



give a little time
MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Cats Protection

Volunteer handbook



Hello!

Hey, we're the Volunteering Development team at Cats Protection

Melanie Anderson
Emily Cottrell
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Hello! Introducing the team

Kit
Lendon

Taz
Rajput

Caroline
Stewart

Paula
Hackett

If you would like to find out more about the Volunteering Development team please visit our volunteering pages on CatNav (you will find out more about CatNav in this handbook)

How to contact us:

T: 03000 12 12 12 (National Information Line)

E: volunteering@cats.org.uk

W: www.cats.org.uk/volunteer

We're social:

f [catsprotectionvolunteers](https://www.facebook.com/catsprotectionvolunteers)

t [@CPVolunteering](https://twitter.com/CPVolunteering)

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Your information:

Please keep this information safe

My branch/shop/centre/volunteer group contact is:

I can contact them on:

Shop/centre address:

Other important contact details:

My volunteer role/s are:

I joined Cats Protection on:

CatNav login:

Find an Opportunity login:

Other useful information:

Welcome to the team!

Hello and welcome to Cats Protection. This handbook has been produced to help ensure that your experience of volunteering with Cats Protection is an enjoyable and rewarding one and to support your induction as you begin your new role.

The importance of volunteers to Cats Protection cannot be overestimated. The valuable time given for cats across the UK is only made possible through the efforts of volunteers like you who willingly give their time and expertise to make a positive difference to cats' lives. Combining our efforts, our volunteers and employees help thousands of cats every year.

Inside this handbook you will find important information about Cats Protection, our vision, values and aims. You will read about the variety of interesting activities our volunteers are involved in and what you can expect as a Cats Protection volunteer. The handbook also contains a brief description of the policies that affect you and how volunteers and employees across the organisation come together to help cats.

By volunteering with Cats Protection you have joined the UK's leading feline welfare charity and biggest cat community! Thank you for choosing Cats Protection and welcome to the team!

James

James Yeates

Chief Executive
Cats Protection



Our history

Cats Protection has been making a positive difference to cats' lives for over 90 years, building up a wealth of knowledge about feline welfare. We now have around 250 volunteer-run branches, 36 centres, over 125 shops and continue to grow to meet the increasing demands placed upon us.



During the 1920s, cats were not seen as the companion animals they are today. Rather than pets, most were thought of as nothing more than pests. On 16 May 1927, a meeting of like-minded people was held at Caxton Hall, London, under the chairmanship of Miss Jessey Wade at which it was resolved 'that a society be formed to be devoted exclusively to promoting the interests of cats and that its name be the Cats Protection League.'



In 1935 the Cats Protection League received, through a legacy gift, Prestbury Lodge in Slough. This became the first designated headquarters. Sheds and later cat houses were added to the garden to provide space for cat care and rooms in the main house were adapted for the care of sick and injured animals.

1940

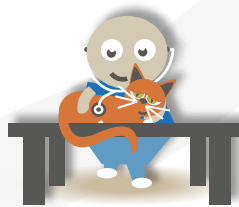


The increased difficulty in funding clinical and rescue work during the war years led to the introduction of the Tailwavers Scheme. This fundraising appeal was introduced by the Cats Protection League in June 1940 'to help relieve suffering among bombed out and starving cats in the blitzed areas'.

Give a little time

- ✓ Microchipped
- ✓ Neutered
- ✓ Vaccinated

1994



The charity, moving with the times, introduced microchipping into all its shelters - now known as centres - in 1994. Every cat that the shelters rehomed was microchipped, neutered and vaccinated, in line with rigid standards of cat care and hygiene set out by the Head of Veterinary Services and the Head of Operations.



1998

The charity changed its name from the Cats Protection League to the shorter and more modern sounding Cats Protection. A new logo and brand identity was launched to reflect the name change.



One of the charity's main objectives has always been to inform the public about the care of cats and kittens and in 1990 a new audience was targeted - school pupils. The Cats Protection League produced its first teaching pack for use in schools for children aged 5-11 years. This was distributed free to teachers and was a huge success: demand greatly exceeded expectation.



2004

The National Cat Centre (NCC), located in Ashdown Forest, Sussex between East Grinstead and Haywards Heath, became home to a 202-pen adoption centre, a veterinary facility and the charity's administrative operations.

1977



In 1977 the charity launched a serious drive for increased membership, advertising in national newspapers and periodicals. Over 1,000 members were recruited in a few months, bringing the total to over 10,000. From 1980 membership cards were issued.



2011

We helped one million cats between 2006 and 2011.



1950

The Cats Protection League's main aim during this time was to establish shelters to provide 'a temporary refuge' for cats in need but the financial outlay for this was great. Then, in 1950 it received a legacy specifically for that purpose. A country property in Haslemere, Surrey was chosen. During the post-war decades, the Cats Protection League was actively seeking changes in legislation so that the plight of cats and other animals might be improved.



2017

Our 90th anniversary, in this time we've helped over six million cats with the help of over 10,000 volunteers!



2019

We welcomed our new CEO James Yeates in 2019, with approximately 11,500 volunteers and over 1,000 employees uniting to help thousands of cats and kittens. We are looking forward to the future with you!



Our vision, values and aims

Cats Protection... now

Cats Protection helps around 200,000 cats and kittens every year which is around 500 cats and kittens every day! This is a huge number and while we are rightly proud of our achievements, we know more cats need our help.

More needs to be done to keep even more cats safe, healthy and cared for in the future. That's why we are determined to grow and develop. We have come a long way from our inauguration in 1927. The concern of just a few cat lovers heralded an organisation that has since grown into the UK's largest feline welfare charity.

