



OUR IMPACT IN
2025



Pets change lives
We change theirs

Who we are

Blue Cross has been changing the lives of sick, injured, and homeless pets since 1897. Pets are at the heart of everything we do and every month we continue to help thousands more.

We love the way that pets can make such an amazing difference to the people they live with. So we offer lifelong support and advice to help that unique relationship thrive.

We change lives. For pets, for people, for life. We believe that pets and their people should be able to enjoy lifelong care and support, and we won't rest until that goal becomes reality.

Nettle

Four-year-old Nettle came into our care in urgent need of a fresh start. Sadly, she had been struggling with bladder stones for a long time, and her previous owner hadn't been able to resolve the issue.

Hannah Wiltshire, Burford Centre Manager, explains: "Bladder stones usually reduce in size and eventually resolve completely with the right care, but Nettle's sadly didn't. She was on medication and a special diet, but they didn't work. This meant that surgery was the only option."

Following successful surgery at our Victoria animal hospital – and 145 days in our care – Nettle was finally ready for adoption. "She's very sweet and beautiful," says Hannah. "She likes a quiet and easy life with loads of pampering."

Rehoming and fostering

Caring for homeless pets and horses until we can find them suitable new homes.

Veterinary

Providing affordable care for sick and injured pets when their family can't afford private treatment.

Behaviour

Providing behavioural expertise so that pets, and their people, can live healthy, happy lives.

Pet loss support

Supporting people who are struggling to cope with the sad loss of a pet through death, theft or having to give up a much-loved pet.

Education

Giving talks and providing advice to help relationships between pets and people thrive.



Facing the emerging hidden pet welfare crisis



Against an increasingly challenging backdrop, Blue Cross has continued to care and advocate for sick, injured and homeless pets – and the people who love them – across the UK. With stellar effort and deep dedication from our teams, we've made progress towards our ambitious goals. From helping more pets through our rehoming and behaviour services to seeing the first country in the UK, Wales, to ban greyhound racing.

The rising cost of living remains a huge challenge for households in the UK. And as pet food, vet bills and other pressures increase, caring for animals is harder than ever before for a great many people. The result is an emerging pet welfare crisis, largely taking place behind closed doors but with deep consequences now beginning to boil over.

At our rehoming centres we're seeing a rise in pet relinquishment and abandonment, driven by these ongoing pressures. Our veterinary teams, meanwhile, are treating growing numbers of pets with chronic and complex health conditions. And our behaviour teams are seeing more animals with complex behavioural needs.

We'll do all we can to help the pets and people affected. And I'm so incredibly grateful to everyone who supports our mission, whether that's by donating, sponsoring second chances for pets, remembering Blue Cross in a Will, taking part in fundraising events, working alongside us, or volunteering precious time.

Thank you so much, we simply couldn't do it without you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Chris Burghes'.

Chris Burghes
Chief Executive MBE



Another year of changing lives

3,302

pets helped
by our Veterinary
Care Fund



6,988

behaviour
interventions



1,579

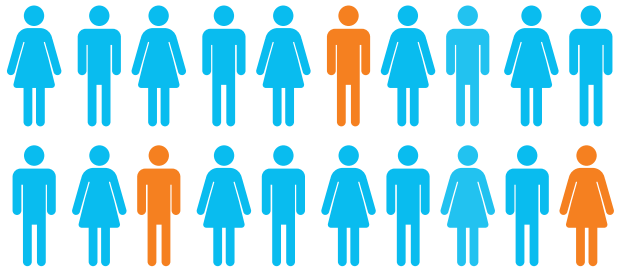
struggling
owners
engaged

with our assessment
and advice service



239,288

hours of volunteer time



123,088

people
reached
through our
education services



2.9m

visits to our
pet advice
pages
on our website



For more information about our activities in 2025, you can read our Annual Report at bluecross.org.uk/publications

25,414

pets helped
by our veterinary services



1,169

horses helped

through our home
direct, fostering and
centre based activities

8,138*

pets helped
by our rehoming and
fostering services



*Figure includes horses

29,338

emails/calls answered
and online interventions
by our pet loss team

(including new Facebook group members)



123,520

pets fed for a day

through food banks
at Blue Cross sites



33,552

pets helped by Blue Cross



Expanding our veterinary services

Thanks to our generous supporters and committed veterinary teams, despite another turbulent year for the veterinary sector, we continued to make headway towards our strategic ambition of helping 28,000 pets annually.

