



Pets change lives
We change theirs



Blue Cross Impact Framework

Giving back to pets in need

About us

Blue Cross is a charity that has been helping sick, injured, abandoned and homeless pets since 1897. Pets help us in so many ways and they depend entirely on us. That's why at Blue Cross we believe in giving back to pets in need.

Our vision is that every pet will enjoy a healthy life in a happy home.

We help thousands of pets in need every month, providing veterinary care, expert behaviour help and find them loving homes, as well as advice and education for current and future pet owners and bereavement support when the time comes to say goodbye. We develop lifelong relationships with pets and owners, providing quality care that is accessible and non-judgemental.

Pets change lives. We change theirs.



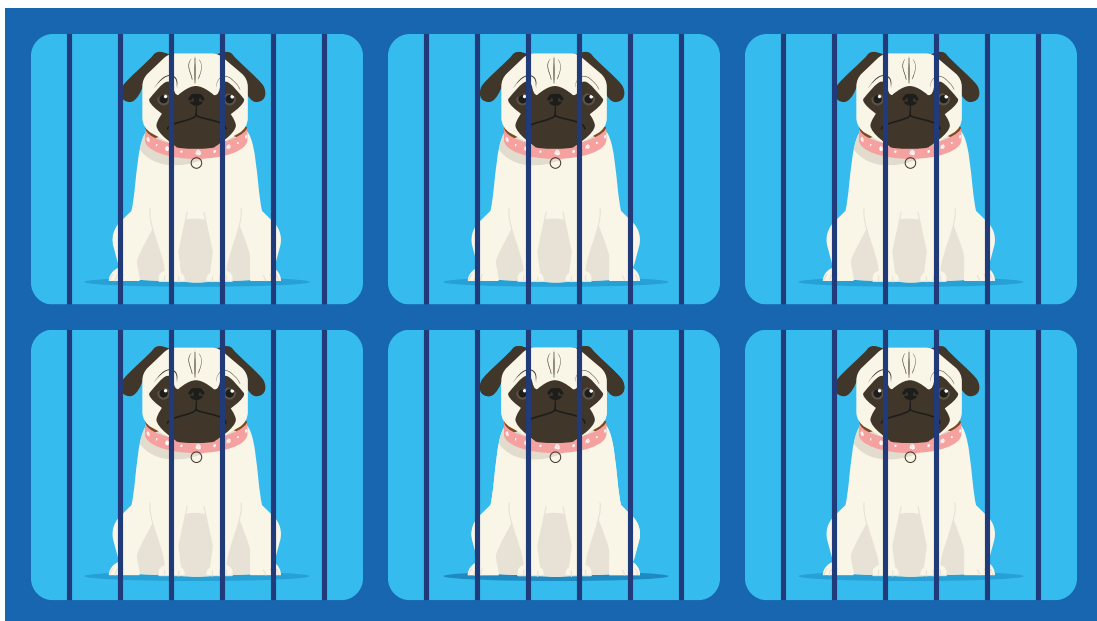
Introduction

Pets make our lives better in so many ways. They get us out and about, walking and meeting people. They are our companions during our best, and worst, moments, and give us purpose when times are hard. The relationships we have with pets improve our wellbeing, both mentally and physically. They're more than pets – they're our families and our best friends.



Sadly not all pets end up happy and healthy.

Unscrupulous breeders, capitalising on the demand for fashionable breeds and operating outside acceptable welfare standards, sell pets with serious health and behaviour issues that unsuspecting new owners cannot afford to treat or cope with.



Fashionable breeds are often raised in miserable conditions by breeders who are purely driven by profit.

The unregulated and unlicensed world of online sales sees thousands of unsuitable, ill or unsocialised pets bought and sold each year, often with confusing, incorrect or non-existent care information.

Reduced household incomes along with cost of living increases, a ballooning rental market and changes to benefits are seeing more and more people forced to give up their pets.

