

Manifesto for Cats: Scotland



The Manifesto for Cats: Scotland forms part of Cats Protection's advocacy work "Speaking up for cats", campaigning for a change that will deliver a better world for cats.



Cat breeding

Updating the law to control the breeding and sale of cats to reduce the number of unwanted kittens and ensure good welfare.



Microchipping

Making it compulsory to microchip owned cats.



Regulating air guns

Enforcement and monitoring of new air gun licencing laws to prevent injury or death to cats shot by such weapons.



Dangerous dogs

A review of the effectiveness of Dog Control Notices as a way of preventing dog attacks on cats.



Animal welfare education

Inclusion of animal welfare in the Scottish curriculum so that all children learn about responsible pet care.



Cats & housing providers

Scottish Government recognition of the needs of people with cats or other companion animals in rented housing and care homes to allow people to keep their pets.



Care and wellbeing

Scottish Government recognition of the benefits cats and other companion animals bring to health and personal wellbeing.



Labelling toxic products

Clear labelling of flowers, plants and household products that are toxic to cats so cat owners know which to avoid.



Banning snares

An outright ban on the use of snares on the basis they are inhumane and cruel and inflict suffering, injury or death upon animals caught in them, including cats.



Illegal imports

Creating a national database to ensure that a central record is kept of all cats entering the UK legally so those entering illegally without a rabies vaccine can be identified without delay.

Cats Protection is the UK's leading feline welfare charity. Cats and their welfare are at the centre of everything we do. Our focus is on helping to reduce the overpopulation of cats through targeted neutering, providing education and information about cat welfare, and rehoming cats. In Scotland, over 1,300 volunteers run 48 branches which operate alongside our Glasgow Adoption Centre. Our volunteers and staff work tirelessly to educate schoolchildren and adult community groups about cat welfare and to help neuter cats. In 2014, our Scottish branches and adoption centre rehomed over 5,700 unwanted and abandoned cats. Our vision is "a world where every cat is treated with kindness and an understanding of its needs".



People care about cats

Cats are hugely popular pets providing love, affection and companionship. The most recent survey statistics show that across the UK, 25 per cent of the population has a cat – that’s an estimated 11.1million cats.¹ In Scotland 23 per cent of households has at least one cat which is an estimated cat population of approximately 900,000.²

Cats Protection has a large social media presence in Scotland, with over 68,000 likes for our Scottish branch and adoption centre Facebook pages. Nationally, Cats Protection’s Facebook page has over 320,000 likes, with thousands of people every day liking, discussing and sharing our messages.³

Animal welfare matters as a political issue – it affects the way people vote. A YouGov⁴ poll asked voters to name issues that will determine how they cast their vote. In Scotland, 10 per cent of those surveyed named animal welfare as such an issue. The Scottish Parliament election in 2016 presents an opportunity for politicians to “Speak up for cats”.

A Manifesto for Cats

There are many actions that the Scottish Government and local authorities can do to ensure a better world for cats. The public are constantly in touch with Cats Protection about issues of concern, whether it is reporting stray or abandoned cats, or kittens being bred uncontrollably from both domestic and feral cats or the need for more cats to be microchipped.

The Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 was the last major piece of legislation affecting cats. In 2010, the Scottish government showed a further commitment to animal welfare when it produced The Scottish Code of Practice for Welfare of Cats.⁵





Breeding for sale: updating the law to control the breeding and sale of cats to reduce the number of unwanted kittens and ensure good welfare

Stevie's story

Stevie was one of six kittens brought to a Cats Protection branch in Aberdeenshire in a cardboard box by a concerned animal lover. The woman told volunteers she had been given the litter after visiting a puppy breeder who no longer wanted to keep them. All six had eye problems, probably as a result of their mother having cat flu, and all needed veterinary care. Three kittens regained their eyesight but two lost their vision in one eye and Stevie was left blind. Stevie was rehomed with his smaller brother Tiny, with whom he had a close bond. Sadly, Tiny's tough start in life left him with a serious eye problem and he later died after developing complications.



