

Glue traps are often used as an alternative to more traditional snap traps or poison, but still cause a tremendous amount of distress and pain for any animal they catch.

Thankfully, two-month-old Cookie was found before she could cause herself too much damage, and her owners managed to safely prise her away from the trap.

But she was left covered in glue residue and was brought to the Blue Cross Victoria animal hospital, in central London, for treatment.

Josie Kirk, Deputy Nurse Manager, explained: "I have seen this on a few occasions with a mixture of species, including rabbits, cats and dogs.

"The traps are based on having the animal stuck to the pad and unable to move. So, unless a human intervenes, then the animal becomes very stressed, very quickly and could starve to death or hurt themselves trying to escape if not found in time."

A household cupboard staple – olive oil – removed the glue and saved the day in Cookie's case.

"But it did result in a very greasy

bunny," Josie continued. "We made sure we removed all the excess oil, as the rabbit would be inclined to clean herself and consume it, which could have caused her to have a stomach upset."

## FATAL

Each year, Blue Cross also sees many pets that have accidentally eaten rat or mouse poison, which can often be fatal. Snap traps also pose a huge danger to pets.

Josie added: "A humane trap which is checked regularly is best, if they need to be used. They don't cause the animal any harm and the rat or mouse can easily be released into a more suitable environment."



# ‘MIRACLE’ PONY WALKS AGAIN

Piglet arrived at Blue Cross with one of the worst cases of laminitis our team has ever seen, but now, there’s no stopping her...

**I**t’s a miracle that Piglet is back on her hooves, let alone being ridden.

The six-year-old pony was in so much pain with a foot condition called laminitis in 2018 that vets were just a week away from recommending euthanasia after exhausting all treatment options.

The skewbald mare had the worst case of the disease that the team at our Burford horse unit in Oxfordshire has ever seen in a pony that has recovered from the condition to be successfully ridden.

“We have never had a horse suffering so badly with laminitis that has gone on to have such an

amazing outcome,” said Veterinary and Yard Supervisor, Clare Bevins.

She continued: “Piglet was so lucky. She hadn’t made any progress for months and when the vet came to do the visit before Christmas, they said that if she was not off drugs and comfortable by the new year that we should consider putting her to



“

**Piglet really is an absolute superstar. She's kind, gentle and has unending patience with her mini humans.**

”

sleep. She was so sore, and nothing seemed to help.”

But, miraculously, Piglet started to improve the day after Boxing Day. “We were so relieved,” said Clare.

## DEVASTATING

Laminitis, which often affects overweight horses, causes devastating inflammation of the foot tissue which leaves them lame and with potentially irreversible damage that can strip away any quality of life.

In Piglet's case, X-rays revealed that the pedal bone in both of her front feet had rotated.

The odds were stacked against her when she arrived back in our care after two months box rest at her previous home, but we immediately put her on a strict diet alongside specialist vet and farrier treatment.

She shed 21kg in eight weeks, making her an optimum weight.

And after her surprise festive turnaround, she started to manage short bouts of exercise on soft surfaces wearing special foot pads.

Incredibly, after six months of care at Blue Cross, X-rays showed her foot bones were back to normal.

Things started looking up for Piglet even more when she was introduced to Ri Kirk, who initially visited Blue Cross in June 2019 to meet another prospective companion for her existing horse, Rio.

But she rehomed Piglet after seeing her gentle nature around her two children and the sweet pony has since formed an incredible bond with Ri's five-year-old daughter, Caitlin, who's now a keen rider.

The family carefully manage her

weight through encouraging exercise in her paddock with toys, TREC-style obstacle courses and different layouts, as well as feeding her hay in a net to make her work for food.

Piglet gets plenty of exercise with Caitlin in the saddle or led by Ri riding Rio. “She has even been known to join the odd dog walk just to burn off some calories!” said Ri.

## PERSONALITY

She continued: “Piglet has fitted right into our little family, she's a gorgeous little pony with heaps of personality.

“She is fantastic with the kids around her and never seems to run out of patience for being brushed, washed and plaited. Piglet really is an absolute superstar. She's kind, gentle and has unending patience with her mini humans.”

Find out more about laminitis at [bluecross.org.uk/laminitis-horses](https://bluecross.org.uk/laminitis-horses)

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# HIT-AND-RUN DOG BACK ON HIS PAWS

In the grip of the Covid-19 pandemic's first wave, one family were already in a living nightmare when the unimaginable happened to their beloved dog.