A lack of understanding of the five welfare needs (suitable environment and diet, able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns, need to be housed with, or apart, from other animals and the need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury or disease) has led to rising obesity, inappropriate living situations causing stress and anxiety, and an increase in preventable illness.

With these and many other issues negatively affecting the lives of pets, there is no one route to improving their quality of life. Our approach reflects that.

We care for sick and injured pets when their owners are unable to afford private vet fees. We find new families for dogs, cats, horses and small pets who find themselves homeless, abandoned or with owners who heartbreakingly cannot care for them due to a change in their circumstances, and we offer behavioural support when they need it.

We're always on hand to give advice to current or future pet owners about how to care for their pets, to

educate about the crucial five welfare needs, and we understand and celebrate the social and emotional role pets play in our society.

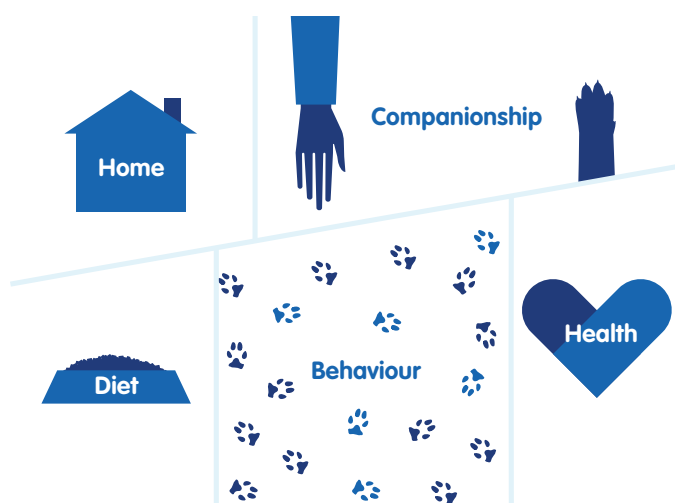
Our vision is that every pet will enjoy a healthy life in a happy home

In this fast-moving and challenging environment, to make our vision a reality and give pets the best chance in life, we need to ensure a number of conditions are in place throughout society as a whole.

To support our aims we have developed the Blue Cross Impact Framework.

The Framework reflects our work today, enables us to identify new areas of need and helps us work with current and future owners, organisations and institutions to improve life for pets both today and tomorrow.

The five welfare needs



Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) 2006, and the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, pet owners must provide their pet with the following: suitable environment and diet; the ability to exhibit normal behaviour patterns; to be housed with or apart from other animals; and protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease.



The Blue Cross Impact Framework

As a charity, we're dedicated to increasing our impact to ensure that pets live **healthier, happier lives** today and long into the future.

Our **Impact Framework** guides our approach. It enables us to clearly engage others in the outcomes we believe are required to deliver our vision for pets, helps us to prioritise activities that will make the biggest difference, and allows us to measure and increase our impact in the future as we learn from the actions and evidence.

The Framework articulates three outcomes that we believe all need to be in place for our vision to become a reality: that **knowledge and understanding** of a pet's needs are widespread; that **pets are valued** for the benefits they bring to society; and that pets have access to **help when they need it**.

To ensure successful delivery of all three outcomes we have identified activities that inform our work and help us determine new areas of need. We continuously evaluate the effectiveness of our work in these areas to ensure the greatest impact for pets and their owners.

The ultimate measure of all three outcomes is that all pets will lead a good quality of life.

For example, when an owner has hit hard times through change of circumstance (such as the loss of their job or change to benefits), subject to certain criteria we provide veterinary care free of charge. This means the owner has one less thing to worry

about, their pet continues to lead a healthy life and the owner can continue to enjoy the benefits their pet brings to their physical and mental wellbeing during such a difficult time.

While the Framework is most easily expressed in three outcomes, in practise our approach blends the different activities together. So while veterinary care is essential for helping a pet in need, a Blue Cross vet during an appointment will also often share their knowledge of the best way to care for a pet, helping owners understand the five welfare needs and how they can ensure the care they provide meets their pet's requirements.