We have built a strong, united charity that has changed the world in which we work. In order to further develop this strength, we are constantly reviewing our direction and methods and making changes where we could do more to improve the interests of cats and kittens. Our voice for cats is listened to, actively sought out and respected by millions of people. We are interested in the welfare of every cat and we offer advice and support to numerous organisations working on behalf of cats. Cats Protection has simple and clear objectives to help cats:

- education and information – improving people's understanding of cats and their care
- neutering – supporting and encouraging the neutering of cats
- homing – finding good homes for cats in need

Our vision is

A world where every cat is treated with kindness and an understanding of its needs

Our vision is ambitious. However, we truly believe it can be achieved because of our passion, our professional approach and simply because cats are one of the UK's most popular companion pets.

Did you know? 9 out of 10 of us would recommend Cats Protection as a good place to work or volunteer

Source: Cats Protection People Survey 2019

“My driving force is to work towards a day when people take responsibility for the moggy. If the branch can help one tiny kitten, one injured cat or neuter one feral then together we have made a difference.”

Gillian, branch volunteer

Our values underpin everything we do

They shine through everything we do and provide the cornerstones of our charity, enabling us to grow and, as a result, to help more and more cats and kittens every year. Our values are simple:

- cats and their welfare are at the centre of everything we do
- we never put a healthy cat to sleep
- we value and respect our volunteers, supporters and employees
- we are committed to providing a high quality service
- we are open and honest

Our strategy

This is how we will help more cats.

- We will significantly increase awareness of Cats Protection and our work
- As the leading authority on cats we will help people better understand their needs in order to improve the welfare of all cats
- We will help to reduce overpopulation of cats:
 - through targeted neutering campaigns and education
 - by directing more resources to the promotion of early neutering
 - by doing more research and gathering better data on the impact of our neutering activity
- We will home more cats until our work on information, education and neutering reduces the long-term need for homing

This will be achieved by:

- pulling together as 'one charity'
- investing in our branches and in volunteers across the charity, so that we can help even more cats
- becoming more effective and professional with standards which are appropriate and fit for purpose

We will:

- invest in supporting the people who carry out our vital work
- build a dynamic and go-ahead organisation
- attract more volunteers, more homes for cats, more funds to pay for food, veterinary care and everything our cats need

Did you know? Every day our volunteers give a year's worth of time!

Source: Cats Protection People Survey 2019

Helping us to get there

- We will significantly grow income and manage our funds to enable us to help more cats, now and in the future
- We will become more responsive to the needs of our customers, current and future
- We will speak up for cats and represent their interests
- We will increase the extent and effectiveness of our collaboration with animal charities and other organisations, for the benefit of cats

Cats Protection...into the future

For every cat we help in the UK, there are many more that we cannot help. To be able to reach out to all the cats and kittens that need us, we must dramatically increase our ability to rehome, neuter and impart information. We cannot ask the cats to wait until we can help them. Their needs are paramount, as is our responsibility to be there for them. The years ahead will bring many new opportunities and challenges.

Cats Protection wants everyone to celebrate our achievements to date and also to support us in achieving an even better future.

“We have now helped over 6 million cats. We are the leading, largest and most impactful cat welfare charity in the UK.”

James, Chief Executive

Cats Protection – How we achieve our vision together

Trustees, Advisory Council, CEO & EMT

The Board of Trustees

The Trustees are the governing body of Cats Protection and are volunteers.

Advisory Council

The Advisory Council is the advisory body to the Trustees and they are also volunteers.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The CEO works with the Board of Trustees to define and deliver the strategic objectives for Cats Protection.

Executive Management Team (EMT)

The EMT plays a leadership role advising and assisting the CEO and Trustees, contributing to the development and implementation of Cats Protection's strategy and plans.

Branches

Cats Protection has in the region of 250 branches across the UK. These groups are run entirely by volunteers, usually from their own homes. Branches take in cats in need and ensure that they receive all the veterinary care and attention that they need to help them get back on their paws before rehoming. Our branch volunteers also raise funds which go directly to helping cats in their care; they help neuter thousands of cats every year and spread cat welfare messages across the UK.

Branches vary in size from just a handful of volunteers to over a hundred. Vital to their success are the volunteers who manage and fulfil leadership and governance roles within their teams. Central to branches are also great teams covering every aspect of how we care for cats, these include:

- our Helpline volunteers take calls all year round from members of the public, veterinary surgeries or cat owners. These calls can range from homing enquiries or reports of an injured or stray cat



- the Welfare team focuses on the welfare of cats in care and those that need our help. They help fosterers place cats into care and ensure our cats' welfare is paramount
- Our fosterers, over 2,000 of them, provide all the TLC a cat could need while providing a temporary home for the cats in care, either in a pen(s) in their garden or they will keep the cats indoors
- the Lost & Found team of volunteers manage and advertise cats that are missing or have been found to help reunite cats with their owners
- every penny raised in a branch goes into the local 'kitty' to help cats. Fundraising volunteers use their imagination, skills and passion for cats to engage with their supporters and raise much-needed funds
- the Publicity/Website/Social media/Newsletter team publicises all cats in care as well as lost and found cats and spreads the important cat welfare message
- feral cats are often the offspring of stray or abandoned domestic cats and can be found living in urban and rural areas. Our branch Trap Neuter Return (TNR) programmes involve:
 - trapping the cat using humane trapping methods
 - taking the cat to a local vet to be neutered
 - returning the cat to their home or finding a suitable alternative
- our Photo and Video volunteers liaise with other volunteers across different areas of our work such as rehoming and welfare, fundraising and publicity to collate photos and videos that illustrate our work
- our Volunteer Champions teams recruit and induct new volunteers to Cats Protection; ensuring we have the right people in the right roles as well as recognising the outstanding work of the branch and individuals within their teams

Of course this is only a snapshot of the type of roles and what volunteers do within our branches. We have something for everyone to get their claws into.



