

CATS Report

Cats and Their Stats
Wales 2023



CATS
PROTECTION

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Methodology

For the fourth year, we have commissioned an external and independent agency, Basis Research, to conduct the research contained in the CATS Report Wales 2023.

An online survey was used to collect information among a nationally representative audience of adults over the age of 18 in Wales and across the UK, allowing us to estimate the proportion of cat owners. We also conducted a more detailed survey among cat owners. This was carried out between 27 February 2023 and 13 April 2023. 'In the last 12 months' within the report refers to the time period March 2022 to March 2023 and unless otherwise stated, comparative data in this survey uses data from the CATS Report Wales 2022.

The research consisted of a UK nationally representative sample of 3,500 individuals and a boost of 6,829 cat owners, including regional boosts to ensure accurate representation in these areas. Overall, 10,392 people participated in the study, including 827 cat owners in Wales.

Data presentation

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

- nationally representative online survey panel to determine the percentage of UK households who own a cat (n=3,500)
- data from the survey of cat owners on the number of cats owned by each household
- data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on the number of households

Percentages throughout the report are rounded to the nearest whole number. Other figures, such as the estimated numbers of cats in the population, are rounded to two significant figures. When calculating cat estimates, we have taken the total estimated cat population figure and multiplied it by the whole percentage, for example 10% of all cats are not registered with a vet, equating to 1.1 million cats. Statistics and population calculations are estimates based on owner-reported responses to the online survey. Significance testing is undertaken on the data at 99% and 95% confidence intervals. When a finding is referenced as significant within the report it has found to be significant at a 95% confidence interval. Due to rounding, there will be instances in the report where percentage calculations do not total 100%.

Cat acquisition: Throughout this report we look at recency of cat acquisition, typically looking at all those cats acquired in the last 12 months compared to another time period, for example over a year ago. The data is sourced from the question 'When did you acquire your cat?' in the CATS 2023 Research Survey.

Nationally representative sample: The population of interest is the entire population of the UK.

The nationally representative sample reflected its structure including gender, age, socio-economic groupings and regions.

More information available upon request.





Cats Protection is delighted to present the CATS Report Wales 2023 – the most comprehensive survey of cat owners in Wales.

Understanding cat ownership is vital to understanding the lives of cats in Wales. The COVID-19 pandemic may be another year behind us, but the cost-of-living crisis continues, with many owners experiencing financial difficulties. The CATS Report Wales 2023 aims to inform and support those playing a key role in ensuring and promoting a good life for cats.

Cats remain an ever-popular pet and there is strong evidence of the great benefits of cat ownership, with an increased number citing companionship and reducing loneliness and stress as the reason they choose to own a cat. 29% of households own the 620,000 pet cats within Wales, and almost all of these consider their cat as part of their family.

The cost-of-living crisis is affecting cat ownership in different ways. This year, more owners couldn't afford to neuter their cat and we also saw more unplanned litters – a trend we're concerned will continue. Cats Protection has widened its neutering support, by offering a new, nationwide subsidised neutering programme.

We are also starting to see the cost-of-living crisis impact owners' ability to access veterinary care. This is the first year that owners report cost as the biggest hurdle to seeing a vet. Challenges with veterinary capacity, which in previous years were a considerable barrier to vet care access, are showing some signs of improvement.

However, problems with veterinary capacity are still present, particularly in urban areas. Cats Protection is working with the veterinary profession to examine how it can support vets and owners in the face of these challenges.

It is encouraging to see a slight increase in the rates of cats being microchipped in Wales, it may be that the increased attention on microchipping following the announcement that it will be made compulsory for cats in England is having a positive knock-on effect. However, it's still concerning that potentially as many as 180,000 pet cats in Wales are not microchipped; which is why Cats Protection is continuing to call on the Welsh Government to introduce compulsory microchipping of pet cats in Wales as soon as possible.

We are also continuing to see changes in how people obtain cats and the types of cats they are acquiring. The continued shift towards a preference to purchase cats presents challenges for animal welfare charities, as fewer cats are being adopted. It may also be fuelling issues such as kitten smuggling and poor breeding practices that have a detrimental impact on cat welfare. Cats Protection is calling for the government to introduce greater protections in these areas.

Cats Protection is here to help people see the world through cats' eyes. We hope to help achieve this by deepening our understanding of cats and the people caring for them, and in turn improve the lives of all cats.

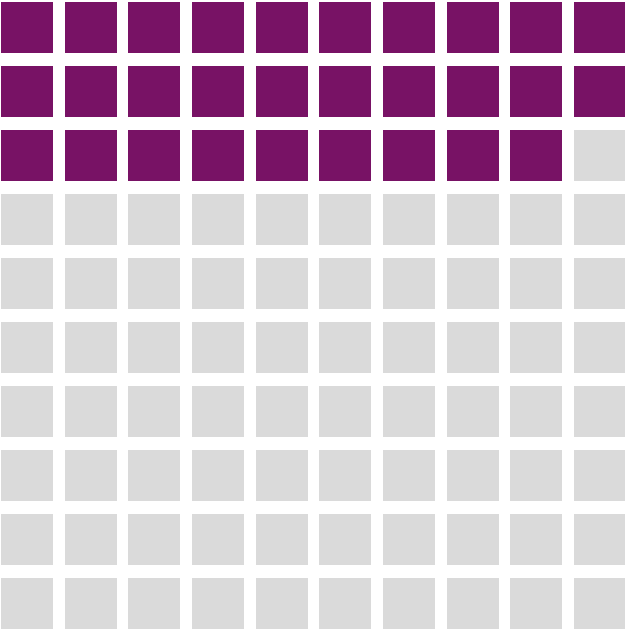
**Kit Sturgess VetMB, PhD, DSAM, FRCVS
Chair of Trustees, Cats Protection**



State of the nation

Cat population¹

29% of households in Wales own a cat



(28% in 2022)

There are now around

620,000 owned cats

in Wales (560,000 in 2022)

The **average number of cats per household has increased in Wales to 1.7 cats (1.5 in 2022)** – the highest of all the devolved nations and the UK as a whole. 60% of Welsh cat-owning households have one cat, and 40% own two or more cats, making multi-cat households more common in Wales compared to the UK as a whole (UK: 33%).

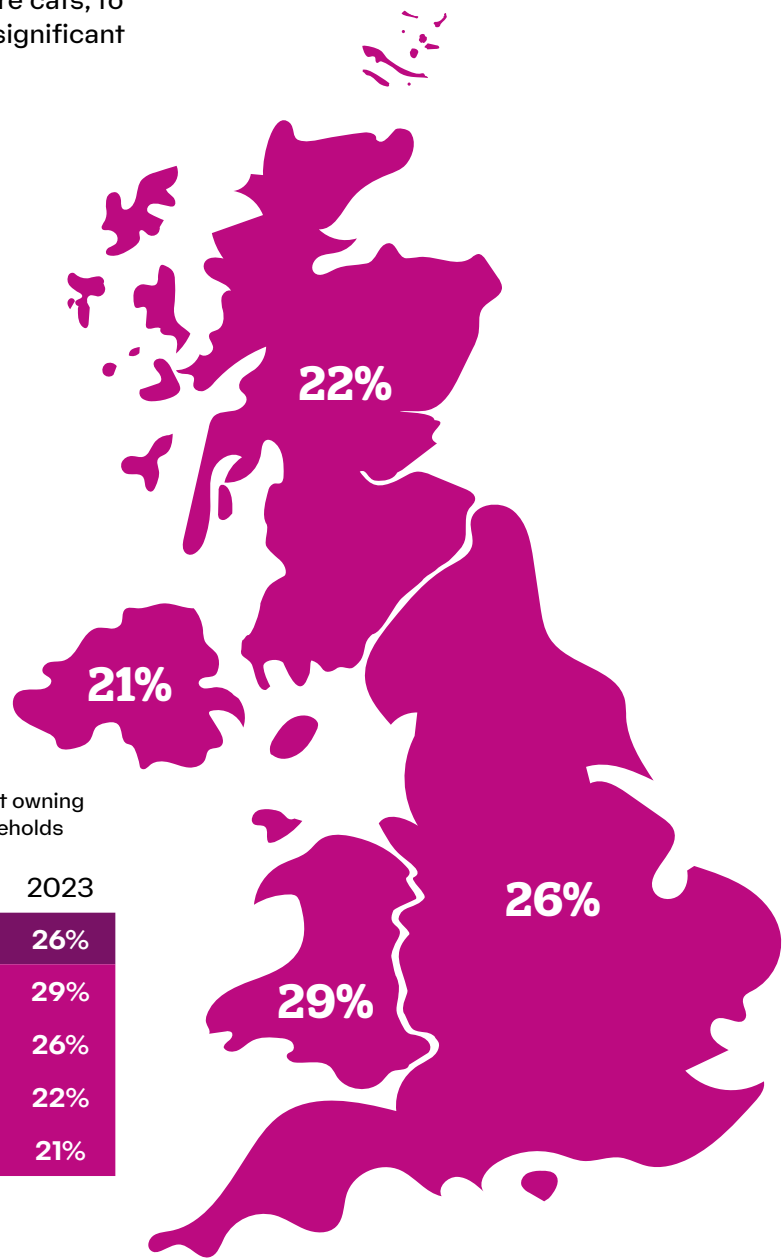
¹ Questions asked: Do you currently have a cat/s (that live with you)?/
How many cats do you have in your household?

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

*Source: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/families/datasets/familiesandhouseholds

Proportion of cat owners by UK country¹

Cat ownership levels vary across the UK, ranging from 21% of households in Northern Ireland owning one or more cats, to 29% of households in Wales, with no statistically significant changes from last year's figures.