Our policies and decisions are informed by a continually developing evidence base. This approach helps us to ensure our resources are directed to the areas where they will have the most impact, and that we can help change the lives of as many pets as possible.

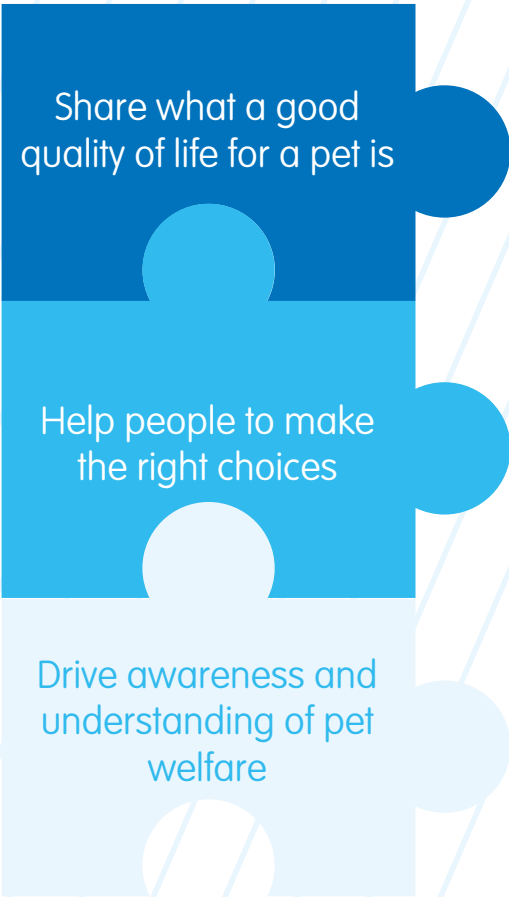
For example if, after reviewing the evidence base, we see that an area of the country has particularly high levels of owners in financial trouble, we may decide to open a new clinic to address the need and help more pets.

Vision of the future:

Every pet will enjoy a healthy life in a happy home

Outcomes required to make our vision possible:

Improved knowledge and understanding



Pets are a valued part of society



Help for pets in need



Activities needed to deliver the required outcomes:

Informed by a continually developing evidence base



Outcome 1:

Knowledge and understanding

Helping an owner choose the right pet for their lifestyle and understand how to care for them leads to more pets enjoying a good quality of life. Pets experience fewer avoidable illnesses and behaviour problems, and are able to enjoy a healthy relationship with their owner. This in turn results in fewer pets moving from home to home, or being abandoned, in their lifetime.

We believe to make a significant shift in this area there needs to be greater promotion of responsible pet welfare, with sound consistent messages in the areas that will have the biggest impact in improving pets' quality of life now and in the future.

How we deliver knowledge and understanding

We share what a good quality of life for a pet is:

- Face to face through our skilled volunteers and employees at rehoming centres, animal hospitals and clinics, events and more
- Our Education Team delivers talks to schools and youth groups, helping to make responsible ownership second nature to future generations of pet owners
- Providing widespread accessibility to expert pet advice and training guides, both online and in person
- Campaigning on key issues impacting pet welfare, such as unregulated online sales
- Debunking popular myths around the needs and behaviours of different types of pets and breeds eg little dogs need more walking than a lot of people think, ex-racehorses are often cheap to buy but are not easy to look after for inexperienced owners, and rabbits need companionship and much more space than people realise

We help people to make the right choices:

- Increase understanding of breed-specific attributes to consider before buying or rehoming a pet eg health issues like breathing problems, dental disease and skin infections are common to brachycephalic (flat faced) pets and often require complex and expensive surgery
- Match pets to people via our Rehoming Service, finding the right home for both the owner and pet's individual needs so pets are less likely to be rehomed again
- Raise awareness of behavioural, financial and rehoming assistance available to pet owners, helping reduce the amount of avoidable illnesses and abandoned pets
- Help our veterinary clients improve their pets' quality of life with Pet Wise 'MOTs'
- Support people during difficult pet ownership decisions, such as giving up a pet