"One individual asked us to take two female cats, each with a litter, because she was moving. We referred her to our Glasgow Adoption Centre. She didn't bother and sold the kittens at a maximum of five weeks old on Facebook. The next year she gave a pregnant female cat away because she was moving! The lady who took this cat called for advice and I knew straight away who she got the cat from. It was skin and bone and had kittens three days after adoption."

- Volunteer, Cats Protection Stranraer & District Branch¹⁰

At Cats Protection we know there are more cats and kittens than there are loving homes. In 2014, the number of kittens from unwanted litters handed into our Glasgow Adoption Centre was double that of the previous year. Yet despite this alarming rise, we still see scores of kittens advertised for sale online, with compelling evidence of commercial breeding where the same advertisers are placing successive adverts.

The most recent statistics indicate that in Scotland 10 per cent of owned cats are not neutered, which is higher than the UK-wide figure of 8 per cent. This means there are around 90,000 unneutered owned cats in Scotland.⁶ Cats are prolific breeders, with just one unneutered female capable of giving birth to around 18 kittens a year. One unneutered female cat can give rise to 20,000 offspring in just five years so it's easy to see how cat numbers can rapidly get out of control. Not neutering pet cats also threatens the survival of the native Scottish wildcat, as breeding with domestic cats dilutes the gene pool of this rare and protected species.

Neutering is the most effective way to reduce the number of unwanted kittens and control the domestic, stray and feral cat population. The Scottish Government Code of Practice for the Welfare of Cats states that neutering of cats is a "particularly important consideration for owners". It goes on to state that "motherhood takes a lot out of a cat and having repeated litters may shorten her life expectancy."⁷ In 2014, Cats Protection's Scottish branches and adoption centre neutered nearly 12,000 cats. Cats Protection will be launching a subsidised neutering campaign for cat owners in Edinburgh and the surrounding areas in Spring 2016.

For many years Cats Protection has been deeply concerned about cats bred in poor welfare conditions. These include those who breed and sell cats, often from domestic premises, and are more motivated by money than welfare. Equally we are concerned where owners simply do not have their cat neutered, allowing female cats to have multiple litters of kittens and relying on family, friends or neighbours to take them on. These unplanned kittens are all too often the ones which become unwanted and abandoned adult cats.

Cat breeding is unregulated in Scotland. There are laws governing the breeding and sale of pets (Pet Animals Act 1951) but these are in urgent need of updating. The European Commission announced proposals in April 2015 for registration from 2020 of those that breed and sell pets.⁸

The Licencing of Animal Dealers (Young Cats and Dogs) (Scotland) Regulations 2009 sets out some licencing requirements for those who sell young cats under 84 days old, but this is not adequately enforced⁹. There is some self-regulation and good breeding practice, particularly among those who breed and register pedigree cats with bodies such as The Governing Council of Cat Fancy. Regulation of commercial cat breeding already exists in other EU countries including Belgium and the Netherlands, various US states and in New South Wales and Victoria, Australia.

Recommendations:

- collaboration between the Scottish Government, animal welfare charities and professional bodies to encourage cat owners to neuter their cats
- Scottish Government support for community projects that encourage cat neutering and responsible pet ownership
- new regulations under The Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 to regulate the breeding and sale of cats
- consideration of a new Code of Practice under The Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 covering the breeding of cats and cat welfare
- collaboration with animal welfare charities and professional bodies in Scotland to develop mandatory training and accreditation for those that breed and sell cats
- updated regulations on pet vending to replace the Pet Animals Act 1951 including a ban on the sale of kittens in pet shops and pet shop businesses
- Scottish Government review of UK and EU best practice and regulatory frameworks governing cat breeding
- collaboration between the Scottish Government and animal welfare charities and professional bodies to develop a "kitten checklist" to guide consumers who purchase a kitten



Microchipping: making it compulsory to microchip owned cats

Microchipping is the safe and permanent method of identification Cats Protection recommends for cats. It increases the chances of a lost or injured cat being safely reunited with their owner. It can quickly identify a cat that has been killed in a road accident, saving their owner much distress. The Scottish Code of Practice for the Welfare of Cats confirms that microchipping is "the preferred method of identification."¹¹

But despite the benefits the most recent statistics indicate that, 45 per cent of owned cats in Scotland are not microchipped. This is higher than the UK-wide average of 38 per cent and means that around 400,000 owned cats in Scotland are not microchipped.¹² When Cats Protection takes an unchipped cat into its care it can be very difficult to trace an owner and may well result in us rehoming a cat needlessly.