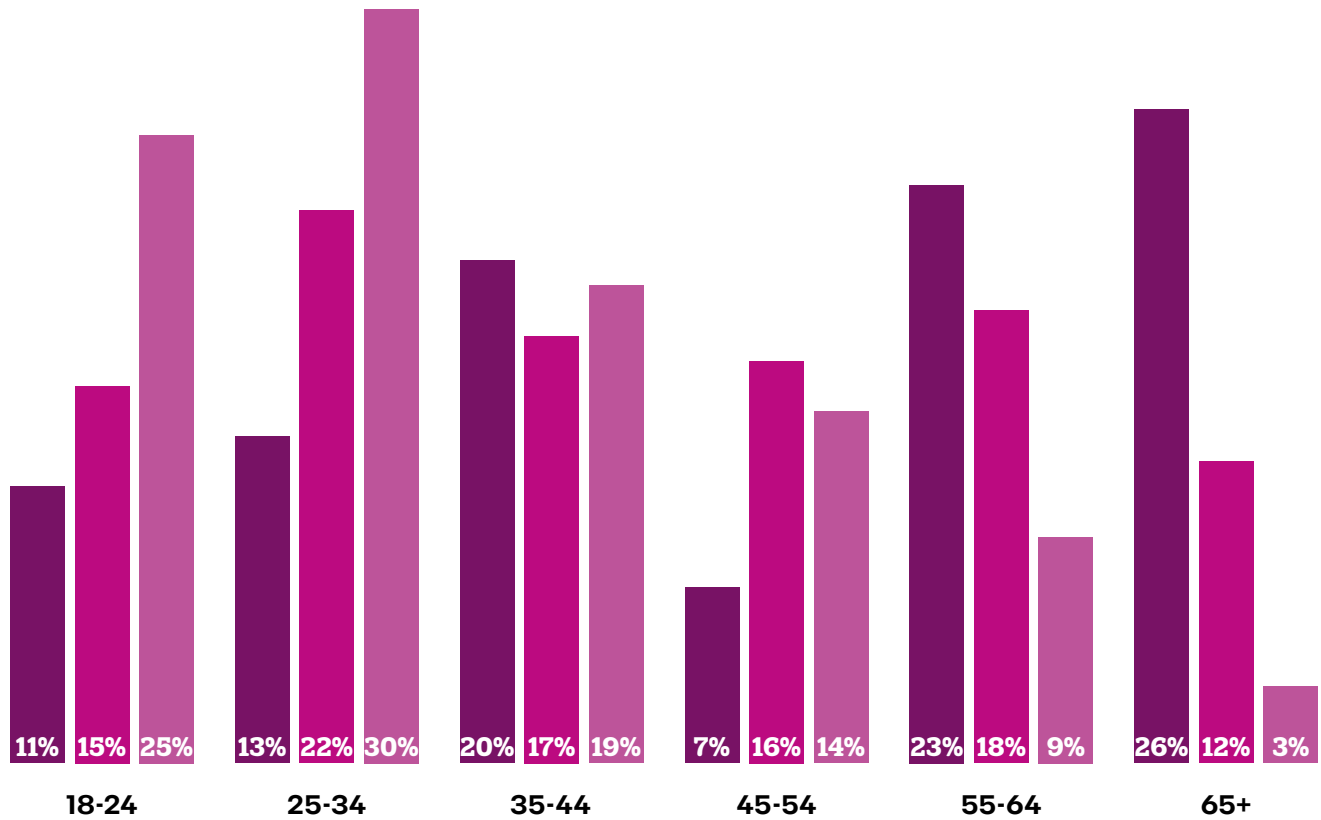


Owned cat population

	In millions		% of cat owning households	
	2022	2023	2022	2023
Total UK	11	11	26%	26%
Wales	0.6	0.6	28%	29%
England	9.2	9.2	26%	26%
Scotland	0.9	0.8	24%	22%
Northern Ireland	0.3	0.2	26%	21%

Profile of cat owners²

The age of Welsh cat owners compared to Welsh households

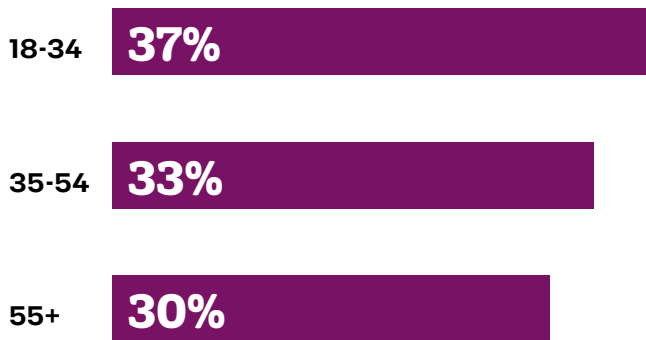


- Welsh adults
- All Welsh cat owners
- Welsh cat owners who acquired a cat in the last 12 months

Welsh cat owners are less likely to be over the age of 65 when compared to the general population and those acquiring a cat in the last 12 months tend to be younger than the overall profile of cat owners.

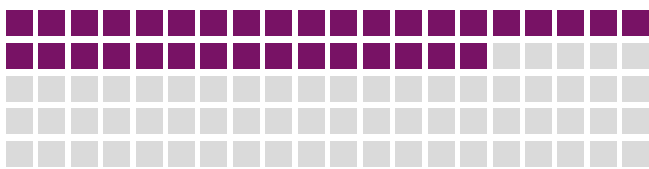
² Questions asked: Do you currently have a cat/s (that live with you)?/How many cats do you have in your household?/When did you acquire (e.g. buy/adopt) your cat?

Welsh cat owners by age



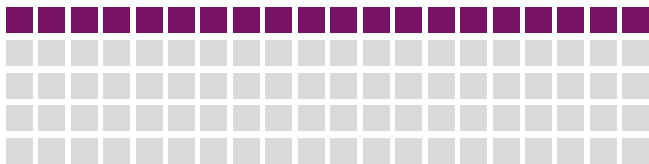
Gender and cat owners

35% of females in Wales own a cat



(33% in 2022)

20% of males in Wales own a cat



(25% in 2022)

Residence status and cat owners³

32%

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

18%

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

24%

of those who **rent a home** in Wales own a cat

41%

of those who **own a home** in Wales own a cat

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

The cat market

How cats were acquired (all cats in current Welsh cat population)⁴

Bought: 25%

(23% in 2022, 21% in 2021)

Adopted from a rescue/rehoming centre/animal shelter in UK: 21%

(26% in 2022 and 2021)

Taken on from a neighbour/friend/family: 21%

(20% in 2022, 19% in 2021)

Found as stray and taken in: 10%

(8% in 2022, 10% in 2021)

Kitten of an already owned cat: 6%

(6% in 2022, 7% in 2021)

Other source: 17%

12% of the current Welsh cat population were acquired during the last 12 months, equating to nearly 74,000 cats (73,000 in 2022).

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

160,000 were bought*

130,000 were adopted from UK rescue/rehoming centres/animal shelters

190,000 were taken on or taken in**

Wales has seen a 5% reduction in the proportion of adopted cats between 2022 and this year. A third (33%) of the cats obtained in the last 12 months in Wales were bought and just 14% were adopted from a UK rescue or shelter.

⁴ Questions asked: Where did you get/adopt your cat from?/When did you acquire (e.g. buy/adopt) your cat? Excludes those who say they bought their cat but did not pay anything.

The remaining 17% of cats were acquired in one of the following ways: given as a gift, my cat adopted me (e.g. started coming in for food and stayed), from an individual I did not know offering them for free, other.

*Bought from a specialist breeder in the UK, bought from someone I know but not a specialist breeder, bought from a neighbour/friend/family, bought from a pet shop, bought from a specialist breeder overseas.

** Taken on from a neighbour/friend/family or found as a stray and taken in.

What type of cats do people have?⁵

Percentage of cat breed types obtained over time

■ Total pet cat population in ■ Wales Cats obtained in the last 12 months

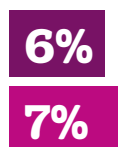
Moggy/domestic shorthair or longhair



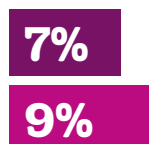
Pedigree/purebred



Cross-breed (non-moggy)



Don't know



Pedigree vs purebred

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

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

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

Moggy: A breed of cat that is produced through nonselective breeding and is neither a purebred, nor a cross-breed.

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

⁵ Questions asked: What breed is your cat?/
When did you acquire (e.g. buy/adopt) your cat?

Veterinary care

Veterinary capacity⁶

There does seem to have been some easing of veterinary capacity problems since last year, with Wales seeing a bigger improvement here than the UK as a whole (UK: 30%, 37% in 2022). Many Welsh cat owners still say that they have had trouble accessing a vet in the last 12 months, however.

27% of Welsh owners state that they have experienced difficulty accessing a vet (42% in 2022)

Of those owners who struggled to access a vet, these are the top reasons

Vet too busy

36%

Reduced service delaying booking of surgery

26%

Vet has reduced opening hours

23%



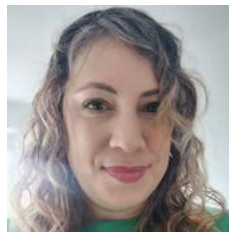
⁶ Questions asked: Still thinking about the vet, have you experienced any of the following over the last 12 months in relation to your cat?/Which of the following best describes how often you tend to go to the vet?

Waiting longer for veterinary services such as neutering and vaccinations can increase the risk to the health and wellbeing of cats, reiterating the importance of early booking for non-urgent or routine treatments.

Recent insight work from Cats Protection probed deeper into current veterinary capacity concerns, finding that one of the top reasons that vets are struggling to meet demands is staff shortages. 40% of respondents to the survey of veterinary professionals said that they have, or had, vacant posts remain unfilled for over six months⁷.

“In Cats Protection’s recent Veterinary Capacity Survey, over half of vets surveyed reported either a current or anticipated reduction in capacity, with both difficulties in recruitment and increases in pets registering over 2022 cited as contributing factors. Vets surveyed reported that this was impacting waiting lists for routine and elective surgery, difficulty fitting in emergency and urgent cases and challenges registering new clients.

“Access to veterinary care is fundamental to the work of charities like Cats Protection, and the veterinary workforce are instrumental in ensuring cat welfare. Cats Protection is currently looking at ways to support the veterinary profession during this challenging time.”



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

Vet registration⁸

**9% of cats in
Wales are not
registered
with a vet**

Higher for:

Outdoor-only cats – 44%

Uninsured cats – 15%

The proportion of cats in Wales who are registered with a vet has increased slightly from 87% in 2022 to 91%.