We improve awareness and understanding of pet welfare:

- Lead campaigns on specific welfare issues, such as the unregulated online sale of pets or unlicensed breeding, via evidence based reports, conferences, social media and online
- Influence legislation by providing expert evidence to government committees such as Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee (Efra), on a variety of topics such as the Dangerous Dogs Act
- Gain support from policy makers on key issues like the online sale of pets, providing tailored information including a full report as well as constituency specific statistics
- Work with the Pet Advertising Advisory Group to help raise the standard of pet advertising based on pet welfare legislation
- Challenge ill-informed advice that impacts on pet health eg anti-vaccination campaigns on social media can lead to rise of preventable illnesses

To increase our impact in this area we plan to:

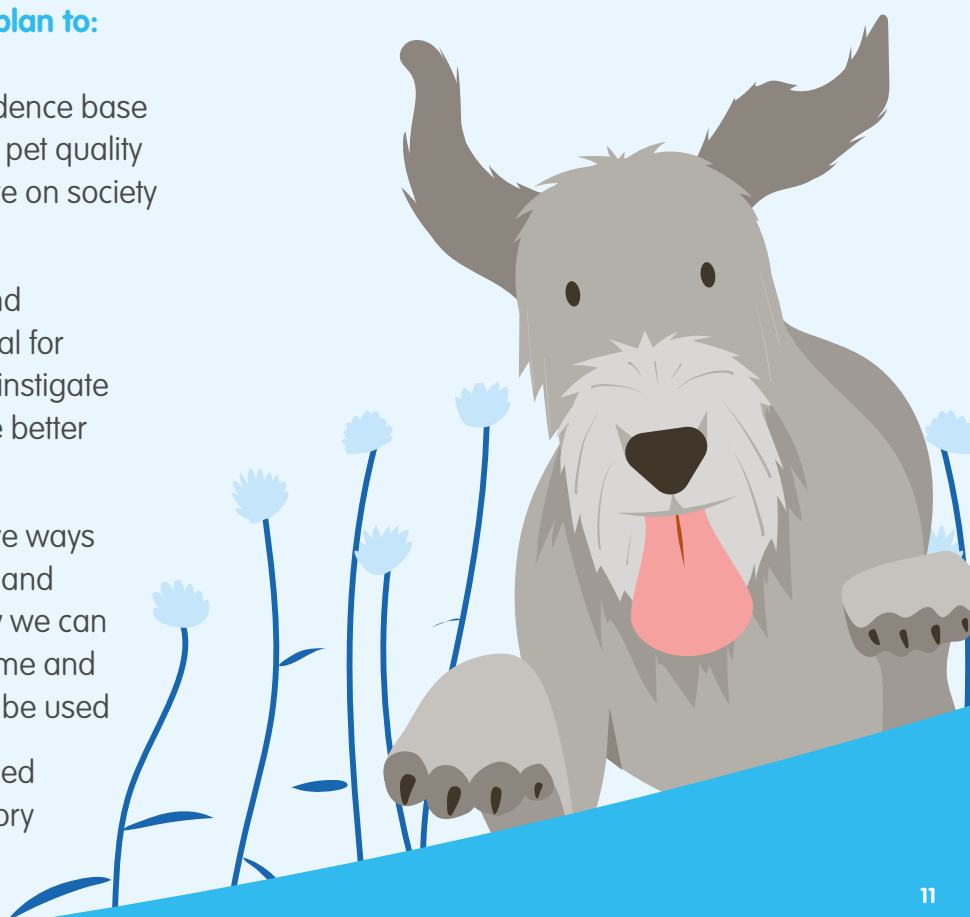
- Regularly build on and refresh our evidence base with the latest research in pet welfare, pet quality of life and the positive impact pets have on society and individuals
- Influence organisations, individuals and government to understand the potential for positive impact and where needed to instigate a change in their behaviour to achieve better outcomes for all pets
- Continually develop and adapt effective ways to influence organisations, individuals and government; testing and learning how we can provide information in the right way, time and place to maximise the likelihood it will be used
- Ensure information and advice is aligned with best practice provided by regulatory and professional bodies

How do we measure our impact?