Centres

Volunteers in our centres support a core team of employees in caring for cats on site. Centres may consist of indoor or outdoor rehoming pens and cat cabins, as well as dedicated areas for cats when they are admitted into care and if they are unwell. The great thing about our centres is that the public can visit and see a variety of cats in our care and hear first-hand our welfare and neutering messages.

We have centres across the UK that help thousands of cats every year and like our branches, they fundraise to support their work. Our centre volunteers and employees spread cat welfare messages across their communities and help prevent unwanted kittens through neutering.

Why volunteer? I create happy endings

“It is fab to be part of a team who create so many happy endings for cats and kittens.”

Julia, Branch Secretary

Shops

We have over 125 shops located across the UK and these are run by 2,000 volunteers and over 170 paid employees. Our charity shops are a window to the whole of Cats Protection. They present a great opportunity for promoting the work of the wider charity and provide a high street presence for their respective branches. In addition to raising funds our shops received 30,000 enquiries in 2018 from the public, ranging from welfare advice, potential rehoming, neutering and relinquishment.



Cats Protection charity shop



Give a little time

Volunteer groups

A variety of volunteer groups are active throughout Cats Protection, all contributing towards achieving our vision. These groups are made up of dedicated volunteers who commit their time to a specific area of the charity ie fundraising, carrying out education talks, increasing the service we provide to customers or neutering cats.

Education volunteers

Volunteers who love to raise awareness of what we do, volunteer alongside branches and centres and get involved in education groups to talk about all things cat. They get involved with schools, community groups and anyone in their community who is interested in cats and what we do.

Health and safety volunteers

The diverse nature of activity carried out by Cats Protection's volunteers can pose many risks and expose them to a variety of hazards. Liaising closely with branches and other volunteer groups in their region, health and safety volunteers raise awareness of health and safety, assess risks in accordance with Cats Protection guidelines and work with others to keep us and our cats safe.

Paws to Listen volunteers

Our Paws to Listen volunteers give practical information about how to celebrate the life of a cat, how to talk to children about grief, grief in surviving pets, and the available after-death options available ie individual/communal cremation, burial etc.

Paws Protect volunteers

Domestic violence and pets can make for an unsafe situation, which is why Cats Protection offers Paws Protect, a cat fostering service. Through a network of cat fosterers, the service provides a retreat for pets of those going into a refuge until the owner has a safe place to live and they can be reunited.

Administrative volunteers

Our busy Contact Centre and Neutering teams receive approximately 150-200 calls each day. Volunteers play a key role in the teams to support a wide variety of administrative activities; maximising efficiency and providing great

customer service. Within our Purchasing department volunteers also play an important role liaising with volunteers, colleagues and other departments ensuring orders are fully processed, as well as reviewing customer service levels and investigating opportunities to improve current processes.

The National Cat Centre (NCC)

The NCC is our administrative office providing centralised support to our branches, centres, charity shops, regional employees and volunteers. Volunteers and employees undertake various support functions including finance, communications, fundraising, legal, operations and veterinary.



Why volunteer? I get satisfaction

“Volunteering for Cats Protection is a fun and rewarding experience, particularly if you have a skill that would benefit the charity or would like to develop new skills by taking on a fresh challenge. Our volunteers gain a great deal of satisfaction helping cats get a second chance in life.”

Majorie, Branch Coordinator

What we do

Helping people understand cats' needs

Our primary welfare strategy influences how we talk to people about cats and their needs and how we treat cats in our care. This is important because as a species they are often very misunderstood. Working with veterinary professionals is vital to help us deliver key welfare messages across the UK and to raise the profile of shelter medicine across the profession and within the animal welfare community.

Dispelling the myth that cats should have one litter before they are neutered is a key message to professionals and the public alike and we work hard to educate vets on neutering cats at four months, before they reach puberty.

Working directly with the public is very important, targeting hard-to-reach audiences, such as those who might be more likely to buy a cat rather than adopt one, to raise awareness of important cat welfare messages. We continue to educate the public on cats' needs and one way we do this is through our Contact Centre. We have introduced improved technology that enables us to develop a network of home-based volunteers to handle calls. This innovative approach has helped to reduce the number of missed calls, thus helping more people and cats!

Did you know? Our Contact Centre handled approximately 110,000 customer enquiries in 2018 via calls, emails and social media channels. This is in addition to the thousands of calls handled locally by our branches

Source: Annual Review 2018

Increasing awareness

Our strategy acknowledges that education and information for adults and children about cat welfare is essential to achieving our vision. Our national media campaigns help to raise awareness of Cats Protection and the work we do. Our 'older cats' campaign, for example, encouraged the adoption of older cats and highlighted that they take five times longer to home than kittens.

Across the country, week after week, we take part in shows, exhibitions and events, ranging from national shows to local fêtes and fairs. We have community education officers who support our branches, centres and our team of education volunteers to give talks to children and adults in schools and community groups. We also work with other charities and local authorities to deliver our messages to a wider audience.

We target specific audiences to raise awareness of cat welfare issues. One of our branches, for example, has run a proactive campaign targeting local farmers to encourage them to neuter feral cats before their numbers get out of control. They distributed posters at local livestock markets, animal feed suppliers and agricultural machinery businesses.

We continue to invest in digital activity to reach more people with homing and welfare messages. Our online rehoming service, Find-a-cat, allows members of the public to view cats in our care currently available for homing.

Did you know? Our online following continues to grow; in 2018, our branch, centre and national websites were visited 4.4 million times.