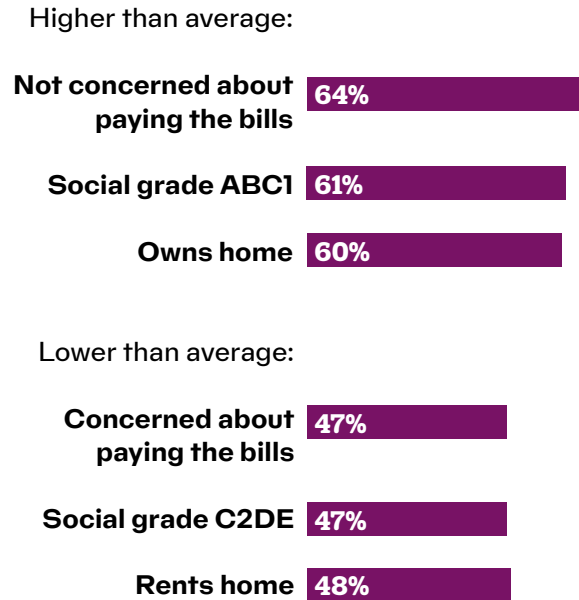
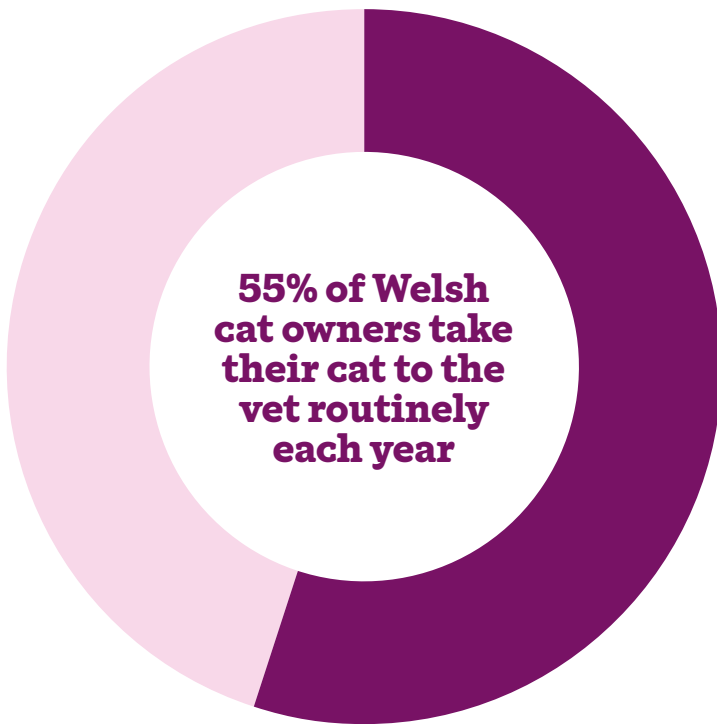
It is perhaps worrying that such a high proportion of outdoor cats are not registered with a vet in Wales – much higher than the UK as a whole (27%) – as their lifestyle places them at greater risk of trauma or injury which may require emergency treatment.

⁷ Cats Protection’s Vet Capacity Survey Fieldwork: Nov 2022 to Jan 2023.

Sample: 236 UK vet professionals including veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses asking about their experiences in the prior 12 months.

⁸ Question asked: Is your cat registered with a vet?

Vet visits⁹



A higher proportion of cats in Wales do not routinely visit the vet each year, compared to the UK as a whole (45% vs 39%). This means that 280,000 cats in Wales are not getting access to routine health checks. This is potentially due to cost being a barrier.

Regular, routine visits not only ensure that cats receive preventative healthcare, but also provide opportunities for health problem to be detected before they are obvious to the owner. This facilitates earlier intervention, improving cat welfare and overall outcomes. Early intervention often represents a cost saving in the long run too, by helping to avoid the more extensive treatment required when some conditions are allowed to progress in severity.

For some Welsh cat owners though, irregular vet visits aren't necessarily by choice – 55% say that they do not visit the vet as often as they would like to. This is down from 61% in 2022, but still represents a lot of Welsh cat owners¹⁰. The stress of vet visits (for the cat and their owner) remains a common barrier, but for the first time, the cost of visiting the vet was the top reason that owners don't go as often as they would like¹⁰.

⁹ Question asked: Which of the following best describes how often you tend to go to the vet?

¹⁰ Question asked: Which of the following, if any, prevents you from taking your cat to the vet as often as you might like to?

Top reasons for not visiting the vet as much as owner would like¹⁰

The cost



(20% in 2022)

Too stressful for me/my cat*



(24% in 2022)

With the rise of cat-only and accredited 'Cat Friendly' clinics, the figures for feline stress keeping cats from visiting the vet will hopefully continue to fall.

*net of responses related to these themes

“While it is well known that stress is a major factor affecting clinic visits, making small changes such as appropriate appointment booking and separation of cats and dogs in the waiting room helps reduce stress for both cats and their caregivers. Education of caregivers on cat carrier training and travel also plays an important role and helps reduce stressors prior to arrival at the clinic.”

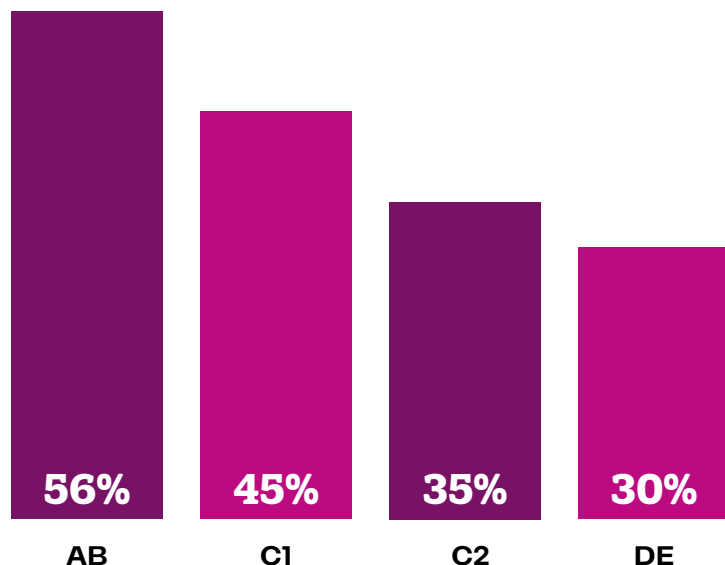
**Sarah Collins RVN, ISFM Nursing Manager,
International Cat Care**



Insurance¹¹

42% of Welsh cat owners have taken out insurance for their cat, compared to 38% last year. While this increase is good, Wales still lags behind the UK as a whole, where 48% of cat owners have insured their cat.

Owners who have taken out insurance for their cat, by socio-economic grade:



The likelihood of a cat being insured drops with the socio-economic grade of their owner, suggesting that affordability of insurance is a significant factor and likely excludes those that would benefit most from it, should a cat become unwell or get injured.

The likelihood of a cat being insured also decreases if their owner is older.

Welsh owners who have taken out insurance for their cat, by owner age:



¹¹ Question asked: Do you have pet insurance for your cat?

Vaccinations¹²

It is important to stress that the data below is owner reported; owners may not be aware of which vaccinations are needed and with what frequency, but nonetheless the data provides a useful insight into the perceptions of owners.

Vaccination status of Welsh cats, according to their owners



The proportion of Welsh owners saying that their cat's vaccinations are up to date, appropriate for their age has remained stable (69% in 2022). However, these figures mean that up to 190,000 cats in Wales may not be protected against diseases that are preventable by vaccination.

Vaccination rates for Welsh cats from multi-cat households are lower than the general cat population, despite being at potentially higher risk of infectious disease due to increased contact with other cats.

Younger cats are also less likely to have received any vaccinations at all (0-6 months: 27%, 7-11 months: 10%). Although some of the cats in the 0-6 month age bracket may be below the age for first vaccination, this still leaves a lot of younger cats in Wales potentially vulnerable to life limiting and costly- or difficult-to-treat diseases such as feline leukaemia virus (FeLV) and cat flu.

¹² Question asked: Is your cat up to date with their vaccinations (i.e. has had their booster vaccinations as relevant to their age)?

Parasite treatments¹³

Over two thirds of Welsh cat owners say that they are protecting their cats against fleas (68%) and worms (65%) throughout the year as often as is recommended by their vet or the product that they use. This is an increase on last year's Welsh figures (60% for fleas and 61% for worms) and higher than this year's UK figures (fleas: 64%, worms: 61%).

Flea treatment

Outdoor-only cats in Wales are nearly half as likely to be treated for fleas regularly compared to all cats (33%) and 13% of Welsh cat owners only apply flea treatment to their cat when fleas are present. There can be negative implications of this approach though. Signs of fleas are often the result of cats being irritated by bites and fleas can transmit diseases such as Bartonella and tapeworms. There is also usually a significant environmental burden of immature flea life stages once fleas are established within the home.

However, cats with certain lifestyles will be at a much lower risk of being exposed to fleas. Therefore, each cat should be evaluated on a risk-benefit basis as to the frequency of treatment, and vets should educate owners about the best treatment protocol.

Worming treatment

15% of Welsh owners only treat their cat for worms when they think that worms are present, which is concerning, as many cats show no outward signs of worms when infected yet will be shedding infective eggs into the environment via their faeces. Some species of worm eggs, such as *Toxocara cati*, can infect humans, with the risk of potentially serious disease for young children, the elderly and those who are immunocompromised.

Lifestyle and diet both influence a cat's risk of being infected with worms and treatment frequency based on these factors, rather than looking for signs of worms (unless performing worm egg counts), is advisable.

¹³ Questions asked: How often do you tend to protect your cat from fleas?/How often do you tend to give your cat a worming treatment?

Responsible parasite protection

There is increasing concern that some of the parasiticides commonly used for pets may be contaminating the environment. As parasiticides are harmful to a wide range of invertebrates, and with even small doses potentially impacting large numbers, this could be highly detrimental to wildlife and ecosystems and, in turn, public health.