Thankfully, we were there...

**W**hen she woke up from a month-long coma, coronavirus survivor Katherine Oscislawski was oblivious to the horror that had just unfolded back at home.

Her family, who had been celebrating the news Katherine was conscious moments earlier, were rushing their beloved dog Benji to our Victoria animal hospital in central London after he was hit by a car.

The shih tzu cross Yorkshire terrier had bolted out of the front door and straight into the road just five minutes after doctors called with the update from hospital.

The driver didn't stop and Benji, who turned one that same day in April last year, was left lying in the road, lifeless.

## LYING LIFELESS

Katherine's daughter Savannah, who had moved back home to help her dad care for her three younger brothers, 17, 14 and three, said: "It was one thing on top of another. Literally, mum's woken up, and then five minutes later this happened.

"Our other dog Zippy had seen and heard it – they sit in the window together. He was whimpering and crying and shaking. You don't think they would feel anything, but he was very, very sad.

"Dad put Benji straight in the car and drove him to the vets. He was barely moving at this point. I thought: 'This is it.'"

Benji arrived at Blue Cross in agony and severe shock. His whole body was swollen, and the poor boy









**Dad put Benji straight in the car and drove him to the vets. I thought: 'This is it'.**



screamed when touched even lightly.

Vet Mihaela Gherman said: "He was in pain everywhere. He was on strong painkillers every four hours and needed to be on a drip for a constant supply of intravenous pain relief to keep him as comfortable as possible. We monitored him 24/7."

### WORRY

Meanwhile, his family were beside themselves with worry.

Benji, along with Zippy, had been a huge comfort to them since Katherine was rushed into intensive care on Mother's Day in March. They hadn't seen her for weeks.

Katherine said: "My husband, Tyran, said he would draw comfort from Benji, that Benji knew when he was sad. He would come to him and nuzzle him, and he drew comfort from that. Even though he had lots of people around him, at times he

felt so alone as the doctors were telling him to prepare for the worst. He could not allow his mind to go there.

"And then to have his dog hit by a car, he was saying: 'Please, God, I can't take any more. You're telling me my wife might die and now my dog!' He got down in the street on his knees and started to pray for the dog."

Astonishingly, tests revealed no damage to Benji's organs or bones, and after three days of intensive care, he returned home to continue his recovery.

Savannah said: "He was quite sore for a few weeks after. But it was just great to have him back and know he was okay."

Of the Blue Cross team that cared for Benji, she added: "I think they were so amazing, more so compassionate – not even just

about the dogs, but us as people as well, which you don't always get. It was really reassuring."

And a couple of weeks later, Katherine was able to return home as well, to two wagging tails.



**Katherine and her daughter, Savannah, with little Benji**

Hundreds  
of pets are  
just waiting  
to meet  
you

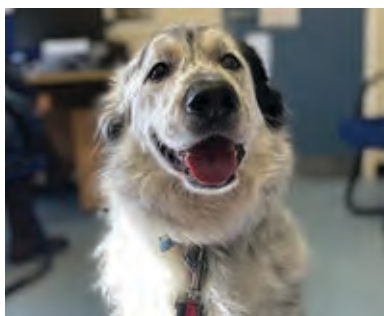
## COULD YOU TAKE ME HOME?

Can you give any of these Blue Cross pets a place in your heart and your home?

### ▼ ERIC

Hiya! I've been at Blue Cross for more than a year now. A fear of other dogs is holding me back, but I promise to give the best snuggles to anyone who gives me a chance.

**Bromsgrove, 0300 777 1460**



### ▼ SMOKEY

Even though I'm small, I'm told I have a huge personality! I'm a sweet and curious boy who loves spending time with people, but I'd also really like a lady friend to hang out with.

**Herts, 0300 777 1490**

### ▲ SOOTY

I was born on the streets in Bulgaria and brought to the UK. Now, I find myself homeless for the second time in my life. Could you give me the love and understanding I need?

**Tiverton, 0300 777 1560**



### ▼ BISCUIT

This place sure beats the woodpile I was living on before I was rescued, but I'd really love a cosy home and a warm lap to enjoy my retirement in. Any space for me?

**Torbay, 0300 777 1550**



### ▲ ELSA

I was in a terrible way when I came here – almost bald! But now my skin has healed, I'm so happy. All I need now is that special home to call my own.