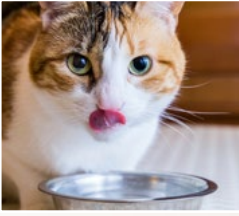
Source: Annual Review 2018

Speaking up for cats

We work hard to put cat welfare on the political agenda. Our advocacy campaigns are frequently discussed with all our elected representatives and in the media commenting on important issues such as breeding, dog attacks, snaring, shooting and poisoning of cats.

The five welfare needs

to keep cats happy and healthy



Diet

To have suitable food and fresh water



Environment

To have a safe place to live with everything they need



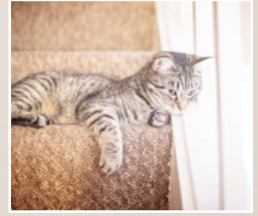
Health

To be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease



Behaviour

To be able to express normal behaviour



Company

To have the choice to be apart from other cats





We will help to reduce overpopulation of cats

- Through targeted neutering campaigns and education
- By directing more resources to the promotion of early neutering
- By doing more research and gathering better data on the impact of our neutering work

We run the largest single-species neutering programme in the world and we neuter tens of thousands of cats every year which includes both domestic and feral cats. A feral cat is one that has not had adequate positive contact with humans as a young kitten and as a result will always remain fearful of people. They are not tame and live and act like wild animals. We run programmes of trap, neuter and return, or relocate if there's no possibility of returning to their original site, to control feral colonies.

As kittens can reach sexual maturity and become pregnant from four months, we recommend that owned kittens are routinely neutered at four months of age. The key to preventing more unplanned litters of kittens being born is to make neutering at this age the 'norm' for pet cats. The procedure can be performed earlier and kittens in our care may be neutered soon after their first vaccine.

One cat that unfortunately wasn't neutered in time was Pickle (formerly Grace), who was only five months old when she came into the care of our Northampton Branch heavily pregnant. Following the birth of her litter, she became ill with mastitis. Thankfully, after dedicated veterinary care she recovered and has found a new home. Diana, a volunteer at the branch says: "Pickle's story shows just how important it is to neuter cats from four months of age. Neutering has many health benefits and helps to reduce the number of unwanted cats in the UK."

We have been working with other charities under the umbrella of the Cat Population Control Group to maximise the effectiveness of cat neutering through collaboration on research, joint projects and coordination of activities.

Pictured is Pickle from Northampton Branch



We have community neutering officers who focus on community engagement, aiming to set up new neutering campaigns, make inroads into targeting harder-to-reach audiences, recruit volunteers as champions of neutering messages within communities and for trap, neuter and return work.

Did you know? In 2018 we neutered 143,000 cats and kittens including 19,000 ferals.

Source: Annual Review 2018

“I volunteer as a trapper because it is so rewarding when you trap a mother cat you have been trying to catch for months. You know that at last that colony will not grow any bigger and the people feeding them will be able to cope so much better without the worry of more kittens arriving all the time.”

Sue, adoption centre volunteer

“The residents are more accepting of the cats now there's not litter after litter of kittens. People are much friendlier towards them.”

Katie, adoption centre staff

After being missing for 18 months,
Phoenix was reunited with his family



We will home more cats until our work on information, education and neutering reduces the long-term need for homing

One of our main objectives is to find a happy home for every cat and our volunteers and staff create these happy endings every day. We have thousands of cats and kittens in our care at any one time, all looking for the perfect home. All of our cats have been treated to our minimum veterinary standards, meaning that they have been examined by a veterinary surgeon, been vaccinated against flu and enteritis, treated against fleas, roundworm and tapeworm and any sick cats have been blood tested for FIV and FeLV. If the cat has not been neutered before or during its time in our care, we will normally ensure owners have done this after homing.

Did you know? In 2018 we helped around 500 cats a day.

Source: Annual Review 2018

Ten-year old Phoenix, who had been missing for 18 months, was found by his owner when she visited our Derby Adoption Centre in search of a new pet. Although Phoenix was still registered to his owner with a microchip, the family had moved home and since his details had not been updated, the centre was unable to get in touch. The owner's five-year-old son Ronnie noticed Phoenix straight away, cheering with excitement at the sight of his 'best friend'. "He was purring as soon as we went over to him and it was amazing to be able to hold him," said the cat's owner, Michelle. This lucky reunion reinforces the importance of microchipping – and ensuring contact details are kept up-to-date.

Why volunteer? Admiration

“I thoroughly enjoy seeing a group from diverse backgrounds working together to achieve a common goal. I also greatly admire the volunteers that give their time to make a change.”

Claire, Community Education Officer

Helping us get there...

We couldn't do what we do without the cat lovers who currently support us with their donations, which have a significant impact on improving the lives of cats that desperately need our help. Thanks to our incredible supporters and volunteers Cats Protection is now at a stage where we can grow to help more cats than ever before.

We have a number of controls in place to try to ensure that the trust and confidence of the public and potential donors are maintained.

As members of the Fundraising Standards Board we follow the Institute of Fundraising's Code of Fundraising Practice and abide by all data protection legislation. Campaigns are a big part of fundraising and our team spends a lot of time planning, testing and analysing the best way to approach and engage with our supporters.



Supporting your volunteering experience with Cats Protection

Cats Protection is a large organisation that we want you to feel part of straight away! We have a number of ways to communicate policies, procedures, news and events so that you are supported in your role, feel part of the big Cats Protection team and ultimately have the best volunteering experience possible. Key elements of our Volunteer Policy can be found on pages 24-29 of this handbook.

Induction

Your volunteer manager will provide you with and guide you to a lot of information when you begin your role. This handbook is a vital tool in your induction journey and will provide much of the information you need to help you learn about the charity and where you fit into the bigger team.

You should also receive a copy of your role description, so if you haven't had this yet please ask for one from your volunteer manager. Your role description will tell you how you make a difference to cats and kittens!

