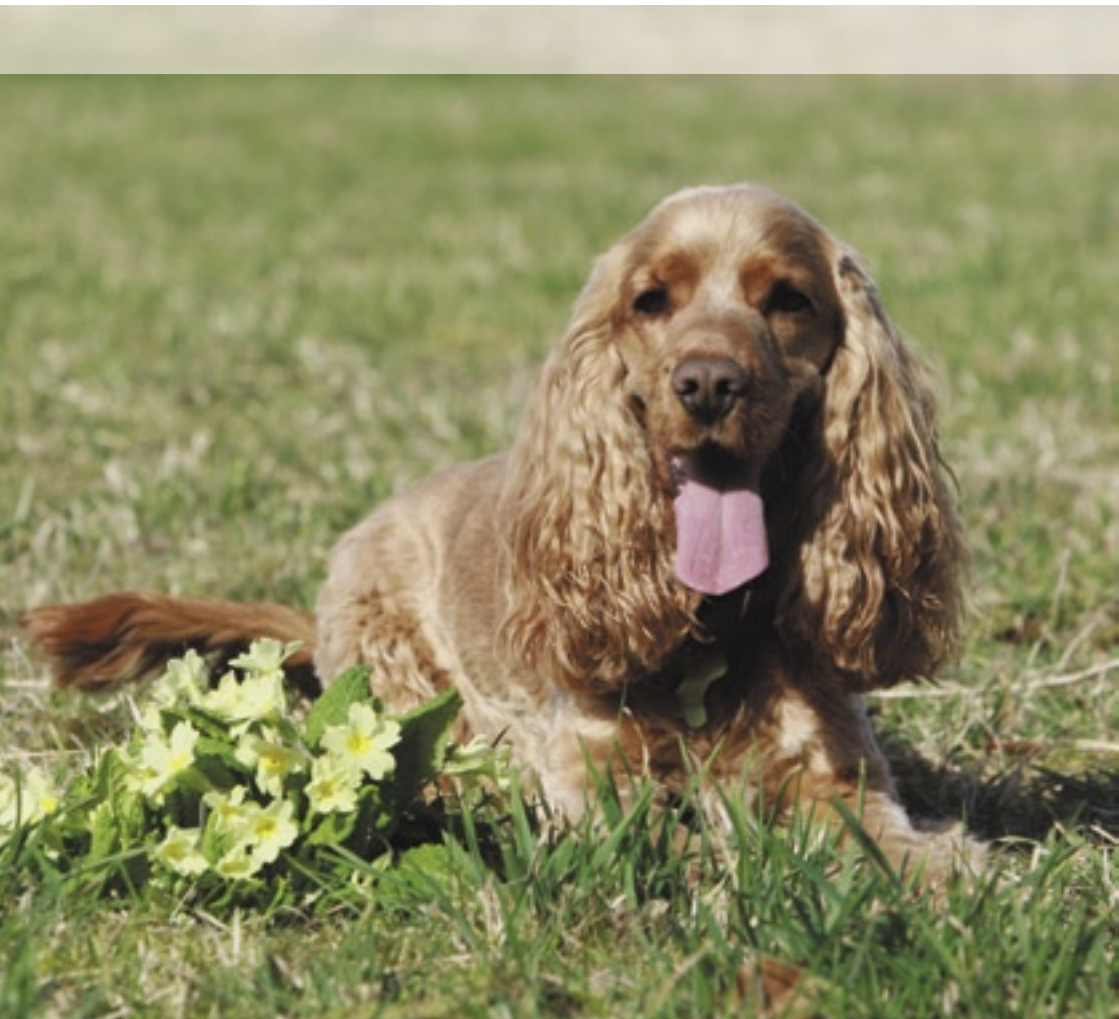




THE BLUE CROSS

*Britain's pet charity*

# Finding the right pet for you



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Owning a pet can be the most rewarding experience, but before you get one, please think first. Do you know as much as possible before taking on this long term commitment? The Blue Cross has put together some top tips to help you choose the right animal for you.