**Suffolk, 0300 777 1480**

### ▼ SELWYN

Howdy! I'm a sweet gelding looking for a home as a companion horse. I didn't have the best start, but I'm looking forward to a bright future with a patient owner.

**Rolleston, 0300 777 1520**



Find your new best friend at [bluecross.org.uk/rehome](https://bluecross.org.uk/rehome)

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# KEEPING PETS COOL

When the warm weather finally arrives after a long winter, we humans can't wait to bask in the sun. But for pets, heatwaves can be a real struggle. Without the right care, their health can even suffer. Help keep your four-legged friends cool and comfortable with these top tips...

## SIGNS OF HEAT STROKE

Weakness and lethargy, panting, reddening of the ears, salivating, confusion and convulsions are all signs of heatstroke. Contact your vet if your pet has these symptoms, as this is an emergency.

## TOP TIPS TO REMEMBER:

- Provide plenty of fresh, cool water
- Ensure they have shade when outside
- Never leave any pet alone in a car
- Many pets and horses, especially those with pale coats, will need sunblock

Illustration by Peggy & Kate

Find out more at [bluecross.org.uk/summer](https://bluecross.org.uk/summer)





### TOP TIPS FOR... HORSES

Shade or shelter will give your horse protection from the sun as well as flies, which can be a real nightmare for them during the summer months. They'll also thank you for a fly fringe or mask, a good horse-friendly insect repellent, and perhaps a fly rug, to keep the pesky critters at bay. Avoid riding your horse at the hottest times and provide plenty of fresh water. A salt lick to restore some of the vital nutrients they lose through sweating will really help, too.

### TOP TIPS FOR... SMALL PETS

Guinea pigs and rabbits may need to come inside during times of extreme heat unless there is a cool, shaded corner of the garden. Cold marble tiles, slates or cooling mats in their runs help. Leafy greens soaked in icy water or straight from the fridge will also take the edge off when the mercury soars.

### TOP TIPS FOR... CATS

Cats' paws absorb and lose heat, so giving them ice cubes to play with and push around the floor will keep their minds entertained and body temperatures down. Step things up and freeze some tuna or their favourite food to make an icy treat.

Wetting a small towel with cold water to drape over your cat, or stroke them with, will also bring some cooling relief.

### TOP TIPS FOR... DOGS

Make keeping cool fun for your dog with a paddling pool to splash about in, ideally in the shade. And ensure they're chilled in every sense of the word by making ice cubes with their favourite treats inside or freezing them in a Kong.

Always avoid walks when the sun is at its strongest and check that pavements aren't hot to avoid burnt paws.

# Fundraise for Blue Cross this year

Why not request our fundraising pack for ideas on how you can help pets in need? From cake sales to gaming and dog walks to quizzes, there is something to suit everyone – with lots of virtual activities, too.



Our pack includes tips and advice on planning your activity and making the most of the fun.



Simply fill in the coupon at the back of the magazine or visit [bluecross.org.uk/fundraising](http://bluecross.org.uk/fundraising)



Blue Cross is a charity that has been helping sick, injured and homeless pets since 1897.



# WE LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

Please send us your news and pictures of your pets!



## JESSIE

After our two female cats Pepsi and Treacle died, aged 21 and 18, we decided not to have another cat.

However, a month or two into a pet-free home and I was starting to buckle.

Our daughter had moved away to live with her boyfriend and their two kittens and although I could get a 'feline fix' at theirs, it was increasingly not enough.

I was recently retired and the house seemed even more quiet than normal. Eventually, my husband and I agreed that we would actively search for an older rescue cat rather than kittens and luckily Jessie appeared. We made an appointment

to see her at the Southampton centre and loved her... she was going to be ours.

She came home with us in December 2019 and she has made our house a home again. To see her happy little face during lockdown helped us to navigate those strange months.

She is the most beautiful cat – attractive looking and so gentle and friendly. She is so contented with us and we are so happy to have given her some love. We are truly blessed.

**Jakki Rook**



## SOCKS

This is Socks, a Blue Cross rescue cat, pictured in 1983. He was my first ever cat when I was just five years old. I absolutely loved him dearly. And when I started school, he would sit in my bedroom window and wait for me to come home.

However, his habit of sleeping on the drive led to his untimely demise, as he was accidentally run over by the postman.