Protecting our pets against the harmful effects of parasites is important though, so an 'individual risk' approach is recommended, guided by evidence-based expert bodies, such as the European Scientific Counsel for Companion Animal Parasites (ESCCAP).

www.esccapuk.org.uk/guidelines-uk/

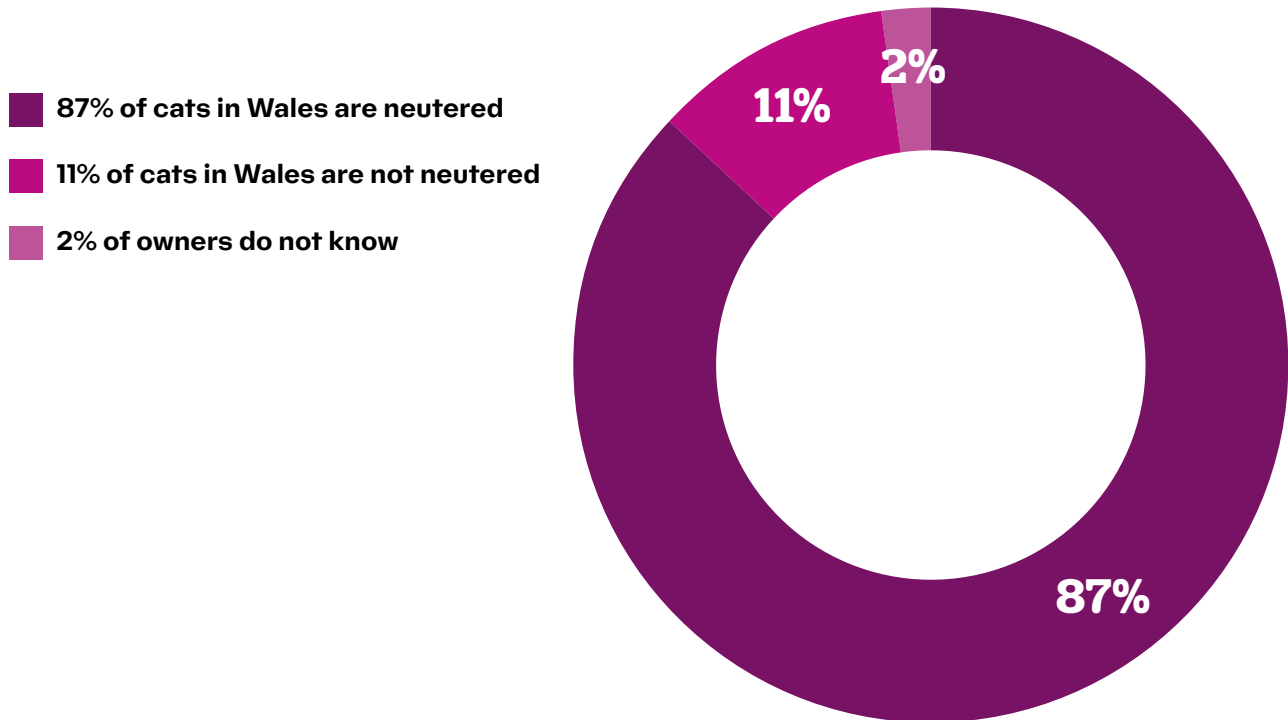


“Veterinary professionals should always take a risk-based approach to prescribing medicines, including parasiticides. They should avoid blanket treatment, and instead risk assess use of parasiticides for individual animals, taking into account animal, human and environmental health risks, in addition to lifestyle factors.”

**‘Responsible use of parasiticides for cats and dogs’ policy,
British Veterinary Association**

Neutering and breeding¹⁴

The proportion of neutered cats in Wales has increased from last year (80%) and exceeds the UK overall (85%).



The Welsh cats less likely to have been neutered

Younger cat owners aged 18-34 are less likely to have neutered their cat (83%), compared to 91% of 35-54 year olds and 96% of those aged over 55. Indoor cats are also less likely to be neutered (86%) than those who have outdoor access (92%). Those living in central urban areas are also less likely to have neutered their cat (84%), which may be linked to there being more indoor cats in these areas.

Top reasons Welsh cat owners choose not to neuter their cat¹⁵

I can't afford it

18% (13% in 2022)

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

16% (10% in 2022)

My cat doesn't go outside

15% (19% in 2022)

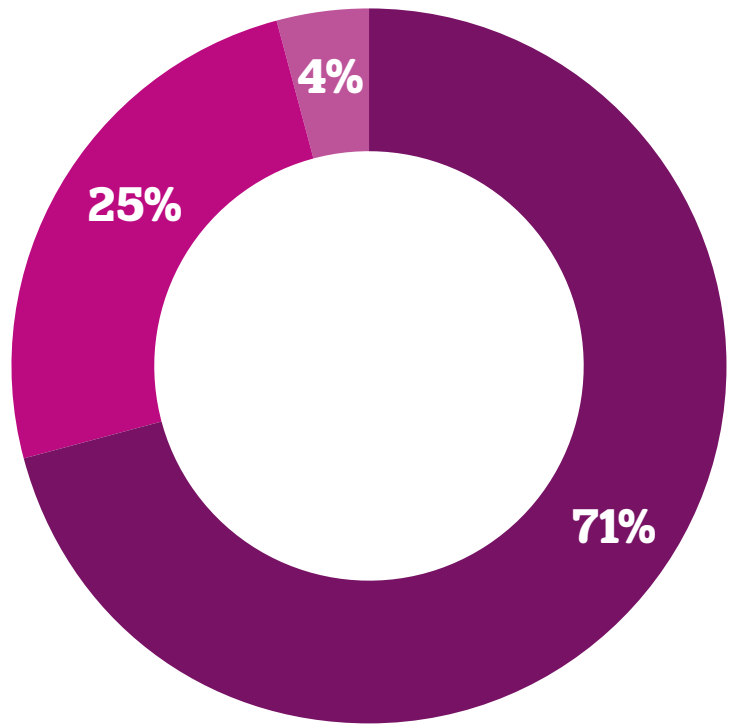
¹⁴ Question asked: Is your cat neutered/spayed?

¹⁵ Question asked: What are the reasons your cat is not neutered?
Filtered by owners of cats that are not neutered. Only responses over 10% shown.

Microchipping¹⁶

Microchipped cats in Wales

- 71% are microchipped
- 25% are not microchipped
- 4%, the owner does not know if their cat is microchipped or not



There has been a slight increase in the number of microchipped cats in Wales, from 66% in 2022. However, **this still means that up to around 180,000 cats are potentially without a microchip in Wales**, reducing their chances of reunification with their owners, should they get lost or stolen.

The cats less likely to be microchipped

Cats with younger owners are less likely to be microchipped, with just 58% of Welsh owners aged 18-24 owning microchipped cats. A higher proportion of cat owners in this age bracket were also uncertain if their cat was microchipped (11%), compared to other age groups. There is also a significant difference between the microchipping rates of cats acquired in Wales during the last year (57%) and those acquired over a year ago (74%).

“Compulsory microchipping is essential in ensuring the reunification of owned cats in the same way as it is essential in ensuring the safety of dogs. Microchipping can reunite lost cats with their owners and reduces the likelihood of a cat being rehomed unnecessarily. Cats Protection welcomes the Welsh Government’s commitment to consider introducing compulsory microchipping in the Animal Welfare Plan for Wales and hopes that legislation is introduced sooner rather than later for the benefit of Welsh cats and their owners.”



Madison Rogers, Head of Advocacy, Campaigns & Government Relations, Cats Protection

¹⁶ Question asked: Is your cat microchipped?

Top reasons Welsh cat owners choose not to microchip their cat¹⁷

I just hadn't thought about microchipping my cat

21%

My cat doesn't go outside

20%

My cat doesn't stray/go far

14%

The proportion of cat owners who simply hadn't thought about microchipping their cat is significantly higher among Welsh owners than the UK as a whole (14%). This suggests that there may be a particular opportunity in Wales for education about the importance and benefits of microchipping – particularly as Wales will likely follow new legislative changes in England that have made microchipping mandatory for cats.

Indoor cats are also arguably at greater risk of becoming lost, should they find themselves outside in unfamiliar surroundings, so it is concerning that 'my cat doesn't go outside' is one of the main reasons that Welsh owners choose not to microchip their cat. This figure is however lower than the UK as a whole (27%).

Microchips and keeping details up to date¹⁸

91% of cats in Wales with a microchip have up-to-date details

(88% in 2022)

No: 4%

Don't know: 5%

Of those who say their cat's microchip details are up to date:

86% say their **current address is up to date**

85% say their **phone contact is up to date**

75% say their **email address is up to date**

5% are **unsure which specific details are up to date**

More Welsh owners than last year say that their cat's microchip details are up to date, but this still leaves many cats who are microchipped with details that are out of date, potentially rendering their microchip useless, should they become separated from their family.

¹⁷ Question asked: Which of the below best describes the reasons why your cat is not microchipped?

¹⁸ Questions asked: Are your cat's registered microchip details up to date?/
Which of the following microchip details are up to date?

Health conditions and injury¹⁹

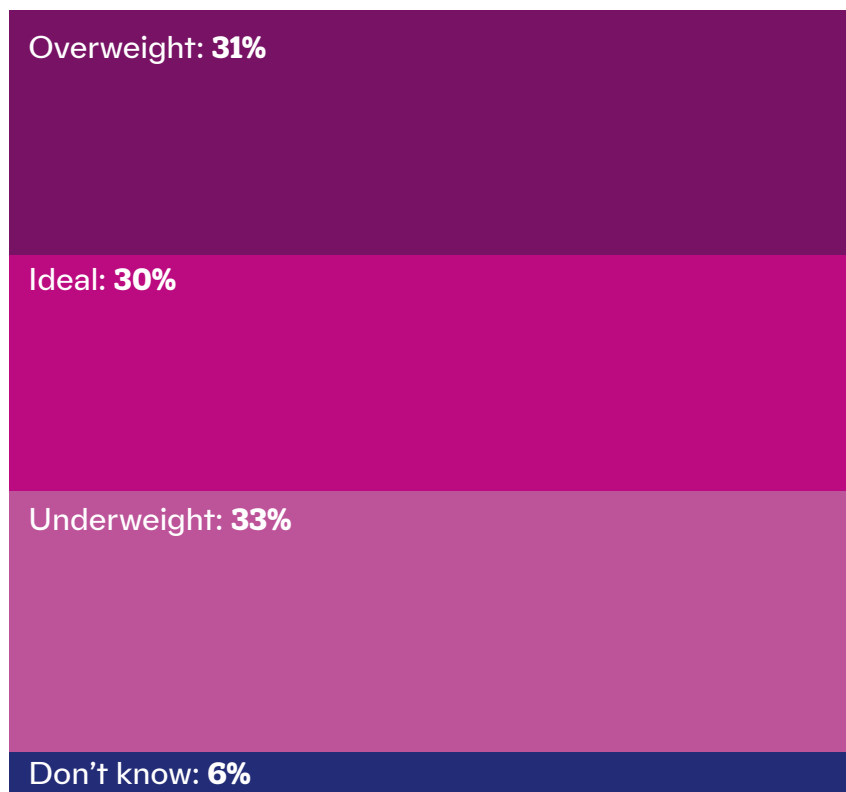
79% of cat owners state that their cat has no diagnosed health conditions, which is an increase on last year (71%), but in line with 2021 (79%).

