

How can we help?



It's cold and you find a cat that is looking thin and bedraggled – what do you do?

Approach the cat cautiously and carefully. He may be frightened or even sick and injured. As such he may lash out. Remember that your own safety and that of the cat are of great importance. If you do have concerns about his health and cannot approach him, this is the time to call the RSPCA on its emergency number **0300 1234 999**.

If the cat is friendly, speak calmly and reassuringly, perhaps entice him to you with a bit of food. Once you've got him, it is



time to check whether he already has an owner.

If possible, take the cat to your nearest veterinary surgery. They should be able to scan for a microchip for free and will try to make contact with the registered owners. If there is no microchip, you can give our National Helpline a call on **03000 12 12 12** for details of your local Cats Protection branch which will keep a lost and found register. The Helpline will also be able to send you some paper collars and some missing cat posters. On the paper collar put a note saying 'Please call this number if this is your cat...'. If the cat seems friendly, fitting a paper collar shouldn't be too much of a problem. If the cat is nervous, please do not risk being bitten or scratched. If someone calls, it will hopefully end the mystery for you





Local Shop



Illustration: Sam Roberts

and also make the owner aware of how far their cat has gone astray.

If possible, take a picture of the cat and put it on the poster with details of where and when the cat was found. The posters could be put up places such as your local vets, shops and wherever you can get permission to display them.

If you are unable to take the cat home with you, you may want to provide it with a temporary shelter. You could use a sturdy cardboard box and put a blanket or some straw inside.

A piece of waterproof sheeting secured over the top will help keep the rain out. Make sure it's properly and safely weighted down to stop it being blown away by the wind.

If possible, do try and provide the cat with food and clean water. Cow's milk is not advisable as many cats are lactose intolerant.

Ask around the local neighbourhood to see if anyone recognises the cat while keeping an eye out for any 'missing cat' posters. Have a word with the postman and milkman to see if they know of any missing pets on their rounds. It is also worth checking the local newspaper to see if anyone has placed a 'lost ad' that could describe the cat. You may wish to take out an ad of your own in the 'found' section.

It is also worth contacting the following organisations with information about the found cat:

- RSPCA www.rspca.org.uk/whatwedo/yourlocal
- USPCA 028 3025 1000
- SSPCA 03000 999 999
- www.animalsearchuk.co.uk
- www.nationalpetregister.org
- Local radio stations
- Schools

We all hope for a happy ending when it comes to missing or lost cats. In 2010 alone, Cats Protection helped reunite 3,132 cats with their owners and increased the chances of those who become lost in the future by microchipping a further 43,729.

Unfortunately, there are many cases where the cat has been abandoned and no owner will come forward. If this happens please phone your local Cats Protection branch or adoption centre where our volunteers and staff will do their best to try and find a loving home for the cat. ●



To contact Helpline, please phone
03000 12 12 12 or email helpline@cats.org.uk