We continuously monitor the effectiveness of activities against our desired Impact Framework outcomes, allowing us to prioritise key areas of work, refine our approach and refocus our resources. Ultimately, more pets will enjoy a greater quality of life.

In this area, successful actions include:

- More requests for help and advice eg face to face talks and online materials
- Our advice is available when owners need it – for example, at the top of online search results
- Our help and advice is reaching more people and helping them make better pet-related decisions





Helping people make the **right choice**

Buster and Harvey

Buster and Harvey's world fell apart when their beloved owners died within 10 months of each other. Even after being taken in by Rebecca, their owners' daughter, they were highly anxious.

Buster and Harvey were used to having their owners' company during the day, and missed Rebecca's parents terribly. With a full time job and young family to care for, Rebecca knew she couldn't give them the quality of life they needed. Even though she was grieving for her parents herself, Rebecca knew she had to find Buster and Harvey a new home: "I didn't want them dying of broken hearts."

Thanks to our Home Direct Scheme, Buster and Harvey were able to stay with Rebecca until we found them a new home. Now they are settled with another Labrador called Barney, and owners Beverley and Graham who give them all the attention they were used to.

"Saying goodbye for the last time and watching them drive away was just heartbreaking, but I knew I had done what was best for the boys, not me," said Rebecca.

Being a responsible pet owner involves making the right decision for the pet, not the person, no matter how difficult those decisions can be. By promoting knowledge and understanding of pets' needs, we help more owners make the difficult choices that improve their pets' quality of life.

“Saying goodbye for the last time and watching them drive away was just heartbreaking, but I knew I had done what was best for the boys, not me.”



Outcome 2:

Pets are a valued part of society

Improved mental and physical health, comfort when coping with depression or bereavement and reduced feelings of loneliness; we know that for some people relationships with pets can be the difference between a life of happiness and meaning, and one of isolation.

We believe that more needs to be done to recognise the value of pets to society at large. With greater provision made for their inclusion in the workplace, home and other aspects of daily life, we will drive real change that will be felt by both people and pets.

How we promote the value of pets in society

We promote the life changing impact of pets:

- Conduct research to illustrate and endorse the positive, and sometimes surprising, impact pets have on people's health and wellbeing. For example, owners visit the GP less often, display reduced levels of stress and enjoy unconditional love from their pet.
- To reflect our mutually beneficial relationship, 'Pets change lives. We change theirs' runs through all our communications – it is why we exist and is at the heart of everything we do.
- Use real life stories to demonstrate the value and life changing impact of pets. For example, the Blue Cross Award recognises pets who have had the greatest impact on their owners' lives.

We promote positive pet and people relationships:

- Helping pets today through all the interactions we have with people who access our services and online materials
- Helping pets of the future by educating the next generation of pet owners through our school and youth talks so they can enjoy healthy and happy relationships with their pets
- Our free Pet Bereavement Support Service recognises the emotional importance of pets to people, and helps owners through the hardest part of having a pet – saying goodbye

We influence enforceable legislation:

- Through strong government relationships and clear legislative goals backed up by thorough research. Among our successes on behalf of pets are improved licensing of breeders, reformed enforcement of licensing and newly developed safeguards for pets traded online.



- Collaborating with like-minded organisations, such as the Pet Advertising Advisory Group, to amplify our message and achieve greater impact for pets across various welfare areas

To increase our impact in this area we plan to:

- Continue undertaking our own research and evidence into the positive impact of pets, driving positive change to attitudes and behaviours across society until recognition of the value of pets becomes second nature
- Clearly articulate specific benefits of people-pet relationships, and build partnerships with organisations which reinforce these benefits and make them accessible to those who will gain the most
- Work with parties across the health, social, economic and political sectors to increase the popularity of pet-friendly policies. For example, encouraging care homes to introduce pet policies so that vulnerable people aren't forced to be separated from their much-loved pets.
- Help to change legislation and enforcement to ensure that as well as pets changing lives, we help to improve all pets' lives

How do we measure our impact?