The following information will help support you in your role and ensure your volunteering experience is a safe and enjoyable one.

Online tools to help you

When you become a volunteer with Cats Protection you will receive a welcome letter or email with login details to access our Cats Protection portal. This portal is our online system which allows you to access a number of applications to support your volunteering.

Depending on your role you will have access to different online applications, however all volunteers will have access to the following:



CatNav

CatNav is Cats Protection's information and resource site for volunteers and employees. You can access documents such as our policies and procedures as well as read CP news stories and events. This is a great way to find out all about Cats Protection!

In addition to providing information and guidance for our volunteers on CatNav we also have learning and development opportunities through our workshops, courses and our LearnOnline programmes.



IT service desk

If you have difficulties accessing the portal or any of the systems you can use this icon to contact IT.

Alternatively you can email **ITServiceDesk@cats.org.uk** or call **01825 741 999**.



Volunteer Information System (VIS)

VIS is a tool that enables all volunteers to update their own records – including their address, emergency contact details and other information about their volunteering role(s). This system allows Cats Protection to know who our volunteers are and communicate with you as appropriate.

You will be able to select how you would like the organisation and your volunteer manager to be able to contact you. All your details are kept in line with GDPR legislation, and you will only be able to access your own record. However, your volunteer manager is able to check and update the records of all existing volunteers in their branch or location and add new volunteers to the system.



LearnOnline

Our Learning & Development team, in conjunction with other teams have been developing online versions of our training for you to do in your own time and space. As well as cat welfare online modules you can also access other great courses on things like how to use social media at Cats Protection. Your volunteer manager may guide you to particular online courses to help you in your role. We particularly recommend completing Understanding Cats' Needs, Health & Safety and the Data Protection modules for all our volunteers.



Forum

Cats Protection's Forum aims to promote our charity values, particularly the values concerned with respect, openness and honesty. The Forum is an open and accessible place where users can share good ideas and experiences and ask questions about cat work and the charity as a whole. All users are asked to agree to the rules and policies of the site.

Logout



Welcome to your Cats Protection portal

Please choose from the options below



CatNav



Email



Forum



IT Service Desk



LearnOnline



Support Materials
On Demand



VIS



Main Site

☐ Open Applications in a New window

Google Search

v1.7

Additional support available to you in your role

Your volunteer manager is your first and main point of contact, however there are a variety of staff teams within the organisation that have specific functions to ensure we can all achieve our goals together.

Our volunteer managers are encouraged to support their volunteers in a variety of ways. This may range from informal chats, texts and emails through to face-to-face catch ups or group meetings. The support and supervision provided to you will depend on your role.

Volunteer Assistance Programme

Sometimes you may have support needs which are of a more personal nature and which are best met by our Volunteer Assistance Programme. At Cats Protection all volunteers have access to a confidential life management and personal support service provided by an external provider. The service can be used for everyday challenges faced within the volunteering role, work and at home and offers volunteers access to experts and mental health professionals who can support them with a range of issues including; health information, debt advice, individual trauma support, legal information or money advice.

The service comprises structured telephone counselling, is confidential, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and completely free of charge.

All volunteers can access this service via a
Freephone number: **0800 030 5182**

Please quote -

Username: **Catsprotection**

Password: **Volunteers**



Fair procedures to deal with problems

While we hope that volunteering will be a positive experience for all our volunteers, we know that sometimes problems can occur. In most instances these can be dealt with informally and an informal chat or a quiet word will often be all that is needed to resolve problems before they become too serious. However, there may be times when a more formal approach is required. We have a range of procedures to deal with any difficulties or concerns in a fair and consistent manner.

The procedure you should follow will depend on the nature of your concern. An infographic is available on CatNav which will help you determine which procedure you should follow. See image below.

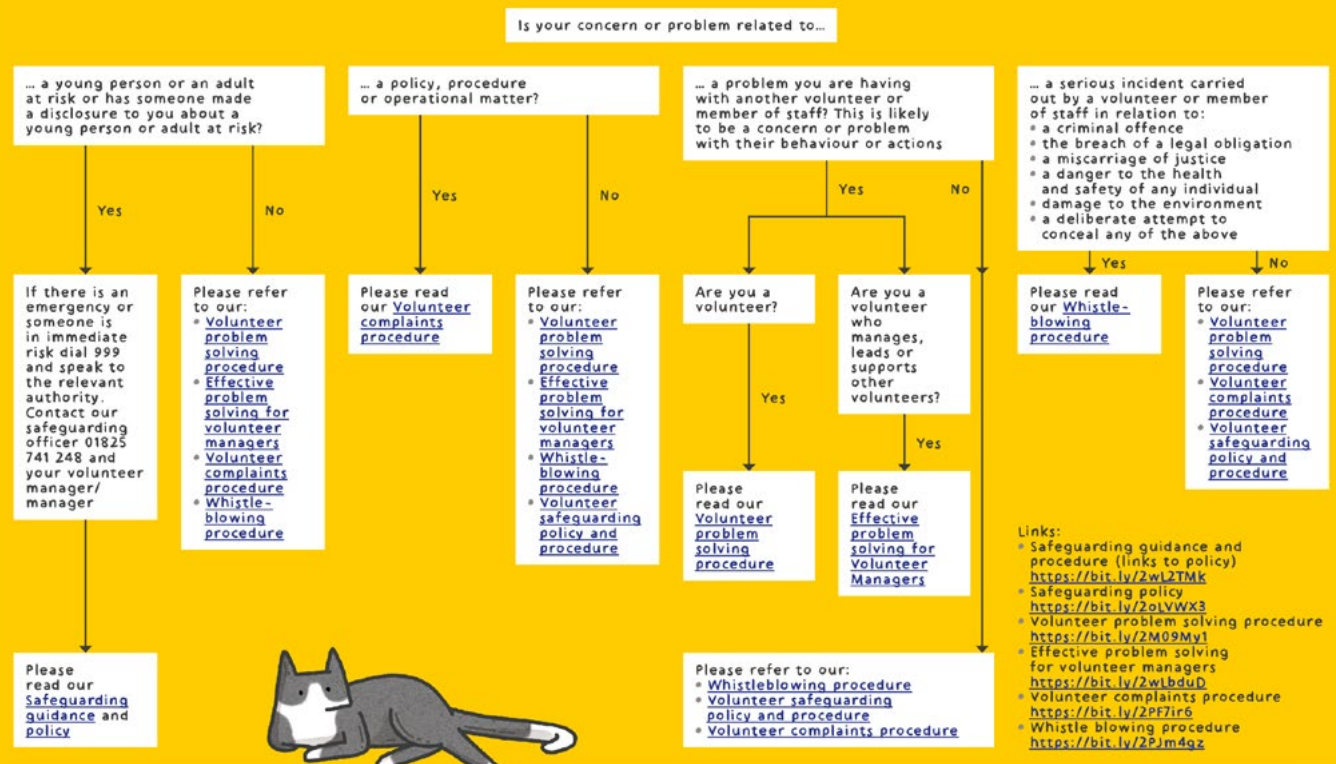
“As a fosterer I derive a great deal of pleasure in knowing that what I do makes a huge difference to the present and future welfare of the cats and kittens that come into my care and seeing them go to lovely new homes is one of the greatest rewards of all.”