Of those Welsh cats that do have a diagnosed condition, obesity and dental disease remain the most common (obesity: 3%, dental disease: 2%). However, the report data shows a much lower prevalence of these conditions than published scientific data, which suggests dental disease and obesity actually affects around 15% and 11% of cats respectively²⁰. This could be indicative of an education gap, where owners simply aren't recognising these conditions or their significance and once again highlights the importance of regular vet visits.

26% of Welsh owners said that their cat had been injured since they have owned them. The most common reason for injury is fights with other cats outside the household (10% of all cats)²¹.

Diet and body weight²²

Welsh owner perception of their cat's weight



Fewer Welsh owners are identifying their cat as underweight than last year (2022: 40%), with many of these percentage points shifting into the 'ideal body condition' category (2022: 25%).

When looking specifically at obesity, 3% of Welsh owners placed their cat in the highest body condition scores (8/9 and 9/9) brackets, which is less than the UK overall (4%) but matched the proportion of Welsh owners saying that their cat had been formally diagnosed as obese. It must be emphasised that this data is owner reported, however. Vet-reported figures for feline obesity are around 11.6%²⁰, but it is also noted that obesity may be under-reported in primary care vet practices²³.

¹⁹ Question asked: Does your cat have any of the following diagnosed health issues/conditions?

²⁰ O'Neill DG, Gunn-Moore D, Sorrell S, et al. Commonly diagnosed disorders in domestic cats in the UK and their associations with sex and age. *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery*. 2023;25(2). doi:10.1177/1098612X231155016.

²¹ Question asked: Since having your cat, has your cat ever been injured?

²² Question asked: Which of the following descriptions and images would you say best reflects your cat in relation to their size?

²³ O'Neill DG, Church DB, McGreevy PD, Thomson PC, Brodbelt DC. Prevalence of disorders recorded in cats attending primary-care veterinary practices in England. *Vet J*. 2014;202(2):286-291. doi:10.1016/j.tvjl.2014.08.004.

Can't afford the vet?

Worryingly, the cost-of-living crisis seems to be impacting feline health and welfare by decreasing access to vital veterinary care for cats. Understandably, this is being felt more by those who have been impacted most by cost-of-living challenges, such as lower income households.

9% of Welsh cats are not registered with a vet⁸

12% for those in socioeconomic grade C2DE

53%

of Welsh owners in socioeconomic grade C2DE **don't take their cat to the vet routinely each year** (45% for all Welsh cat owners)⁹

29%

of Welsh owners said **cost prevented them from visiting the vets as often as they would like** (up from 20% in 2022)¹⁰

Higher for:

socioeconomic grade C2DE – 35% (24% in 2022)

those who say that they are concerned about paying the bills – 49% (25% in 2022)

18% of Welsh owners said that the reason that their cat remains unneutered is because they simply can't afford to get it done¹⁵.

This makes cost the most common reason that cats remain unneutered in Wales – higher than 'my cat doesn't go outside', which is the most common reason in the UK as a whole this year and was the most common reason in Wales in 2022. This is a clear example of how household financial concerns are increasingly impacting the delivery of veterinary care to cats in Wales.

Overall, 29% of Welsh cat owners are concerned about how they would pay vet bills if their cat became sick or injured, rising to over half (51%) of those who say that they have been negatively

impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. This is more than the UK as a whole (25% and 50%, respectively)²⁴.

As more and more households are struggling to meet everyday costs, Cats Protection is looking at ways that it can support owners to access essential veterinary services. Cats Protection's subsidised neutering scheme will enable access to neutering and microchipping to cats where finance may be a barrier. Cats Protection also signposts to organisations who provide access to subsidised veterinary clinics for eligible owners. However, charity resources will be limited, and in the face of a cost-of-living crisis, it's likely that not all owners will be able to access a subsidised clinic.

²⁴ Question asked: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Insights from a recent survey of the veterinary profession suggests that decision making for vets and clients is becoming more dependent on financial limitations since the cost-of-living crisis began. Cats Protection is developing education resources for vets to support them with clinical decision making and discussions around finances with owners who are struggling, so that they can offer a broader range of treatment options.

Education for current and potential owners to help them understand the realistic costs of veterinary care is also important, as it allows owners to budget for costs accordingly and highlights the benefits of having pet insurance. It will also help reassure and encourage attendance for some owners who perhaps perceive veterinary treatments as being more expensive than they really are.





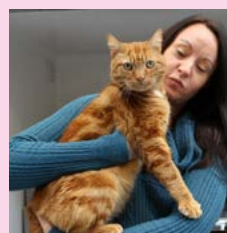
To help ensure continued access to important veterinary services for all households, Cats Protection is dedicated to delivering targeted help for cat owners on a low income to overcome some of the barriers to veterinary access for neutering and microchipping.

It is vital that support is well signposted to Welsh owners however, as 55% of those who say that they have been negatively impacted by the rising cost of living said that they are unaware of support available to them, and a further 16% say that they don't know where to go to find it²⁵.

This highlights the importance of well-coordinated communication teams for charitable and other support organisations.

“Cats Protection is proud to have launched a new subsidised neutering scheme for low-income households from April 2023. After surveying how best to make the scheme work for vets, we increased the value of the voucher (and will review this annually), have one, nationwide scheme, and include post operative pain relief, a buster collar and microchip where needed. In helping more cats be neutered (and chipped) we aim to reduce the number of unwanted litters, which are not only detrimental to feline welfare, but can place additional financial strain on those already most affected by the cost-of-living crisis. We thank all the practices who have already signed up for helping us work towards this.”

**Jane Clements RVN,
Head of Neutering, Cats Protection**



²⁵ Question asked: Are you aware of any support available to help with rising costs of looking after your cat/s?

Cat care, welfare and behaviour

Sources of cat care information

The number of Welsh cat owners claiming to have done research prior to getting their cat has dropped from 38% last year to 31% this year. The number of Welsh owners who claim to do a lot of research generally about how to best look after their cat has also dropped, from 35% to 29%²⁶.

Where are Welsh people seeking their cat advice from?²⁷

Contact my vet:

61% (52% in 2022)

Search the internet/Google:

53% (47% in 2022)

Talk to my friends and family:

37% (31% in 2022)

Search social media:

19% (16% in 2022)

Contact an animal charity:

16% (12% in 2022)

Contact a pet shop:

11% (10% in 2022)

Buy or borrow a book:

11% (15% in 2022)

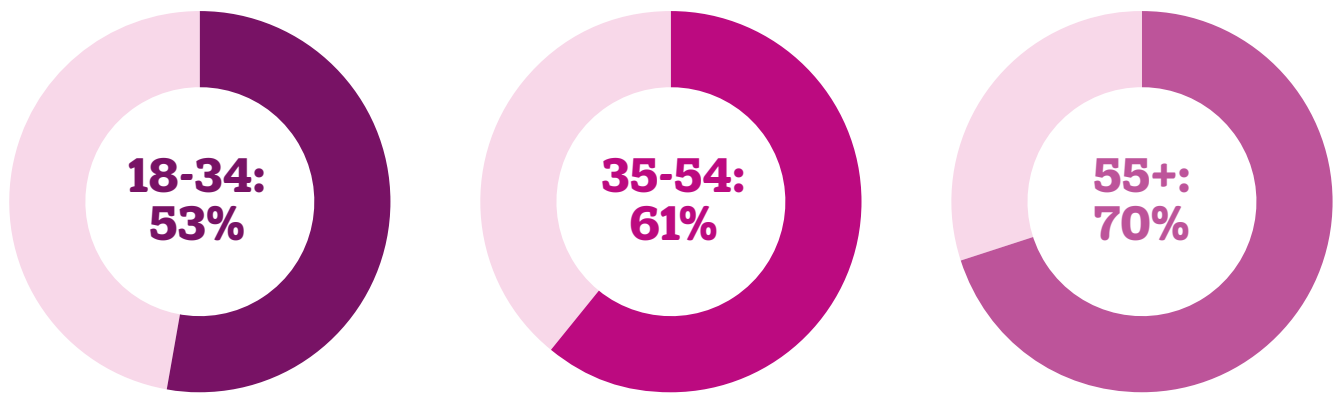
Welsh cat owners are increasingly turning to their vet for advice, which remains the most commonly chosen source of information²⁷. This seems to translate into owners that feel better informed, as 66% of Welsh cat owners that visit the vet regularly feel confident that they know what is best for their cat, compared to just 54% of Welsh owners that never visit the vet²⁸. This confidence is higher in Welsh owners than the UK overall however (UK: 63% for regular vet visitors and 44% for those who never go to the vet).

²⁶ Question asked: To what extent do you agree with the following statement (I did lots of research before getting my cats/I find it easy to find high quality and reliable information about cats)? Top two response boxes included (1 = strongly agree, 7 = strongly disagree).

²⁷ Question asked: Which of the following would you do if you were seeking information or advice about your cat/s?

²⁸ Question asked: I'm very confident I know what's best for my cat/s: To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements about having a cat/s?

Older Welsh cat owners are more likely to seek information about their cat from a vet²⁷



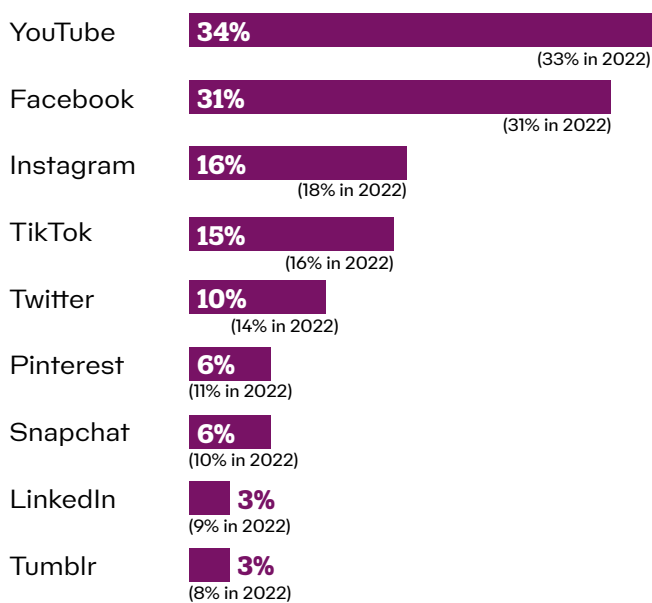
Welsh owners that acquired their cat in the last 12 months are less likely to turn to their vet as a source of information about their cat (48%) but are much more likely to turn to social media (29%), compared to other cat owners.



Internet searches and searches on social media for information on cats are as popular as ever, further highlighting the online space as an increasingly important source of information.