The effectiveness of our work in this area is reviewed against certain outcomes, including:

- An increase in the number of organisations across the social, work, housing and health sectors, with a positive and supportive pet policy eg more landlords having inclusive pet policies
- More work, living and leisure environments designed with pets in mind
- Increased media coverage about the benefits of pets to people
- Relevant policies put in place, with effective and appropriate enforcement
- More positive attitudes towards pet ownership in general



“ They’re incredibly sensitive to people’s emotions and feelings. So when we take them to meet patients, they know when someone is really ill. ”



Dame Maggie and
Princess Rose



Therapy ponies **changing lives**

For ponies so small, Dame Maggie and Princess Rose have had an enormous impact on many lives. The Shetlands, who were found new homes by Blue Cross rehoming centre, Burford, work as therapy animals comforting terminally ill patients at hospices, inspiring children and adults with learning difficulties and even helping to steer troubled youths away from crime.

"They're incredibly sensitive to people's emotions and feelings. So when we take them to meet patients, they know when someone is really ill," said Alex Taskin, from Equilibrium for Life. "They're completely quiet and just stand there, and they will nuzzle the person."

In one particularly touching moment, Maggie rested her head in the lap of a young disabled boy using a wheelchair who was on his way to visit his sick grandmother – his parents couldn't believe how his face immediately lit up.

Outcome 3:

Help for pets in need

Pets rely entirely on humans for their food, shelter, emotional wellbeing and to live a life free from pain and suffering.

For all they give us and considering the significant health, social and emotional benefits that come from a relationship with a pet, we want to ensure we are there to give back to them in times of need.