Mary, branch volunteer

If you are unsure how to resolve your concern or problem please contact the Volunteering Development team who are here to support you volunteering@cats.org.uk



What to do if you are a volunteer and have a problem or concern in Cats Protection



“The best bit about volunteering for me is that I am able to put my skills to good use helping the branch.”

Mark, branch volunteer

Volunteering expectations

Volunteering is a partnership and we are committed to creating the best possible environment for volunteers to share their skills, knowledge and experiences, as well as ensuring that every volunteer is valued and recognised for their time and expertise. We embrace our mutual hopes and expectations which ensures that yours and other volunteers' experiences within Cats Protection are positive and enjoyable.

What you can expect from Cats Protection

- To agree tasks and roles
- To provide induction, support, guidance and training
- To ensure that you know who you are responsible to and who should provide you with support should you face any problems
- To ensure that you and all others working and dealing with Cats Protection are treated with respect in line with our commitment to equal opportunity and diversity

give a little time
MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE



Give a little time

- To ensure a safe working environment and providing appropriate and reasonable insurance for you while volunteering with Cats Protection
- To accept what you have to offer and to support you in saying 'no' when necessary
- To encourage you to take on new challenges when they are available and you are ready to do so
- To provide opportunities to contribute to the future development of the charity, by sharing ideas and experiences
- To make a real difference to cats across the UK

What we expect from you

- To carry out agreed tasks detailed in your role description
- To embrace our values; we care about cats, we value and respect our volunteers, supporters and employees, we are committed to providing a high quality service and we are open and honest

- To attend and fully participate in support and training sessions which are appropriate to your role
- To raise any concerns at the earliest opportunity
- To encourage others to feel welcome, work with other volunteers and employees as a team and to treat everyone with respect in line with Cats Protection's commitment to equal opportunity and diversity
- Not to exceed any authority given to you
- Communicate with Cats Protection, openly, honestly and respectfully
- To comply with Cats Protection policies, procedures and guidelines
- To give us as much notice as possible should you be unable to attend or carry out your volunteer role or if you decide to end your volunteering commitment with us



What volunteers mean to Cats Protection and key elements of our Volunteer Policy

With the support of volunteers, Cats Protection can achieve its vision of a world where every cat is treated with kindness and an understanding of its needs. The purpose of our Volunteer Policy is to set the broad principles for volunteering within Cats Protection. These principles and values should be applied by all volunteers and employees within the charity.

Key elements of our Volunteer Policy

Our volunteering values

We recognise and appreciate the distinct contribution volunteers make to Cats Protection. Through our volunteers, we are able to reach out across the UK to rehome and neuter cats and to educate people on responsible cat ownership. We value their passion for cats, the different perspectives and breadth of experience they bring to the organisation and the distinctive and complementary role they play alongside paid employees.

Cats Protection benefits from the skills, experience and enthusiasm of volunteers and we believe that volunteers should be able to gain personal benefits from the experience too. We are committed to managing volunteers in a way that ensures the needs of both the volunteer and the organisation are met.

Cats Protection strives to create a diverse and inclusive organisation; we are committed to ensuring equality of access to high-quality volunteer opportunities and equality of treatment of volunteers in all our policies and procedures.

Equality and diversity

Attracting new volunteers to Cats Protection is vital for the future of the organisation and to do this successfully we must demonstrate fair, transparent and inclusive recruitment processes. We value equality and diversity and aspire to reflect this in our recruitment procedures and volunteer management principles.

Recruitment and selection

The charity welcomes volunteers of all ages. We do not specify an upper age limit as we recognise the valuable contribution made by older volunteers in terms of knowledge and experience.

Young volunteers can bring fresh perspectives and enthusiasm



to the charity while gaining valuable skills and experience. Young volunteers must be at least 14 years old and must have the written consent of a parent or guardian. Children under the age of 14 are welcome to volunteer with Cats Protection if they are involved in a family volunteering role.

“I have been volunteering for Cats Protection for the last year and it has been an amazing experience. I love cats and I wanted to give something back to them and help out in any way I could. That was why I chose to be involved in the education aspect of this magnificent charity.”