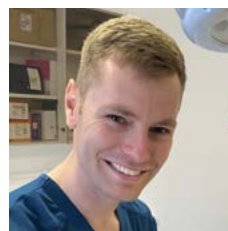
YouTube remains the most popular source of cat information for Welsh cat owners on social media, but the rival video-based platform, TikTok hasn't seen the same rise in popularity that has been seen across the UK as a whole as an information source about cats²⁹.

Social media platforms as sources of information about cats in Wales²⁹



“With more owners looking for information about their cats online, and especially among our younger owners, there is an important opportunity for vets to use these platforms to educate the public. Despite worrying trends towards cat content which focuses on extreme breeding and practices of poor welfare, vets can counteract this by challenging misinformation and providing factual, engaging, and valuable information which in turn empowers owners to do the best by their cat.”

**Dr Ben Simpson-Vernon MRCVS,
Veterinary surgeon and TikTok star
(Ben the Vet)**



²⁹ Question asked: Which of the following, if any, do you use/visit on a regular basis when looking for the following content related to cats? (Information/advice).

Cats Protection is increasingly concerned about the representation of cats online, as well as videos that people may think are ‘fun’ but are actually causing distress to cats. The charity is looking to work with companies which advertise online using cats to ensure they are not represented in a way that could be detrimental to their welfare and that extreme breeds are not used.



Top five cat-related activities that Welsh owners engage in several times a week or more³⁰

Talk about cats with my friends/family:

44%

Watch funny or cute videos of cats online:

33%

Look at funny or cute pictures of cats online:

33%

Look at cat-related social media profiles:

24%

Watch informational videos of cats online:

12%

Overall, Facebook and YouTube remain the most popular social media sources of ‘fun’ cat-related content (FB: 43%, YT: 39%), but for younger Welsh owners aged 18-24, TikTok is by far the most popular social platform (53%, all Welsh cat owners: 28%)³¹.

³⁰ Question asked: How often do you tend to do each of the following? Top two response boxes included (at least once a day, several times a week).

³¹ Question asked: Which of the following, if any, do you use/visit on a regular basis when looking for the following content related to cats? (Fun content).

A cat's environment

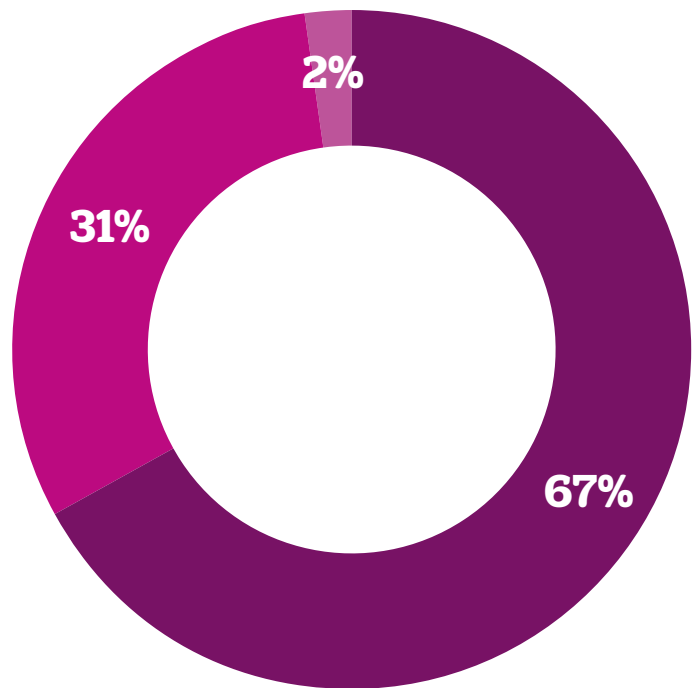
Indoor vs outdoor cats

Cat living arrangements³²

They go both indoors and outdoors: 67%
(59% in 2022)

They always stay indoors: 31%
(58% in 2022)

They always stay outdoors: 2%
(3% in 2022)



The proportion of cats in Wales that have access to an outdoor space has increased (69%, 62% in 2022) and is higher than the UK as a whole (63%). Wales has a lower proportion of indoor-only cats compared to the UK as a whole (37%).

Nearly half (48%) of Welsh cat owners control their cat's outdoor access in person – letting their cat in and out as needed. 12% use a cat flap with built in functionality that allows them (as the owner) to control their cat's access – either with a timer, or unidirectional opening. 20% have a basic cat flap, increasing the likelihood that their cat has autonomy over their outdoor access³³.

As well as controlled cat flaps, other measures that can help cats remain safer outside include making their outside space as enriching as possible and cat-proof fencing to discourage them straying too far (as well as unwanted visits from other cats) and training them to come when called. To facilitate rapid reunification should they get lost, microchipping is a must.

³² Question asked: Which of the following best applies to your cat?

³³ Question asked: In what ways does your cat have access to going outside/ coming inside?

“To thrive, cats need to feel they have sufficient autonomy and choice with their environment, as well as access to positive sources of stimulation. This includes the opportunity to explore, perform elements of their predatory sequence and access somewhere calm, away from the typical daily activities and disturbances going on within the home. Giving cats the option to venture outdoors into a safe and enriching area is a good way to provide them with these pleasurable experiences and sense of autonomy, and it’s encouraging to see that the majority of cats reported on in the survey have outdoor access. Although there are always important risks associated with cats going outdoors, it is also really reassuring to note the very low reported incidence of injury due to road traffic accidents and other outdoor hazards.”



Dr Lauren Finka PhD, Feline Welfare Scientist, Cats Protection



“Daily enrichment; such as the use of a puzzle feeder or appropriate play can have multifactorial benefits for all cats, but especially indoor-only cats and cats in multi-cat households. These activities simultaneously help stimulate the cat both physically and mentally, while also contributing to the release of ‘feel good’ hormones. Providing activities that best meet the ethology of our domestic cats ensures that one of their key welfare needs are met. This can form part of a wider solution needed to strive for harmony in a multi-cat household. Additionally, the value of vertical space should not be underestimated. Cats being able to get up high and avoid each other when moving about is an invaluable resource.”



Daniel Warren-Cummings, Behaviour Officer, Cats Protection

Cats at night³⁴

For those Welsh cats that do have outdoor access, 43% are able to come and go freely at night – more than the UK as a whole (39%) – but over half (51%) of Welsh cat owners keep their cat in overnight.

Cats Protection recommends that cats are kept in overnight, to reduce the risk of injury from road accidents, fights with other cats/ animals and predation of wildlife. This is because cats are most active at dusk and dawn, choosing this time to hunt, explore and venture into other cats' territories.

Preventing cats from harm

26% of Welsh cats have been injured since being in their owner's care²¹

49% of Welsh cat owners are unaware that lilies are toxic to cats, which is less than the UK (53%), but still represents a lot of Welsh cats that are potentially at risk³⁵

Lily toxicity occurs when a cat eats any part of the lily plant, including pollen that ends up on their coat and the cat licks off while grooming. The toxins can cause kidney failure, which is often fatal. Ideally owners should totally restrict their cat's access to lilies but if lily toxicity should occur, prompt veterinary care should be sought, as rapid treatment can prevent renal failure.

³⁴ Question asked: Does your cat have access to the outside overnight?

³⁵ Question asked: Which of the following popular cut flowers, if any, are you aware of being toxic to cats?

As well as ongoing media and social media activity, Cats Protection is calling on companies that sell lilies to improve warning labelling and has produced guides for cat owners about the dangers of lilies, and other plants, to cats.

Find out more: www.cats.org.uk/lilies






Living with other pets

40% of cat owning Welsh households have more than one cat, which is more than the UK as a whole (33%)¹. 42% of Welsh cat owners also own a dog – slightly more than the UK as a whole (39%)³⁶.

Cats are not ‘social obligates’ like dogs and humans – they do not necessarily need to live with company to have their emotional needs met. Because of this, other pets (especially other cats) in the household can be a source of stress and so steps must be taken by owners to ensure that resource provision and placement is adequate for all cats in the household, as well as being aware of signs of stress in cats. A single cat or bonded pair of cats is almost always the best household set up to avoid social problems.

Best practice advice for multi-cat households is to ensure resource provision for cats at a minimum rate of ‘one per cat, plus one’. The figures for important resources such as water bowls and litter trays, show that this recommended resource ratio is less likely to be met in multi-cat households, where the need is greatest. This creates a potential welfare problem, increasing the risk of stressed cats and the potential for intra-household fighting – something that has been reported to lead to injury for 3% of all Welsh cats and 4% of Welsh indoor-only cats²¹.

Average number of resources per cat in Wales³⁷

									
	2023	2022	2021	2023	2022	2021	2023	2022	2021
Food bowls	2.4	3.9	2.3	3.0	3.2	2.8	4.8	5.1	4.4
Water bowls	1.9	3.5	1.7	2.4	2.4	2.0	2.9	3.3	2.6
Litter trays	1.3	3.1	1.2	1.7	1.8	1.5	2.7	2.6	2.1
Scratching post	1.7	3.3	1.5	2.3	2.2	1.9	2.4	2.2	2.0
Cat beds	1.8	3.5	1.8	2.3	2.6	2.2	3.5	3.8	3.5
Hiding places	2.5	4.1	2.2	3.1	3.4	2.9	4.0	4.2	3.4

Resource provision for cats in Wales largely follows the same pattern as the UK as a whole, but just like the UK-wide data, does highlight some insufficiencies – particularly in multi-cat households.


³⁶ Question asked: Do you currently have any of the below pets (that live with you)?

³⁷ Question asked: How many of each of the following, if any, do you have in your home and are currently available for your cat/s to use at any one time?









































Behaviour and stress

Behaviour can be a complicated thing to analyse, with a large degree of crossover between ‘normal’ behaviours, and those that indicate that a cat is stressed. Sometimes, ‘normal’ behaviours that cats exhibit are deemed problematic by their owners, while behaviours that indicate stress are unrecognised or downplayed. This risks owners focusing on the wrong behaviours as concerning, and the potential knock-on effects for cats that may be experiencing stress.