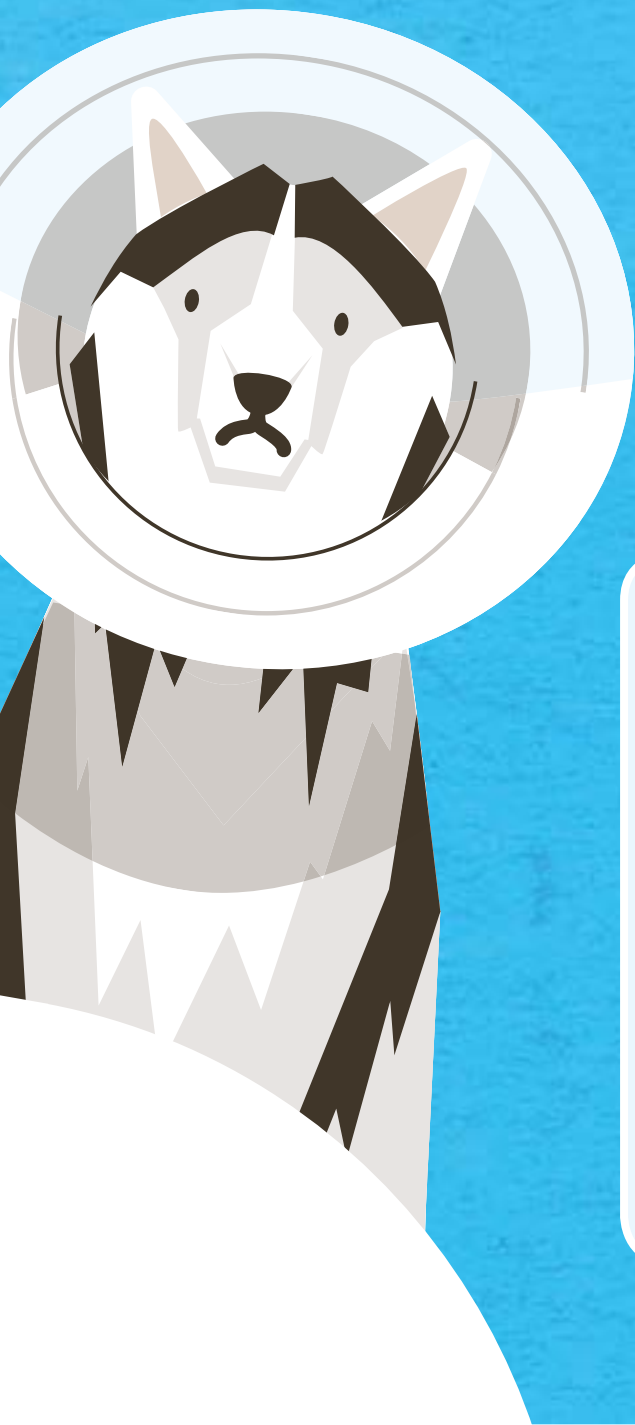
How we provide help for pets in need

Access to veterinary care:

- We provide caring and efficient veterinary services at our animal hospitals and clinics for pets whose owners cannot afford private vet fees and meet our eligibility criteria, ensuring pets don't suffer due to their owners' financial difficulties
- We identify areas of high welfare need, and expand our network of rehoming and advice units and colleges to rehome pets in such areas
- We are significantly broadening accessibility to veterinary care through partnerships with pet care clinics and our emergency grants to help the increasing numbers of pet owners experiencing financial crises
- The best place for a pet is in a home, not a rehoming centre. So we remove as many barriers as possible for people needing to find a new home for their pet, as well as people who are looking for a new pet. Our non-judgemental, open minded approach helps to ensure a pet's long term quality of life.
- During consultations we help owners understand how they can make improvements to their pets' quality of life. For example, advising on exercise, ideas for mental stimulation or dietary suggestions to counter obesity.

We provide rehoming services for pets who need new homes:

- Find new families for abandoned pets, or pets whose owners can no longer keep them. With no 'one size fits all' approach, our expert teams take into account individual circumstances and lifestyles to match pets with people for the best chance of happiness.
- Behavioural support when intervention is needed:
 - Pets in our care are assessed and helped to overcome any behavioural issues, which could prevent them from leading healthy and happy lives in a new home
 - After our pets have moved to their new homes, we offer their owners behavioural support to treat any problems that may occur. Helping pets settle reduces the likelihood of them needing to be rehomed again due to preventable reasons, helping both pet and owner enjoy their new lives together.



Pets rely entirely on humans for a life free from pain and suffering

To increase our impact in this area we plan to:

- Continually improve the welfare of pets in need of our services by using our latest research and evidence base to regularly adapt our services
- Enable greater accessibility to our services with innovative design, targeted partnerships and the smart use of technology
- Develop innovative, cost-effective new services where areas of need are identified
- Continually improve customer experience by learning from feedback and adapting to meet expectations

How do we measure our impact?

We continuously monitor activities against our Impact Framework outcomes. In this area they include:

- More owners using our services to treat their pets
- Increased geographic coverage, putting our services within reach of areas of high need
- Increased number of pets helped across our service areas
- Increased number of interventions (the different ways in which we help pets)

A sight-saving operation and **loving** new home for Bear

Poor Bear was in an appalling state when he arrived at our Suffolk rehoming centre. Suffering a severe strain of cat flu which caused ulcers on his eyes, his eyelids had fused and he could barely see. Just three months old, we had to operate twice to save his sight.

Thankfully Bear's young body proved resilient, and he pulled through. Although he was left with deformed eyelids and partially obstructed eyesight, he is thriving with new owners Tara and Luke.

“He's brought lots of mischief and fun with him and makes our home a happier one.”

“We wanted to give a home to a cat with a disability, as a lot of people overlook them. I saw Bear on the website and I just knew we had to have him. He looked like such a lovely little guy and he is,” said Tara.

Luke continued: “He's brought lots of mischief and fun with him and makes our home a happier one. We couldn't imagine life without him now.”





Bear

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We change theirs



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