Valeria, education volunteer



All volunteers will be asked to complete an application or registration form, provide details of referees, consent to further checks (if applicable) and have an informal interview to match their preferences, skills and suitability with available volunteer roles.

It is important to us that all volunteers feel comfortable and confident in their roles. To achieve this all volunteers will receive a role description, know who to go to if they have any concerns, problems or questions and receive a full induction into their role and the charity.

Our expectations

Cats Protection places great importance on clarifying and communicating the expectations of the volunteer and of the organisation. Our values, what we expect from you and what you can expect from Cats Protection are detailed in our volunteer expectations, agreement and code of conduct.

Did you know?

9 out of 10 of us can clearly explain what Cats Protection does and why and 94% are proud to volunteer for Cats Protection

Source: Cats Protection People Survey 2019



Keeping you involved and motivated

Expenses

Cats Protection believes that volunteers should not be out of pocket through volunteering. Agreed expenses will be reimbursed in line with the Volunteer Expenses policy.

Support and supervision

Providing support and supervision to our volunteers is very important, so all employees and volunteers who manage other volunteers will be approachable and happy to discuss and review a volunteer's needs and abilities.

Learning and development

Induction and ongoing training will be offered as appropriate to the voluntary role and the needs of the individual. Volunteers will be given the opportunity to develop their skills wherever possible.

There are a number of ways to access training including using LearnOnline which you can access through our portal.

When things go wrong

If problems occur Cats Protection aims to identify and solve them at the earliest possible stage. The problem-solving procedures for volunteers and volunteer managers exist to help deal with complaints and problems quickly, fairly and consistently.

Listening to our volunteers

Cats Protection endeavours to listen to the views of our volunteers and involve them when appropriate in the development of the charity. The volunteer consultation policy outlines how we may do this.

Saying thank you

Saying thank you and recognising the value of our volunteers is vital; our recognition policy and strategy is just one way we demonstrate this.

Did you know? 88% feel comfortable with the amount of volunteering they do and 85% of our volunteers say their volunteer role makes them feel good about themselves

Source: Cats Protection People Survey 2019

Keeping you and information about you safe

Safeguarding and ensuring safe environments

In addition to our health and safety policies and procedures, we also have guidance on creating an inclusive and safe environment for all our volunteers, particularly safeguarding young people and adults at risk.

Our safeguarding policy and procedure is available on CatNav and includes guidance on involving and volunteering alongside children and adults at risk. This includes practical tips to keep them and you safe.

As part of your induction you should receive a poster and wallet card on our dos and don'ts in responding to safeguarding issues. Please ask your volunteer manager for these if you have not yet received them.

What should I do if I have a safeguarding concern about someone?

If it is an emergency and the person is at immediate risk of harm please contact **999**, then contact your volunteer manager and our Safeguarding Officer.

If it is not an emergency please contact your volunteer manager and our Safeguarding Officer.

You can contact the Cats Protection Safeguarding Officer on: **01825 741 248**.

Insurance

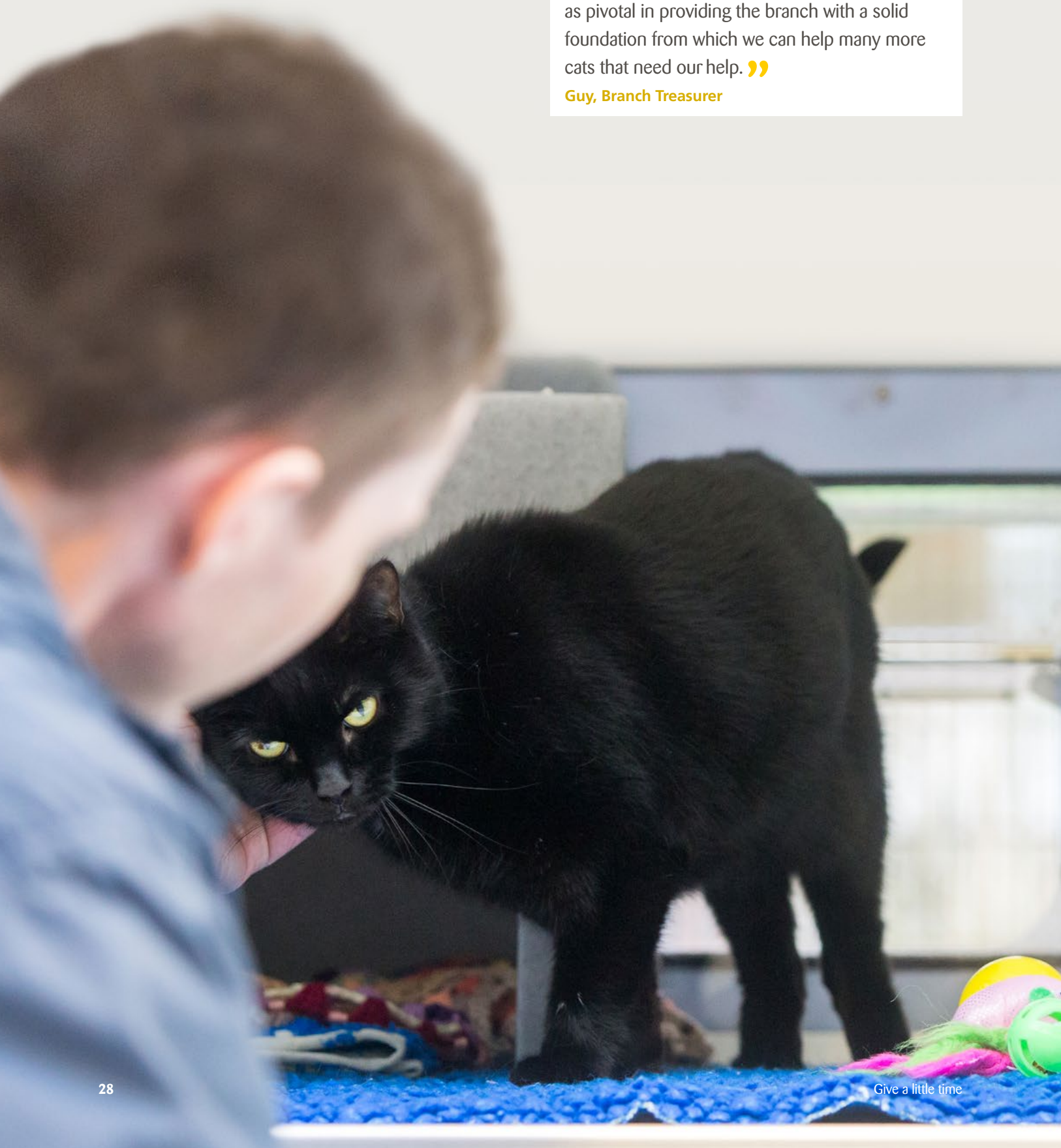
Registered volunteers are covered by Cats Protection's public and employer's liability insurance. Please contact your personal car insurance provider if you drive your car while volunteering for us.