The total number of pets we helped in 2025 is lower than in 2024. The reasons are threefold: the loss of our pet care clinics, continuing operational pressures on our hospital teams, and our XL bully scheme – through which we supported additional dogs and owners impacted by legislation changes in 2024.

In 2026, we'll keep working towards our ambition. And we'll focus on maximising our impact by improving efficiency, strengthening workforce stability, and embedding pragmatic, welfare-led care models.

A fair, sustainable pricing structure

Over recent years we've seen the cost of delivering veterinary care rise significantly. In 2025 it became clear our existing pricing model was unsustainable. So we redesigned our pricing structure, effective January 2026, focusing on fairness, transparency and sustainability.

Now all clients will pay the same heavily subsidised, discounted prices. We will monitor the impact closely throughout 2026 – and we remain committed to providing accessible veterinary care to as many pets and people as we can.

River

Though just eight months old, when River came to us she was pregnant with twin puppies. She suffered complications in labour and we had to step in to deliver the pups via C-section. River struggled to connect with her puppies, so we saw them through those vital first days, with round-the-clock feedings, until River was ready to take over. Poor River was also suffering with luxating patellas – a knee condition. So once the puppies were weaned, our vets performed surgery to treat her legs.

25,414

Pets helped by our veterinary services (27,184 in 2024)

including:

3,302

pets helped by our Veterinary Care Fund (3,122 in 2024)



Veterinary Care Fund

Our Veterinary Care Fund has continued to grow, helping even more people struggling to afford the vet treatment their pets need. A new centralised system is now easing efficiency, data capture, fund management and governance.

The network of participating practices has grown rapidly since early 2023, when there were around 70. 1,591 practices are currently enrolled in the VCF, representing 92 per cent coverage of the UK based on practice postcodes.

To better manage demand for this vital veterinary service, we invested in a new centralised system in 2025. This allowed us to address recommendations from a 2024 audit, improving our data capture, fund management and governance. It also offers our partner practices an improved user experience. Feedback from both staff and veterinary practices has been highly positive.

Based on the postcodes of participating practices, the VCF is now covering

92% of the UK



“

My dog needed two operations and the total was just too much for me to pay alone as I'm a single parent, out of work due to my children's additional needs. The help you gave me was a massive help, thank you.

”

“

It was life changing! Betsy was in a lot of pain and barely eating, and we couldn't afford the full funds so the contribution helped massively. I am so grateful.

”



Increasing the impact of our rehoming and fostering services

In an increasingly challenging environment, we did our utmost to progress towards our goal of helping over 10,000 pets a year through rehoming and fostering.

We helped 8,138 pets through our rehoming and fostering services in 2025 (an increase of 4.2 per cent on 2024), therefore taking a significant step closer to our 10,000 pets a year by the end of 2026.

In-house veterinary support

We've continued increasing the level of in-house veterinary care at our Hertfordshire rehoming centre, with a weekly vet visit supported by remote consultations between visits. Pets benefit from being monitored and treated in a familiar environment, without the stress of travelling. And by relying less on local private practices, except in urgent cases, we've reduced costs.

We also expanded the service to our Newport rehoming, advice and behaviour unit and will be introducing it at our Southampton rehoming centre next year.

Increasing our fostering capacity

Fostering is a key aspect of our strategy to help more pets at a lower cost per pet helped.

Following on from our work in 2024, we undertook further digital marketing to recruit new fosterers and by the end of the year we had 897 foster carers in place. As a result, foster home placements increased by 31 per cent year on year.