I was distraught and refused the offer of another cat until I was eight or nine. Since then, I've had six or seven at various times, but just like that 'first love', one never forgets their first pet. Socks will always hold a very special place in my heart.

**Mrs Lucy Travell**

## We love to hear how Blue Cross pets are changing lives...

Please email your letters and photos to  
[editor@bluecross.org.uk](mailto:editor@bluecross.org.uk)

or write to For Pets Editor, Blue Cross,  
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[bluecross.org.uk](https://www.bluecross.org.uk) **23**

# *STEPPING INTO A BRIGHT FUTURE*

We feared she may never take her first steps, but now there's no stopping Pomegranate – thanks to life-changing physiotherapy at Blue Cross...







**We were all so worried when we saw her struggling to walk. It was heartbreaking.**



**A**s her siblings began to explore and play, poor little Pomegranate could only lay there and watch.

The kitten was born at our Suffolk rehoming centre last year, along with sisters Coconut, Papaya and Mango, to stray mum Juno, who had been living in a back garden.

At first, they all seemed well. But as the litter became mobile at about three weeks old, it was clear that something was seriously wrong with Pomegranate – or Pom, as she is affectionately known.

Susie Winship, Animal Welfare Assistant at the centre, said: “As she attempted to move around, it was apparent her back legs were splaying, and she wasn’t able to walk properly.”

### **BIRTH DEFECT**

Pomegranate was diagnosed with a birth defect known as swimmers syndrome, which causes the legs to splay out in a frog-like posture.



Jennifer Bromley, Veterinary Supervisor at Blue Cross Suffolk, explained: “The root cause of swimmers syndrome is a mystery and it’s not something we had seen here at Suffolk before. We were worried she would never be able to walk properly.”

The tiny kitten was immediately put on a physiotherapy programme, with the rehoming team given a strict set of strength-building exercises to do with her at least five times a day in three-minute sessions.

After just a few weeks, the team began to see a huge improvement and determined Pomegranate soon made a full recovery.

### **WONDERFUL LIFE**

She’s now living life to the full in a new home, like her mum and sisters.

Clare Williamson, Centre Manager, added: “We were all so worried when we saw her struggling to walk. It was heartbreaking.

“Seeing her taking her first steps and walking normally now is just wonderful.”



# FROM PUPPY FARM TO VILLAGE SUPERSTAR

Passed from pillar to post as a tiny pup, poor Heidi's early life was filled with uncertainty until Blue Cross and a loving family gave her a fresh start...

**A**t less than eight weeks old, little Heidi had been through more than any dog ever should.

The cocker spaniel had known three homes before she was even old enough to leave her mum.

She arrived at our Suffolk rehoming centre after being given up by her first owner, who had been told by the seller on collecting Heidi a fortnight earlier that she was two months old.

But a vet check confirmed that she had been sold aged six weeks, at

the most, and there were glaring inconsistencies with her paperwork.

Susie Winship, Animal Welfare Assistant, said: "Everything pointed towards Heidi coming from a puppy farm. These are run by unscrupulous breeders, often with awful conditions.



**Marie and Tony's daughter Kerry, and granddaughter Lara, with Heidi**

"She should have also been at least eight weeks old when she was taken away from her mum."

More bad luck followed for Heidi when her owner became injured, leaving them unable to care for her.

By now, she had missed out on vital socialisation and was placed in foster care to get her used to as many sights and sounds as possible.

Meanwhile, Tony and Marie Boullemier, of Northamptonshire, were looking for another dog after losing their beloved spaniel, Lucie, two years earlier.

Tony said: "Lucie was nearly 18 years when we lost her, and she was the light of our lives.

"I found myself walking around the village for exercise on my own and it wasn't the same without her. People used to tell me I didn't look right walking around without a spaniel, as I'd been doing that for so long."

### LOVELY NATURE

Tony continued: "The moment I saw Heidi's photograph, I said: 'She's the one!' Because she looked so lively, cheeky and funny."

"She's got a lovely nature and loves everyone. She's a very affectionate little dog," said Marie.

Heidi has given the couple the motivation they needed to explore the great outdoors, and for Marie, this has helped her recover from breast cancer treatment.

She said: "The chemo is behind me now and walking Heidi has helped me get fit and back playing tennis twice a week. A lot of people slow down when they get to 73 but walking Heidi keeps me active."

Tony added: "She's the perfect excuse for walking around for an hour or two a day. We've met so many people in the village that we wouldn't have seen otherwise and

discovered paths in the country we never knew existed."