Prevalence and owner perception of common normal and potential stress indicative cat behaviours in Wales³⁸

 Proportion of cats displaying this behaviour

 Considered a problem by owner (for owners of cats displaying this behaviour)

Jumps onto work surfaces/shelves	46%		22%	
Scratches furniture/carpets/walls	35%		55%	
Wakes me/other members of the household up	31%		26%	
Shows fear towards noise	25%		26%	
Begs for food when I'm eating	24%		24%	
Brings in wildlife/prey	23%		40%	
Runs away from household guests	22%		20%	
Scavenges for food/steals food left out	14%		36%	
Not get on/fights with other cats in household	11%		43%	
Hides around the house for long periods	10%		15%	
Poos outside litter tray	8%		68%	
Screams/screeches	8%		27%	
Chews wires/leadschargers	8%		61%	
Runs away from me/other adults in the house	7%		42%	
Wees outside litter tray	7%		73%	
Sprays outside of the litter tray/inside the house	5%		72%*	
Shows aggressive behaviour towards adults in the house	5%		57%*	
Not get on with/fight with my other pets (not cats)	5%		43%*	
Shows aggressive behaviour towards guests in the house	2%		48%*	
Shows aggressive behaviour towards children in the house	2%		67%*	

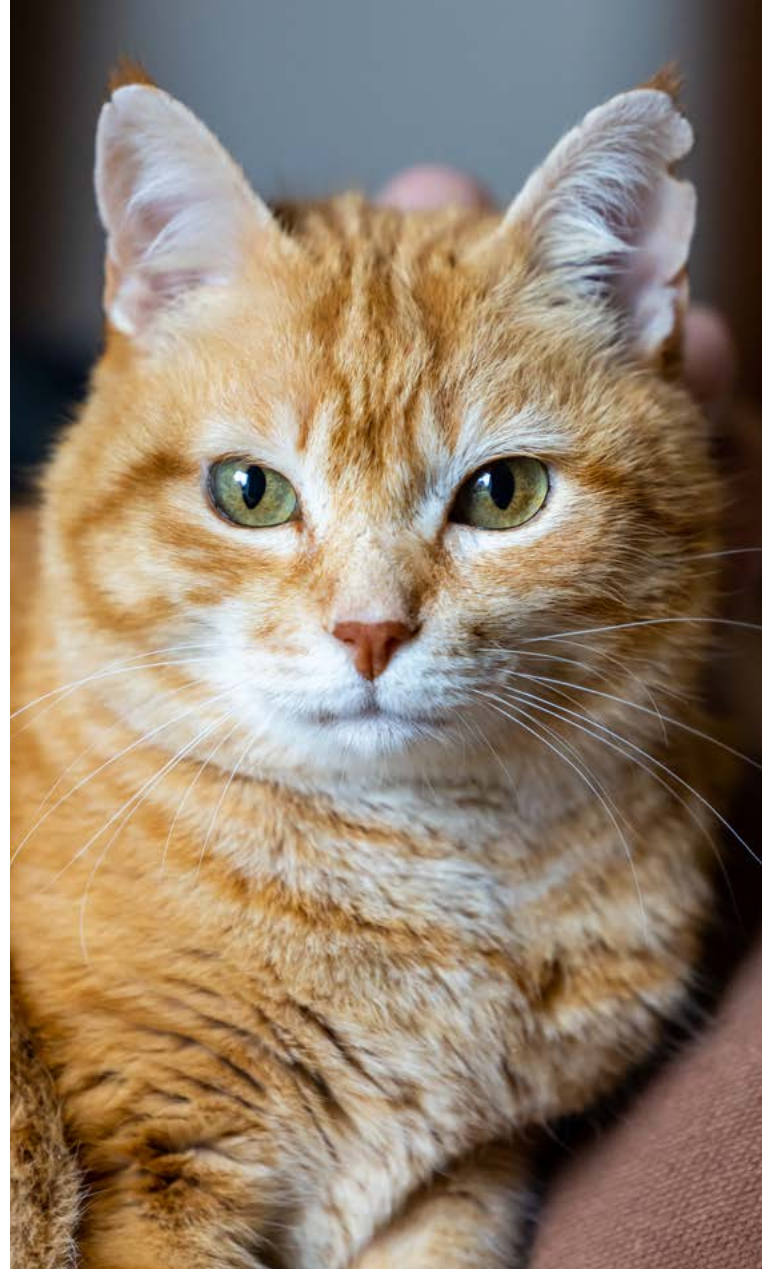
*sample size too small for statistical significance

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

The behaviours that owners find most problematic often relate to house-soiling, destruction/damage of belongings and aggression. House-soiling and aggressive-type behaviours typically have a compelling reason behind them – be it a medical issue, stress and/or the needs of the cat not being met. Often, resolving the underlying issue for the cat’s benefit yields positive results for everyone.

Another thing that owners find problematic – scratching – is also a normal behaviour for cats, used to scent mark and condition their claws, but also relieve stress. For example appropriate outlets for this behaviour (for example scratching posts) is therefore important, to prevent the behaviour becoming ‘destructive’.

The trend shown in the UK data that cats from multi-cat households are more likely to display behaviours that owners find most problematic is echoed in Wales. This highlights the need for owners of multiple cats to not only be aware of the potential signs of stress in cats but also know how best to alleviate it, such as ensuring adequate resource provision and placement, as well as considering the appropriateness of adding any more cats to the household.



Cats Protection firmly believes that positive change comes from ongoing education, which is why this underpins a huge proportion of the work that we do.

Curriculum-based lesson plans and school visits, as well as fun online learning modules are aimed at helping the next generation understand and value cats. Free, interactive talks for community groups spread that word further, and continued education for veterinary professionals means that the research and learnings that will improve feline welfare are disseminated to the people that can implement it best.

Fireworks

Fireworks can be really distressing for all animals, including cats. 25% of Welsh cat owners say that their cat shows obvious fear towards noises such as thunder or fireworks³⁸, and 62% of those who have witnessed their cat experience fireworks say that their cat seems affected by them³⁹.

The impact of fireworks on cats in Wales (top three behaviours)³⁹

Hides or becomes withdrawn

27%

Appears startled

19%

Tries to escape/run away

14%

All these behaviours are indicative of stress in cats. For more advice about fireworks and stress in cats, visit www.cats.org.uk/fireworks



“There needs to be a balance between people being allowed to celebrate key moments with fireworks and the knock-on impacts that this has to wildlife, our pets and other people. Often, the unpredictability of fireworks is a big part of the problem managing the effect that they can have on our pets. That is why Cats Protection continues to call on the government to restrict the unplanned use of fireworks and reduce the maximum noise levels of them. This would help owners anticipate displays and take appropriate action, and ease the stress of all animals, including cats. Cats Protection also sits on a working group, with other leading animal welfare charities, to collaboratively call on the government to undertake a review of fireworks legislation to account for their impact on animal welfare.”

Charlotte Broad, Advocacy & Government Relations Officer, Cats Protection

³⁹ Question asked: Does your cat tend to show any of the following signs of stress as a result of hearing fireworks? Filtered for owners that have seen their cat experience fireworks.

Is escalating cost of living causing cats to be more stressed?

As people, we can all relate to the pressure that the increased cost of living places on everyday life, but are cats experiencing knock-on effects too?

Cats from Welsh households that are struggling financially are more likely to show multiple signs of stress. Of course, there are probably many factors at play here, including the risk of stressors for cats and the owner's perception of stress signs in their pet. It does highlight again that cats from households that are struggling financially will likely benefit from a variety of support for their owners however, not just financial assistance. This could include advice on resource placement and education about causes of stress in cats.

Cats showing three+ signs of stress⁴⁰ from Welsh households that:

say they've **been negatively impacted by the cost-of-living crisis**

26%

say they've **not been negatively impacted by the cost-of-living crisis**

19%

are **concerned about paying the bills**

30%

are **not concerned about paying the bills**

19%

40 Question asked: Thinking about the past 12 months, which of the following does your cat tend to do, at least some of the time? (Count of stressors).



Companionship and challenges to ownership

Why we have cats⁴¹

More than ever, personal wellbeing is a huge driver for cat ownership, with companionship, reducing loneliness and reducing stress being collectively the top reasons that people choose to own a cat in Wales (56%, 48% in 2022).

The popularity of reasons for owning a cat and increases in companionship and stress relief as a foundation for cat ownership seen in Wales follow a very similar distribution to the UK-wide data, with some notable exceptions. A higher proportion of cat owners in Wales own their cat because that cat needed to be taken in, compared to the UK as a whole (18%), and while there is a clear male/female owner discrepancy regarding the importance of companionship shown by the UK-wide data (36% vs 44%), this is not evident in Wales.

⁴¹ Question asked: What are the main reasons you have a cat/s? Multiple answers allowed.



Main reasons for owning a cat in Wales

As company for me/my family

40% (33% in 2022)

I've always had cats

38% (34% in 2022)

I grew up with cats and so wanted to get my own when I left home

28% (23% in 2022)

To help me feel less stressed/anxious

24% (19% in 2022)

They needed looking after/to be taken in

23% (20% in 2022)

To help me feel less lonely

21% (19% in 2022)

I've just always wanted cats, so got one as soon as I could

19% (16% in 2022)

I wanted a pet animal and thought having a cat would be easier than having a dog

13% (16% in 2022)

My child/children wanted one

13% (14% in 2022)

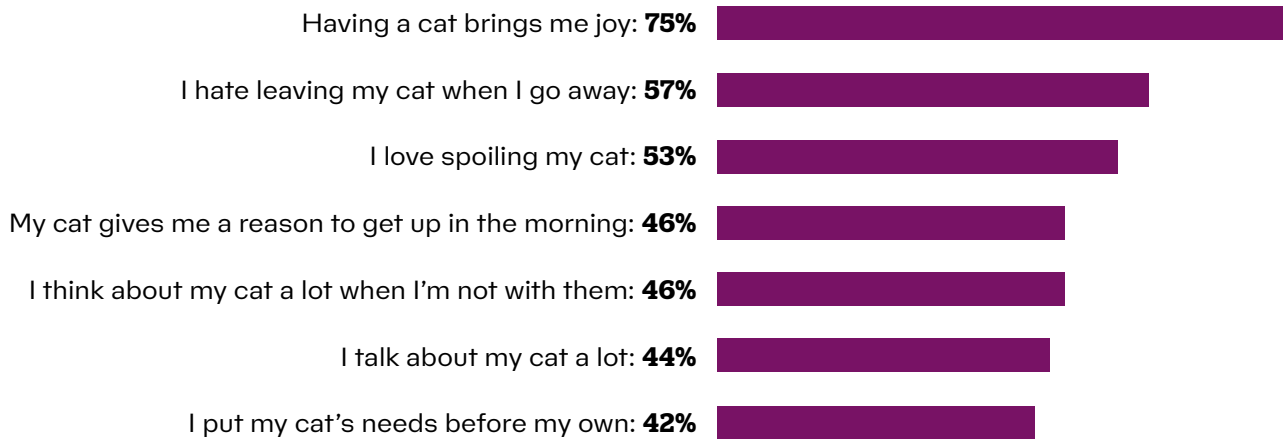
My partner wanted one/already had one

11% (10% in 2022)