Our horse service

In 2025 we developed our horse strategy to include focussing more support

8,138

pets helped by rehoming and fostering services (7,809 in 2024)

2,918

pets spent time in foster care (2,234 in 2024)

839

pets helped by Home Direct (962 in 2024)

on helping private owners no longer able to meet their horse's core welfare needs, with 59 per cent more horses signed over to our care than in 2024. A key cause for this is the continuing cost of living crisis and we have seen an increasing number of horses arrive in extremely poor condition and/or with long standing behavioural issues.

Keeping pets and people together

Wherever possible we continue to prioritise keeping pets in their existing homes. Through our assessment and advice service we offer tailored guidance, support and expert advice at the point where someone is struggling to care for their pet and considering rehoming. In 2025 we engaged with the owners of 128 horses and 1,451 dogs, cats and small pets.

Behaviour services

Our behaviour service has continued to see a rise in pets needing behaviour support since the lockdowns associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Dogs, in particular, missed out on early years socialisation due to lockdowns. 53 per cent of dogs admitted in 2025 needed help from a dedicated behaviour team member, compared with 27 per cent in 2019. And overall, pets also stayed with us for longer – on average, excluding horses, 41 days in 2025 (36 in 2024).

We have seen an increase in the number of rabbits and rodents in need of help from our behaviour team, alongside an increase in their length of stay.

The number of cats requiring behaviour support has gone up 57 per cent on 2024 and the number of horses who have needed at least one behaviour intervention has increased by 8 per cent.

Our behaviour team is working tirelessly, under increasing pressure, to support pets and increase their chances of living happy and fulfilled lives in new homes.

6,988

total behaviour interventions
(6,898 in 2024)

1,152*

ongoing behaviour
interventions to support
rehomed pets (1,387 in 2024)

*included in total figure

Elin, Miska and Runa

Striking Icelandic horses, Elin, Miska and Runa showed incredible resilience throughout a harrowing ordeal. They were rescued from unfit conditions in Devon before coming to our Burford centre. Though semi-feral, they slowly but surely learned to trust us. Through it all their beautiful bond shone – they found strength and comfort in each other.



Growing our Pet Loss Support service

For more than 30 years we've been helping people cope with the grief of losing a pet.

Following a phenomenal year in 2024, when the service exceeded our 2026 strategic goal of responding to 30,000 requests for support, our figures dropped marginally in 2025 to 29,338 (30,689 in 2024). We believe this was due to a reduced spend on advertising and some concerns about the increasing use of chat bots on webchat elsewhere. We don't and never have used bots – all responses are live from our team, and we now make this clear.

29,338

requests for support
(30,689 in 2024)

15,466

telephone calls and emails
answered (15,390 in 2024)

4,124

webchat conversations
(5,709 in 2024)

9,748

new Facebook group
members (9,590 in 2024)

Building a support community

We now have 488 volunteers active in our pet loss support team. We're also working with more charities and other organisations, including Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA), Assistance Dogs, Northern and Southern Ireland Guide Dogs, and Dogs Trust. We offer training and support to their team members. Collaboration with other charities is a continued focus for 2026.

Pet loss and mental health

During 2025 we worked with Mind to hold an 'online day' focused on pet loss and mental health. And we attended the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons' Mind Matters Symposium to discuss wellbeing and mental health within the sector.



Responsible dog ownership

Responsible dog ownership is key to the prevention of many welfare issues and dangerous incidents involving dogs. So developing a shared approach to tackle the issue is a core goal for us.

Throughout 2025, we continued to grow our Responsible Dog Ownership Course (RDOC) in partnership with 44 police forces and local authorities across England and Wales. The number of attendees has grown from 32 in 2022 to 1,043 in 2025.

Our RDOC received the Welsh Government Rural Project of the Year award in 2025 for its achievements in tackling issues with livestock worrying across Wales.

Protecting your postie

With over 2,000 dog incidents a year affecting postal workers, a key focus in 2025 was our partnership with Royal Mail, promoting safety around dogs. Four 'Protecting your Postie' online webinars reached 355 people in 2025. We also produced a training video shared with over 90,000 postal workers, which includes advice on staying safe around dogs. We're now working on a second video with further advice to help reduce dog incidents.