Marie continued: "I talk to everyone in the village – I've probably made a hundred friends from having her."

Heidi has also been a huge hit with the couple's grandchildren, Jack, Freya and Lara, and her exploits are even detailed in her very own column entitled *The Observations of a Spaniel* in the village magazine.

Tony added: "I wouldn't be without her, neither of us would be."





# A WONDERFUL NEW LIFE FOR TV SHOW STAR

Did you catch the toe-curling moment Blue Cross vets treated Nelson on ITV show *Inside Animal A&E*? We caught up with him in his new home...

**H**ad poor Nelson not been found on the streets when he was, the outcome could have been very different.

The black and white stray cat was picked up in Lincolnshire with an enormous and agonising abscess on his neck that needed urgent vet



treatment, to save him from being left with a nasty wound.

Our team at the Blue Cross Grimsby animal hospital drained the painful lump, probably caused by a bite from another cat. And 10 days later, Kenny – as he was then known – was on the mend at our rehoming centre in Southampton, Hampshire.

He soon found a wonderful home with David and Elizabeth St John, who were on the lookout for a new pet after recently losing their beloved cat, Jethro.

Heartbreakingly, Elizabeth was diagnosed with incurable pancreatic cancer just a few months after rehoming Nelson, in 2019.

And it was the comfort that Nelson brought Elizabeth during her last days, as well as the companionship he has given David since, that has shown what a truly special boy he is.

### **GREAT COMPANION**

David said: "He did a great job with Elizabeth. He would go and lie on the bed next to her and purr away.

"She ended up in a hospice, but while she was at home Nelson was always up there sleeping next to her. It's a very cosy feeling when a cat is around."

He added: "Since losing Elizabeth, he's been a great companion. He likes being with people; if I'm having

“

**Since losing Elizabeth, he's been a great companion. He likes being with people.**

”

breakfast, he's always there beside me at the table, sitting on the chair next to me. And he always sits with me in the evenings. He is definitely one of the friendliest cats I've known."

## BITESIZE STORIES

ALL THE LATEST NEWS FROM BLUE CROSS



arriving in kennels. He was wary and reactive towards people, dogs and traffic – he would lunge, growl and bark at these things.”

Our Behaviour Team set up a careful plan to help Bob overcome his fears, but his difficulties around other dogs continued to present a real hurdle.

### BREATHING SPACE

Lockdown, however, meant that most pets went into foster care, with Bob one of only a small number of dogs at the centre – giving him the breathing space he needed to gradually build confidence around his own kind.

And, thanks to two helper dogs – Alfie and Bumble – Bob soon made his first friends.

Tom continued: “He was then introduced to many other centre dogs and absolutely adored going for walks with all his new friends.

“It’s just incredible to see how much dogs can change when given the right amount of care, love and time. We’re so proud of Bob.”

Bob is now happy in a new home and is living a life of luxury with his very own doggy sofa, swimming pool and an endless array of toys.

## SILVER LININGS

Last year’s first lockdown was a worrying time, but for one nervous and under-socialised dog, it was the respite from the world he needed.

Staffordshire bull terrier, Bob, arrived at the Blue Cross rehoming

centre in Tiverton, Devon, in January 2020, aged 14 months, as his boisterous nature was too much for the other dog in the home.

Tom Nunez, Animal Welfare Assistant at the centre, said: “Bob’s ability to trust took a big hit when

### GERBILS LIVING IN SWEET JARS

A group of 11 gerbils temporarily kept in sweet jars before being rescued by Blue Cross have been found loving homes.

The tiny pets came to our Newport rehoming and advice unit after breeding became out of control, leaving their owner unable to care for them or find enough space in cages.

Find out what gerbils need to be happy and healthy at [bluecross.org.uk/caring-your-gerbil](https://bluecross.org.uk/caring-your-gerbil)





## BLIND CAT'S MEDAL HONOUR

A blind therapy cat's inspirational work has been recognised with the Blue Cross Medal.

Carrots is a familiar face at the Marie Curie Hospice in Bradford, where he brings relief and joy to those living with anxiety and depression – as well as those receiving palliative care.

He first started visiting the hospice three years ago when his owner, Katie Lloyd, was diagnosed with a rare type of brain tumour, and the soothing soul was an instant hit with the other patients there.