## Do your research

- Consider what type of pet is best suited to your home and lifestyle
- Think about the cost and time needed to look after the pet
- Research the size, temperament, exercise requirements, expected lifespan and health predispositions of different species and breeds
- Talk to your vet, local animal charity, breed club or rescue society for more advice about the different traits and inherited health issues that are associated with specific breeds



## Consider a rescue pet

Thousands of rescue animals are desperate for a good home. Animal welfare organisations, like The Blue Cross, can offer support and advice about individual pets as well as information about different breeds.

### **Blue Cross animals ready for adoption are:**

- Fully health and behaviour assessed
- Carefully matched to new owners to make sure they are well suited
- Neutered, vaccinated and microchipped
- Given four weeks' free pet insurance as standard

## Use a reputable breeder

- If you do want to buy a pedigree dog or cat, ask your vet or relevant breed club to recommend a responsible breeder
- Measures such as hip scores, elbow grades, eye screening and even DNA tests can give an indication of whether a dog is prone to inherited conditions and a smaller number of tests are available for cats
- Ask the breeder for all the relevant paperwork including pedigree registration papers, health screening certificates and a written medical history, including vaccinations and worming

- Ask to meet the animal's parents, relatives and siblings to observe their temperament and general health and welfare
- Find out if the parents or any of their other litters have developed inherited diseases or related problems
- Ask to contact the breeder's vet and other people who have bought youngsters from them to verify this; if they refuse, go elsewhere

## Maintain good health

- It's important to maintain the general health of your pet through appropriate diet and exercise
- Visit the vet regularly to keep vaccinations up to date and for health check ups
- Pet insurance is advisable to help cover most unexpected vet bills

## Help protect the next generation

- If your pet is diagnosed with a condition that could be inherited, it's important to tell the breeder, alert the relevant breed club and The Kennel Club or Governing Council of the Cat Fancy
- Get your pet neutered to prevent them from passing on the problem to future generations. Neutering also avoids unwanted litters and has benefits for the animal's long-term health.

## Useful links

### General pet care advice

- The Blue Cross: [www.bluecross.org.uk](http://www.bluecross.org.uk)
- All about pets, an online community for pet owners: [www.allaboutpets.org.uk](http://www.allaboutpets.org.uk)
- Association of Dogs and Cats Homes: [www.adch.org.uk](http://www.adch.org.uk)

### Information on inherited diseases

- University Federation for Animal Welfare: [www.ufaw.org.uk](http://www.ufaw.org.uk)
- Canine Inherited Disorder Database: [www.upei.ca/cidd/intro.htm](http://www.upei.ca/cidd/intro.htm)
- Cambridge School of Veterinary Medicine Inherited Diseases in Dogs Database: [www.vet.cam.ac.uk](http://www.vet.cam.ac.uk)
- Feline Advisory Bureau: [www.fabcats.org](http://www.fabcats.org)

### Further advice on dogs

- There are many books and magazines with extensive advice on dog health and welfare: [www.yourdog.co.uk](http://www.yourdog.co.uk); [www.dogsmonthly.co.uk](http://www.dogsmonthly.co.uk); [www.dogworld.co.uk](http://www.dogworld.co.uk); [www.ourdogs.co.uk](http://www.ourdogs.co.uk)

### Further advice on cats

- Governing Council of the Cat Fancy: [www.gccfcats.org](http://www.gccfcats.org)
- Cats Protection: [www.cats.org.uk](http://www.cats.org.uk)
- There are many books and magazines with extensive advice on cat health and welfare: [www.yourcat.co.uk](http://www.yourcat.co.uk); [www.catworld.co.uk](http://www.catworld.co.uk); [www.ourcats.co.uk](http://www.ourcats.co.uk)

### Veterinary advice

- British Veterinary Association: [www.bva.co.uk](http://www.bva.co.uk)



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The Blue Cross is a charity registered in England and Wales (224392) and in Scotland (SCO40154).