42

Responsible Dog Ownership Courses (RDOC) – (30 in 2024)

1,043

people attended a course (562 in 2024)



Pet food banks

Pets at Home (PAH) and their charity the Pets Foundation generously continued supporting our pet food bank service throughout 2025, with collection bins for pet food donations in stores nationwide.

To promote the service, PAH and the Pets Foundation ran another very successful national event in the summer. Funds raised from this three-week event were split between Blue Cross (£133,970) and food banks associated with each PAH store across the UK. We're delighted to report we'll be working in partnership on this event again in 2026.

To support struggling pet owners, we continued to distribute pet food to a network of local food banks across the UK. We also operate our own Blue Cross pet food banks at our sites in Bromsgrove, Newport, Devon, Manchester, Sheffield, and Bicester.

At the end of the year we had:

2025

Blue Cross sites where people can donate goods

9

Blue Cross sites where people can pick up food

6

Pets at Home stores where people can donate goods

460

Local food banks being supplied with pet food

459

“

I love rescue animals. I've got a rescue dog. That dog means the world to me. And if I am on the breadline, I can honestly say if I can't get it from a place like this, I would honestly feed my dog before myself.

Food bank client

”

“

She's the reason why I get up in the morning. She's number one. So I used to go without food to make sure that she is fed.

Food bank client

”



Education

During 2025 we continued to educate children, young people and adults, as we work to create a nation of knowledgeable, responsible and caring pet owners.

We significantly expanded our work on responsible dog ownership in 2025 – with huge potential to change peoples' behaviour around pets and ultimately improve pet welfare. Our schools talks programme was scaled back due to resourcing and in recognition that online learning is becoming a more sustainable way to reach schools and a wider range of audiences. This impacted on the number of people reached through our workshops.

123,088

people reached through our education services
(140,109 in 2024)

7,861

people reached through education partnerships
(5,597 in 2024)

Online live super sessions

In 2025 we put on four online super sessions – the topics were careers in animal welfare, living things, animals in WW1 and pets at Christmas. These sessions reached nearly 45,000 young people.

Pet Education Partnership (PEP)

Blue Cross is proud to be part of the Pet Education Partnership, a collaboration of eight UK animal welfare charities. We work together to make animal welfare education available and accessible to every child aged between five and 11 in the UK. Our shared vision is to ensure every animal is respected, understood and cared for, and enjoys their best possible life.

In 2025, the partnership held two online events, reaching over 9,000 children aged five to 11. We estimate that over the course of the year around 1.5 million children had the opportunity to interact with the PEP website resources.



Campaigning for pets

We're passionate about creating a better world for pets and the people who love them, and in 2025, we continued our tireless work speaking up for pets and championing their welfare and wellbeing.

Scottish Parliament engagement

We hosted two events in 2025 which engaged 65 members (over 50 per cent) of the Scottish parliament (MSPs) in total, marking our highest ever level of engagement.

In January we hosted a drop-in event on responsible dog ownership and briefed MSPs on issues emerging in their constituencies. We provided personalised, bespoke information packs for each MSP, including tailored data relevant to their local authority.

In September, at a three-day exhibition, MSPs could visit and discuss their pet welfare priorities for the next parliament.

Greyhounds

In partnership with the Cut the Chase Coalition in Wales, we secured a government commitment to ban greyhound racing. A huge step forward for greyhound welfare in Wales.

We also worked with Mark Ruskell MSP on his members' bill to ban greyhound racing in Scotland. The bill has the support of the Scottish government, so we hope to see it passed before the end of this parliamentary term.

We also continued our own 'Don't Race Embrace' campaign. We encouraged supporters to write to their local MPs calling for an end to greyhound racing. Over 17,000 letters were sent.

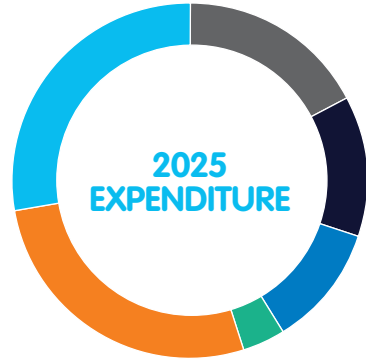


Funding our work

It's only thanks to the generosity of our supporters that we can help so many pets and the people who love them.