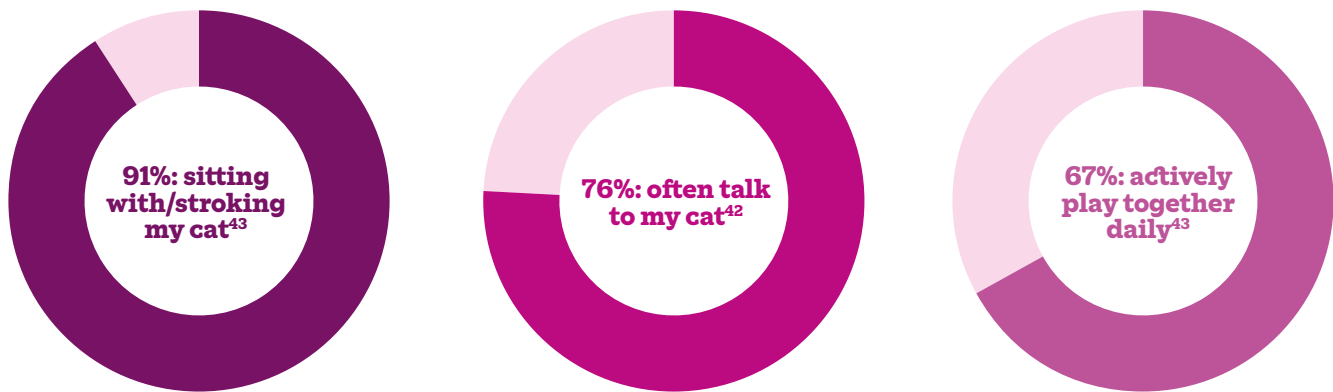
91% of Welsh cat owners agreed that they consider their cat part of the family - clearly demonstrating their important position within the household⁴²

⁴² Question asked: To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements about having a cat/s?

The importance of the cat-owner relationship⁴²



Spending time with our cats



Welsh owners seem to enjoy even closer relationships with their cat, compared to the UK as a whole, with a higher proportion of owners saying that their cat brings them joy (UK: 73%), that they think about their cat when they're not with them (UK: 42%) and that they put their cat's needs above their own (UK: 38%). Welsh owners are also more likely to play with their cat daily (UK: 65%) and talk to their cat often (UK: 72%)⁴³.

⁴³ Question asked: In an average week, how often do you do each of the following with your cat?



Helping the most vulnerable

Cats Protection understands the special relationship that people have with their cats and provides a range of services that aim to support owners, especially when they are at their most vulnerable.

Examples include the pioneering Lifeline (formerly Paws Protect) service – a free and confidential cat fostering service for people experiencing domestic abuse – and the Paws to Listen grief support service. This free, confidential service puts grieving owners in contact with trained volunteer listeners who are ready to offer emotional support and practical information.

“Each year, the CATS Report continues to highlight the benefits to people of sharing their life with a cat, who provide companionship, and reduce both stress and loneliness for many cat owners. However, we know that the death of a much-loved pet can be devastating, and even a hurdle to future cat ownership, reflecting the trauma this loss can bring. Cats Protection aims to support people through the complete journey of sharing a life with a cat, including the difficult time after loss, and therefore has created our Paws to Listen service, to offer a sympathetic ear at a difficult time.”

**Catherine Joyce,
Paws to Listen Team Leader,
Cats Protection**

The ongoing cost of cats

For many Welsh owners, the rising cost of living is a big concern, with 12% seriously worrying about how they will meet their cat's needs in the future⁴⁴. 7% say that they have already had to reduce their spending on necessities such as cat food and litter and 3% have had to rely on food banks to feed their cat⁴⁵. 29% of Welsh owners have doubts about how they would pay vet bills if their cat became sick or injured and almost a quarter (24%) of Welsh cat owners are very concerned about being able to pay bills and other living costs over the next 12 months⁴⁴, due to inflation and interest rate rises, and associated impacts on regular household outgoings, such as mortgage payments.

It is interesting that helping to reduce stress is consistently more likely to be the main reason for cat ownership for people that are concerned about finances. This is further indication of the benefits of cat ownership for people who are facing the big challenges of life.

Proportion of Welsh owners who own a cat to help them feel less stressed⁴¹:

24%

Negatively impacted by the cost-of-living crisis:

Yes: 30%

No: 15%

Concerned that they won't be able to pay bills/other living costs:

Yes: 30%

No: 15%

⁴⁴ Question asked: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

⁴⁵ Question asked: And thinking about the last 12 months, which of the below, if any, apply to you?



Helping to lessen the pinch

Cats Protection is dedicated to helping cat owners continue to lovingly meet their cats' needs through these hard financial times, for the benefit of both the cat and their owner.

One example of this is the partnership of Cats Protection with multiple charitable and corporate organisations to secure cat food for distribution via FareShare – the UK's largest charity fighting hunger and food waste. This alliance has already helped thousands of cats be protected from the financial pressures that their owners face. Cats Protection's branches and centres across the country are also partnering directly with food banks and community partners to provide families with cat food, to help feed their pet.

Cats Protection has also produced guidance on how to take care of your cat when facing rising living costs, including information about our neutering voucher scheme, how to help keep vet bills down and top tips on keeping day-to-day cat care costs as low as possible.

To access this guidance visit www.cats.org.uk/cost-of-living



“The cost-of-living crisis represents a huge issue for cat welfare, with many owners facing impossible choices as costs continue to rise. No one should be forced to give up a beloved pet and no cat should be left hungry. We are proud to be working with our colleagues across the sector to get donated food into the bowls of cats in need.”

**Peter Shergold,
Head of Field Operations,
Cats Protection**



Cats in Wales, in summary



State of the nation

- There are 620,000 owned cats in Wales
- 60% of Welsh cat-owning households have one cat; 40% own two or more cats

UK cat ownership:

	In millions		% of cat owning households	
	2022	2023	2022	2023
Total UK	11	11	26%	26%
Wales	0.6	0.6	28%	29%
England	9.2	9.2	26%	26%
Scotland	0.9	0.8	24%	22%
Northern Ireland	0.3	0.2	26%	21%

The cat market

- Wales has seen a 5% reduction in the proportion of adopted cats between 2022 and this year
- 65% of the Welsh cat population are moggies, 22% are pedigrees/purebreds and 6% are cross-breeds (7% don't know)

Veterinary care

- 27% of Welsh owners state that they have experienced difficulty accessing a vet in the last 12 months, down from 42% in 2022
- Wales has seen a bigger improvement in the easing of veterinary capacity problems compared to the rest of the UK (15% compared to 7% reduction)
- 9% of Welsh cats are not registered with a vet (UK: 10%)
- 70% of Welsh cats are up to date with their vaccinations (UK: 72%), according to their owner
- 87% of Welsh cats are neutered (UK: 85%)
- 71% of Welsh cats are microchipped (UK: 73%)
- Cost of living and vet care:
 - 18% of Welsh cat owners have not neutered their cat due to concerns over cost (UK: 15%). This is the first year that cost has been the most common reason for not neutering
 - 29% of Welsh cat owners are concerned about how they would pay the vet bill if their cat became sick or injured (UK: 25%)

Companionship and challenges to ownership

- 40% own a cat for companionship
- 24% own a cat to help them feel less stressed or anxious
- 21% own a cat to help them feel less lonely
- Cost-of-living concerns:
 - 12% of Welsh cat owners seriously worry about how they will meet their cat's needs in the future
 - 7% of Welsh cat owners say that they have had to reduce their spending on necessities such as cat food and litter in the last 12 months
 - 3% of Welsh cat owners have had to rely on food banks to feed their cat over the last 12 months

Cat care, welfare and behaviour

- 67% of Welsh cats have both indoor and outdoor access
- Wales has a lower proportion of indoor-only cats, compared to the UK as a whole (31% vs. 37%)
- 49% of Welsh owners aren't aware that lilies are toxic to cats
- There is a higher proportion of multi-cat households in Wales than across the UK as a whole (40% vs. 33%)
- Provision of important resources in Welsh multi-cat households is often less than the recommended rate of 'one per cat, plus one'

Where do we go from here?

A message from John May, Cats Protection's Chief Executive

We often talk about the importance of seeing the world through cats' eyes. In its fourth year, the Cats and Their Stats (CATS) Report Wales continues to provide vital additional insight into the perceptions of cat owners.

With owners facing significant changes and challenges over the past few years, we need to keep up to date with how cat welfare is being impacted, and work to provide the right support and advice to those who need it.

The insights from this report indicate that cats and their owners are being affected by the global challenges of the last few years. We aim to use this report not only to steer our practical activities and ensure they're relevant to the needs of cats in Wales, but also to influence policy makers and other key stakeholders.

As the UK's largest cat welfare charity with more than 10,000 volunteers and employees across the country, Cats Protection is well placed to deliver the support that's needed. I'm delighted that we continue to invest in our neutering programme, have successfully campaigned for compulsory pet cat microchipping of pet cats in England and are delivering targeted support to owners to help them through the cost-of-living crisis.

One of the consistent findings of the CATS Report is that methods of cat acquisition are shifting – Cats Protection is here for all cats and will continue to strive to offer the advice and support owners need; regardless of where owners get their cat.

However, the continued shift to more cats being purchased undoubtedly presents challenges for animal welfare charities, with fewer cats being adopted at the same time as more owners looking to relinquish their pets. Cats Protection will seek to highlight its research and work with the wider sector and government to help address these issues.

The changes in the market may also be fuelling issues that have a detrimental impact on cat welfare such as kitten smuggling and poor breeding practices, so our work to speak up for cats and ensure they are provided adequate protections in regulation will continue to be critical as we seek to achieve our mission.

Cats Protection's vision is a society where every cat has their best possible life because they are protected, cared for and understood by everyone. The findings of the CATS Report and other research conducted by Cats Protection enables an improved understanding, so that we can make our vision a reality.



Services

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

www.cats.org.uk/contact-us or 03000 12 12 12

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

www.cats.org.uk/neutering

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

www.cats.org.uk/education

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

www.cats.org.uk/catguardians or 01825 741 291

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

www.cats.org.uk/contact-us or 03000 12 12 12



For further information contact stats@cats.org.uk or visit www.cats.org.uk/stats

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