Carrots is now the only therapy cat within Marie Curie Hospices and is the UK's only blind therapy cat. He was awarded the Blue Cross Medal 2020, in the award's 80th year of celebrating heroic pets changing or saving lives across the UK.

Katie said: "I'm so incredibly proud of Carrots for winning.

"I'm really humbled and didn't expect Carrots to get this kind of recognition."

### Do you know a hero pet?

Nominate them for our 2021 medal at [bluecross.org.uk/pet-hero](https://bluecross.org.uk/pet-hero)

## VET'S LUNGWORM WARNING!

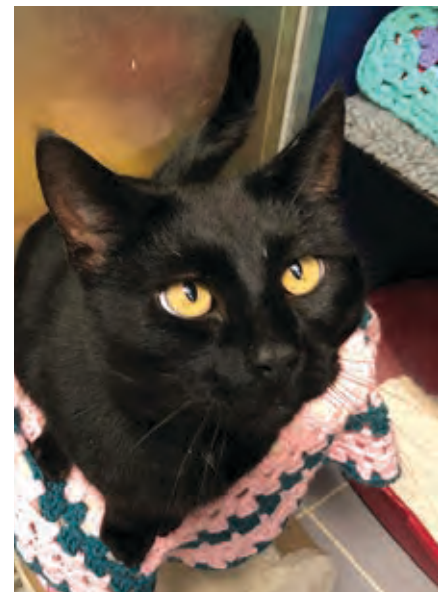
Jessie's life hung in the balance when she arrived at Blue Cross, having collapsed at home.

Vets at our Victoria animal hospital in central London quickly diagnosed the four-year-old beagle with a potentially fatal lungworm infection, which is spread in the larvae of infected snails, slugs or frogs.

The larvae grow, move and multiply inside a dog's heart and blood vessels, causing heart and breathing problems. It can be easily prevented with worming treatments from a vet.

Vet Alison Brennan said: "It is a hidden killer, so we urge dog owners to talk to their vet about preventative treatments and make sure they keep an eye on pets outside, and wash their toys and water bowls if left outdoors."

After several days of 24-hour intensive care, Jessie made a full recovery and returned home.



## BULLET-RIDDLED STRAY'S HAPPY ENDING

A lucky stray cat has found a happy home after arriving in Blue Cross care riddled with bullet shrapnel.

Dennis was brought to our Thirsk rehoming centre in Yorkshire with a mysterious limp, which X-rays soon revealed was down to a cruel, deliberate shooting.

The shrapnel missed his vital organs but fractured his femur. Despite treatment, he was left with one leg shorter than the other – but it causes him no discomfort and he was soon rehomed.

For more info visit [bluecross.org.uk/petadvice](https://bluecross.org.uk/petadvice)

BLUE FOR PETS CROSS

# WHATEVER HAPPENED TO?

Every year Blue Cross finds families for thousands of homeless pets. We've caught up with a familiar face to see how they're doing...



## AKIRA

Little Akira was born into our care just before the coronavirus pandemic took hold in the UK last year.

She was one of the many pets that relied on us during this troubling time and was fostered by Blue Cross Animal Behaviourist, Claire Haynes, who spent many months nurturing the shy, nervous pup.

Now, we're happy to report that Akira is living life to the full in a wonderful new home.

"They love her to bits," said Claire. "Hearing how happy she is makes all the hard work worthwhile."

## HERTS CENTRE BUILD UPDATE

Work continues on our Hertfordshire rehoming centre with the hope of welcoming pets back on site in the summer.

Thanks to our generous supporters, we have nearly hit the fundraising total needed to complete the rebuild of the once outdated site in Kimpton.

The new facility will put us at the cutting edge of pet care, with cramped kennels replaced with spacious blocks – including a dedicated space for puppies.

While construction has taken place, the team has continued to help pets in the area like Eddie (pictured below), thanks to foster carers, and rehoming via our Home Direct scheme.

Centre Manager, Kellie Brooks, said: "We're really excited for when it's finished. When we're back there, we want to hit the ground running."







# TINY STRANDED KITTEN RESCUED

**T**hank goodness someone heard him. At just four days old, tiny Bernard was found in the roof void of a hotel, crying his little heart out – with no mum in sight.

Far too young to be alone, one of our wonderful foster carers took him home and worked round-the-clock to feed him the milk he needed to grow into a strong, healthy boy.