Why volunteer? I can use my experience

“ Adopting Tiger and Gizmo all those years ago from the branch inspired me. At that time I wanted to support Cats Protection and though I would have loved to help the cats directly, I believed my experience with budgetary and financial controls would be of greater value to the team as a whole. I see the role of branch treasurer as pivotal in providing the branch with a solid foundation from which we can help many more cats that need our help. ”

Guy, Branch Treasurer



Health and safety

The charity is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all volunteers. Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner and not to act in a way that may put themselves or others at risk of injury. It is the responsibility of all volunteers to report any accident/incident or dangerous circumstance or occurrence to the Health & Safety Manager, healthandsafety@cats.org.uk irrespective of whether any person has been injured.

Data protection

Personal information recorded about volunteers is stored and maintained with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality. The charity abides by all provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018. Volunteers who collect or administer any personal data on our supporters/other volunteers will also be required by law to comply with the provisions of that Act. We have a range of useful infographics which outline how data protection applies in various volunteering roles from fostering to fundraising. These are available to download from CatNav. See example below:

Confidentiality

Volunteers have a personal responsibility to protect and maintain confidentiality of charity, supplier, customer and client information.

Computer security, email and internet

Volunteers have a personal responsibility to ensure they do not commit any criminal offences or breach any laws including data protection legislation in their use of IT systems.

Intellectual property

Both volunteers and the organisation agree that the intellectual property rights of original work produced by volunteers automatically transfers to the organisation.

Full details on all Cats Protection volunteering policies and procedures can be found in the volunteering pages of CatNav.

Data protection at Cats Protection

1 General principles

Volunteers are responsible for any personal data they collect, store and share on behalf of the charity.



2 Certain types of information must be kept particularly secure and protected



3 Consent

Legislation places an emphasis on Cats Protection to ensure that we have an individual's consent to process their information solely for the purpose/purposes it was given.

4 Evidence of consent

We must ensure we can evidence a person's consent when we collect their information for each specific purpose and the communication methods they would prefer, eg email, SMS etc.

5 Sharing

If you wish to share information, think:

1. What's the information about?
2. Is this information personal/sensitive?
3. Who am I giving this information to?
4. What is it going to be used for?
5. Do I have permission to share this information?
6. Is it legal to share?

6 Access and securely storing information

We need to consider how we protect information in everything we do at Cats Protection, for example:



7 Data breaches

We've all heard about laptops containing personal or sensitive information being left on trains but some other examples include:

- files infected by a virus or malware
 - disposing of paper documents, such as completed forms, in an insecure way
 - losing a memory stick or tablet that holds personal information
 - sending an email containing personal information to more than one person without using Bcc
 - information left accessible to unauthorised people
- Always keep information safe.



8 Always check if the info is in line with Cats Protection's Data Protection policy

If you have any breaches, concerns or queries contact dataprotection@cats.org.uk

Find out more: Learn Online or CatNav

Produced by Volunteering, Learning & Development, Operations and IT

Notes



Contact info

Your first point of contact for general support in your volunteering will be your volunteer manager however the following numbers may also be useful.

The Branch Support Unit (BSU) are available to help branches and centres with any queries they have, whether it is something BSU can deal with directly or they can ask another department to help with. To contact the team please call: Freephone **0808 00 191919** 9am-5pm Monday to Friday or email **bsu@cats.org.uk**

If you have a difficulty with your login to CatNav please contact IT via email **ITServiceDesk@cats.org.uk** or **01825 741 999**.

If you have a general query relating to any aspect of Cats Protection and its work please contact the Contact Centre **03000 12 12 12** or visit our website **www.cats.org.uk**

If you are grieving the loss of your cat please contact Paws to Listen from 9am-5pm Monday to Friday **0800 024 94 94**.

give a little time
MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

One small action can make a big difference!
Could you do one of these today?

- Tell a friend about Cats Protection and our work in your community
- Visit our website
- Follow us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram
- Visit the cats in one of our centres

Thank you

for being part of the Cats Protection team!

www.cats.org.uk



give a little time
MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Cats Protection
National Cat Centre
Lewes Road
Chelwood Gate
Haywards Heath
RH17 7TT

T: 03000 12 12 12 (National Information Line)

E: info@cats.org.uk

W: www.cats.org.uk

*Thank you
xx*

f www.facebook.com/catsprotection

t www.twitter.com/catsprotection

Reg Charity 203644 (England and Wales) and SC037711 (Scotland)