- Donations/gifts (including events, raffle, lottery & sponsorship) - 22%
- Legacies - 56%
- Charitable activities - 8%
- Trading - 12%
- Investment - 2%



- Veterinary - 28%
- Rehoming - 27%
- Advice and support - 4%
- Raising awareness - 11%
- Raising funds - 13%
- Trading activities - 17%

We are here to help pets and people thrive together, but the cost of providing that support grows every year. We receive no government funding and rely solely on the generosity of our supporters and partners.

In 2025 we have made an incredible impact for pets and people. Today owners face rising pressures that make caring for a pet harder than ever and we are seeing a hidden pet welfare crisis emerging. Your continuing support is more vital than ever. Thank you.

For every £1 invested in fundraising we received

£7.44*

in vital funds to change lives for pets and their people (£7.77 in 2024)

*This figure was correct at the time of going to print but please see our annual report for our full financial statement.

Lasting legacies

Over half of our work is only possible thanks to the incredible generosity of people who leave Blue Cross a gift in their Wills. Blue Cross is deeply thankful to those who show their love of pets in this very special way.

A cat lover's compassionate gift

When lifelong animal lover Sue sadly passed away in July, aged 70, she donated more than £6,500 from her estate to Blue Cross. She held a deep belief that no cat should ever be unloved or abandoned. And with this beautiful act of kindness she was able to continue supporting us in this shared goal.

We're so grateful for this generous, compassionate gift. The funds will help us run our Pet Peace of Mind service, which cares for pets whose owners can no longer care for them due to illness

or death. It was a cause especially close to Sue's heart after she moved into supported care, leaving her beloved cat Millie in need of a new home.

Thankfully, a friend was able to take Millie in, which gave Sue great comfort. However, she knew that not everyone has this option and she couldn't bear the idea of other pets like Millie facing an uncertain future.

The kind gift that Sue left to Blue Cross ensures her love for cats will have a lasting impact far into the future.

We're so grateful that she chose our charity to honour her legacy.

Powerful partnerships

We're deeply grateful to all our corporate and trust partners, whose generosity helps make so much of our work possible.

By funding strategic projects and essential services, these partnerships enable Blue Cross to make a truly transformational difference for the animals we support, changing the future for pets and the people who love them across the UK. Here are two examples of the great impact these partnerships can have:

The John William Hay Charitable Trust

The trust has generously supported our work in Scotland to ensure people are able to access affordable treatment for their pets in times of crisis through our Veterinary Care Fund, supporting over 200 people in 2025.

Animal Friends Insurance (AFI)

Thank you to AFI, whose financial support towards our Pet Loss Support service last year made such a difference to so many people dealing with grief.



Community and challenge events

Every year, supporters across the UK do amazing things of all kinds – from the wonderful to the sometimes weird – to raise funds for our vital work.

We're so grateful to everyone who invests the time and energy into participating in a challenge or event on behalf of Blue Cross, or plans and puts on their own. These events don't just raise funds – they also raise awareness of the plight of vulnerable pets in the UK and the ways that we can help. They're often also incredibly inspiring!

Susan – wingwalker of wonder

In August, Susan Murphy took to the skies to celebrate her recent 80th birthday in unique style!

A huge lover of cats, who's had rescues her whole life, Susan was keen to get involved when she heard Blue Cross was looking for people to take on fundraising challenges. And when she

saw that one of the options was a wingwalk, she was thrilled.

Susan had wanted to experience the magic of standing on the wings of a plane since she was a child, and now here was an opportunity to do it while also helping a cause she's passionate about.

And shortly after her 80th birthday, her aeronautical dreams came true.

Susan set out to raise £1000 for Blue Cross but soon exceeded her target. At last count her amazing feat of derring do had raised £1,560 – a truly life changing amount for a pet in need.

We're all in awe, and we're sure Susan's rescue cats, Charlie and Lucy are incredibly proud!