Vanessa Margrave, Animal

Welfare Assistant at the Blue Cross rehoming centre, Burford, had to hand feed him every two hours – including through the night – to make sure he stayed alive.

## HUNGRY

She said: “He was the size of a hamster when I picked him up, so tiny. He was dizzy and hungry, but strong. But at four days old, he needed milk every two hours.

“He lived in a special tank beside my bed and came everywhere with me. He was very well travelled! It’s tiring work hand-rearing kittens, but so rewarding.”

He soon grew into a friendly, inquisitive boy who loved nothing more than a snooze on Vanessa’s lap after a good play session.

And now he’s in a forever home where he continues to entertain with his cheeky-chappy ways.

**G**ive your cat the gift of exploring the outdoors in safety this spring with a garden cat fence barrier: the optimum balance between safety and outdoor enrichment for your cat. Best of all, you'll benefit from total peace of mind!

**The benefits:**

- Safe outdoor access for your cat
- Prevent accidents and injuries
- Prevent fighting and disputes
- Reduce transmission of pests
- Reduce exposure to viruses and diseases
- Deter pet thieves
- Reduce unexpected vet bills
- Better relationships with your neighbours
- Total peace of mind

This cat fence barrier can be fixed to fences or walls that are 1.8m or taller.

The prize is a ProtectaPet® Cat Fence Barrier Kit (20m) but can be exchanged for the equivalent value in ProtectaPet products or professional installation service.



**WIN  
A PROTECTAPET™  
CAT FENCE BARRIER  
WORTH £350!**

**HOW TO ENTER**

Answer the following question for your chance to win:

On pages 10-12 we brought you the story of two poorly kittens. What are their names? *(please tick)*

- Mac and Burger
- Cheese and Biscuits
- Mac and Cheese

Fill in your name and contact details and post to:\*

**Freepost BLUE CROSS FOR PETS**

Or, enter online at

**[bluecross.org.uk/forpets](http://bluecross.org.uk/forpets)**

Closing date Friday 30 April 2021  
\*Strictly one entry per household.

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

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Postcode: .....

Telephone: .....

Email: .....



Blue Cross respects your privacy and will keep your information safe and secure and will only use it in accordance with our Privacy Policy. We will not sell, rent or share your personal data with other organisations for their marketing purposes. We may use your data for profiling purposes to make future communications more relevant to you. To see more about how we will use your information visit [bluecross.org.uk/privacy](http://bluecross.org.uk/privacy) You can change your preferences at any time by contacting our Supporter Care Team on 0300 790 9903 or email [info@bluecross.org.uk](mailto:info@bluecross.org.uk)