Over £300k was raised in 2025 by our community and events fundraisers.

Volunteering

Our teams are the lifeblood of Blue Cross, and we owe so much to the generosity of those who give their time and energy to our mission voluntarily.

Every volunteer is an individual, many with their own deeply personal relationship to our work. Here we are sharing the story of the incredible bond between volunteer Moyra and her beloved horse Megan.

Moyra and Megan

For six and a half years, beautiful piebald cob Megan was Moyra's joy. But in 2015, an accident in the field, injuring Megan's foreleg, changed everything.

Thankfully, with time and care, Megan improved. But in 2018, she showed new lameness in her other foreleg. Moyra knew this time would be different and her heart sank. Soon Moyra had to make the hardest decision of her life, and Megan was compassionately put to sleep.

The grief was profound. As a Blue Cross Pet Loss Support volunteer for many years, Moyra had helped others through heartbreak, but nothing could have prepared her for her own.

Megan's ashes now rest beside those of Nevada – on whom Moyra first learned to ride. And despite her own pain, she still volunteers with Blue Cross to support others who are grieving.

“

Grief is not linear. It doesn't have a finish line. But in sharing Megan's story, I hope others feel seen, supported, and reminded that they're not alone.

Moyra

”



“

Grief following the loss of a horse can be especially complex... The emotional bond is immense, and yet, equine grief is often misunderstood or overlooked.

Annalisa De Carteret, Pet Loss Support Service Manager at Blue Cross

”

Annalisa's words resonated deeply with Moyra. Megan's loss was not just emotional – it changed her life. But over time she found healing.

On average

3,258

volunteers work with us every month (2,797 in 2024)

Volunteers gave

239,288

hours of their time (218,513 in 2024)

For information about volunteering for blue cross visit bluecross.org.uk/volunteer

Our plans for the future

We have made significant progress towards the goals set out in Our Focus 2024 – 2026. To maintain this momentum, we must continue working to remain financially sustainable and increase our impact for pets and the people who love them long into the future.

We've now started developing our strategy for beyond 2026, which we will finalise and launch in early 2027. With the world continuing to change rapidly we are already exploring some of the areas that we feel will be key to our next strategic cycle.

Expand our services digitally

It's vital we have a strong online presence and effectively use technology to deliver our services. We'll focus on making sure we have the right processes and tools in place to expand our reach and deliver the best possible service to those who need our help and those who support us.

Deliver for pets and people in times of need

Rising costs, conflicting online advice, and everyday pressures are making life increasingly difficult for many people – and for charities too. We believe these challenges will continue throughout the next strategic period. We'll do everything we can to ensure pets and people can get the help they need, whether directly from Blue Cross or through one of our trusted partners.

Build a better society for pets

We have a long history of championing the welfare of pets and horses to drive systemic change and tackle the root causes of the challenges we see. Pets are an integral and deeply valued part of our communities, and we want to

help shape a society where pets and people can truly thrive together.

Remain financially sustainable

We have a responsibility to make sure our funds are spent well and will examine how all our teams operate to see how we work more efficiently to save time and money. As well as managing our costs and operations, we'll also work hard to drive income – an increasingly challenging task in the current climate.



Curly Wurly

Curly Wurly is a little guinea pig with a big personality (and a hairdo to match!) Sadly it took this lovely lad a while to find his forever home.

He originally came to Blue Cross alongside 14 other guinea pigs as part of a bad welfare case from another charity.

We wanted him to find a smaller herd where he could thrive and receive the attention he deserved.

Our team focused the search on a home with a single female guinea pig or pair. And two months later, they found just that.

Curly Wurly now lives with two lady friends who had recently lost a member of their little herd. He's been welcomed with open arms.



Thank you

Whether you donate, volunteer, take part in fundraising events, raise money in the workplace or have pledged a gift in your Will – you make a powerful difference.

Together we change the lives of thousands of pets and people.

If you would like further information about our work, please call our supporter care team on:

0300 790 9903

info@bluecross.org.uk

or visit: [bluecross.org.uk](https://www.bluecross.org.uk)