We have **55** shops and  
**19** national rehoming  
network locations

# FIND US

Discover your local Blue Cross

## Our animal hospitals

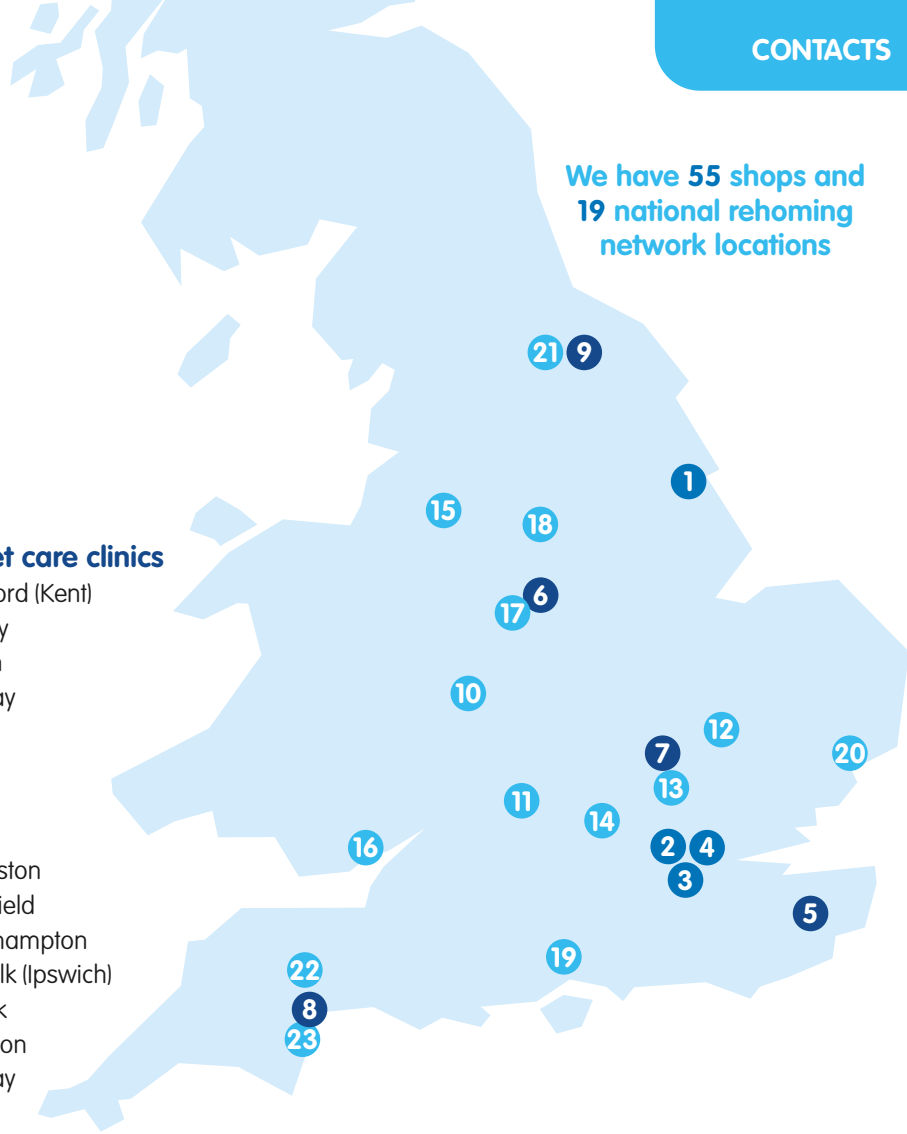
- 1 Grimsby
- 2 Hammersmith
- 3 Merton
- 4 Victoria

## Our pet care clinics

- 5 Ashford (Kent)
- 6 Derby
- 7 Luton
- 8 Torbay
- 9 York

## Our rehoming centres

- 10 Bromsgrove
- 11 Burford
- 12 Cambridge
- 13 Hertfordshire (Kimpton)
- 14 Lewknor
- 15 Manchester
- 16 Newport
- 17 Rolleston
- 18 Sheffield
- 19 Southampton
- 20 Suffolk (Ipswich)
- 21 Thirsk
- 22 Tiverton
- 23 Torbay



## Say hello, find your nearest Blue Cross or make a donation

**Call:** 0300 790 9903 **Email:** [info@bluecross.org.uk](mailto:info@bluecross.org.uk) **Visit:** [bluecross.org.uk](http://bluecross.org.uk)

**Write to us:** Freepost BLUE CROSS FOR PETS

### Book a free education talk

Animal welfare and responsible pet ownership workshops for children and young people in schools, youth groups and clubs.

**Call:** 0300 111 8950 **Visit:** [bluecross.org.uk/education](http://bluecross.org.uk/education)

### Pet Bereavement Support Service

Free and confidential support for anyone coping with the loss of a pet, for any reason.

**Call:** 0800 096 6606. Lines open every day, 8.30am to 8.30pm.

**Email:** [pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk](mailto:pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk)



Pets change lives  
We change theirs

[bluecross.org.uk](http://bluecross.org.uk) 35



Pets change lives  
We change theirs



We're a charity that has been helping sick, injured and homeless pets since 1897

# “Remember me in your Will”

If pets have a place in your heart, please find a place for them in your Will. A gift in your Will can help secure the future for thousands of pets.

Order your FREE information pack on making or amending a Will and leaving a gift to Blue Cross online at [bluecross.org.uk/gift-your-will](http://bluecross.org.uk/gift-your-will)

Or complete the coupon and send to:  
**Freepost BLUE CROSS FOR PETS**

Alternatively, call or email and quote: B221  
**Telephone:** 0300 790 9903  
**Email:** [legacy@bluecross.org.uk](mailto:legacy@bluecross.org.uk)

[bluecross.org.uk/gift-your-will](http://bluecross.org.uk/gift-your-will)

Title:

First name:

Surname:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

B221

I have already included a gift to Blue Cross in my Will

**Thank you for your continued support.**

Blue Cross is a charity registered in England and Wales (224392) and in Scotland (SC040154). \*From time to time we may wish to communicate with you by phone with news about the pets you are helping and ways you can help in the future. If you are happy for us to do this, please fill in your details above.