As well as promoting microchipping to owners, Cats Protection also encourages local authorities to scan cats which have been killed in road accidents. Simple, handheld scanners carried by road cleaning teams can easily identify cats which have been microchipped so that owners can be informed. This quick and straightforward routine can save an owner the distress of not knowing what has happened to a missing cat, not to mention the time and money spent searching for a much-loved pet.

Microchipping of dogs will become compulsory in Scotland¹³ in 2016, along with England¹⁴ and Wales¹⁵, and is already compulsory in Northern Ireland. Microchipping of cats is already compulsory in some countries, for example Spain, France and parts of Australia.

Recommendations:

- regulations to introduce compulsory microchipping of owned cats
- a Scottish Government led review of EU and non-EU best practice in countries where microchipping of owned cats is already compulsory
- collaboration with the Scottish Government and Members of the Scottish Parliament to promote the benefits of microchipping cats (including support for initiatives like National Microchipping Month every June)

Tigger's story

In East Renfrewshire cats which are victims of road accidents are much more likely to be identified, thanks to the forward-thinking approach of the local council. Cats Protection's Giffnock & District Branch joined forces with local councillor Kenny Hay after his own pet cat Tigger was hit by a car. They met with officers at East Renfrewshire Council to convince staff of the benefits of checking for a microchip when cats have been killed in road accidents. Cats Protection provided three microchip scanners and support to road sweeping teams who now routinely scan cats which have been killed in road accidents. Branch Coordinator Karen Minnery said: "It's a cheap, straightforward, sensible and decent thing to do and we hope other councils will follow this example." Councillor Hay added: "Tigger was lucky to survive, although he sustained serious injuries and a broken pelvis. But if he had died, I would have desperately wanted to have known what had happened to him. Cats become part of the family and it's only right that owners should be told if they have been killed."





Cats entering the UK:
creating a national database to ensure that a central record is kept of all cats entering the UK legally so those entering illegally without a rabies vaccine can be identified without delay

A total of 43,829 cats and kittens were recorded as having entered the UK legally under the EU Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) in the three years to 2014.¹⁶ PETS governs the non-commercial movement of pets. Cats Protection is concerned where cats or kittens enter the country unchecked and/or illegally as this presents a potential public health risk as well as a threat to animal welfare. Just one cat or kitten smuggled in could put Scotland and the rest of the UK at risk of a case of rabies or other infectious diseases.

In November 2013 a cat was identified in Paris as having rabies.¹⁷ In May 2015, a dog which had illegally been taken to Algeria died from rabies after returning to the Rhône-Alpes region of France.¹⁸ Currently there is no centralised database recording all pet cats entering the country under the PETS scheme. Such a database would confirm that a cat had been checked, scanned for a microchip and had entered the country legally. Currently only animals that are declared get checked before entering the UK.

Cats Protection is one of 40 animal welfare members of Eurogroup for Animals, recognised by the European parliament as the leading body representing animal welfare issues in the EU. In 2015, the group launched a campaign to unify pet microchip databases within Europe, a move which will make it easier to determine where an animal has come from.

Recommendations:

- creation of a national database that registers details of all companion animals that have entered the UK legitimately. The database should be linked to an EU database which is accessible across the EU to maximise traceability
- Scottish Government guidance for Local Authorities, trading standards officers, welfare charities etc on procedures to follow if a cat is suspected of being an illegal import (including specific guidance on when to quarantine)
- random checking of cars and other vehicles to look for cats and dogs that are being smuggled into the UK





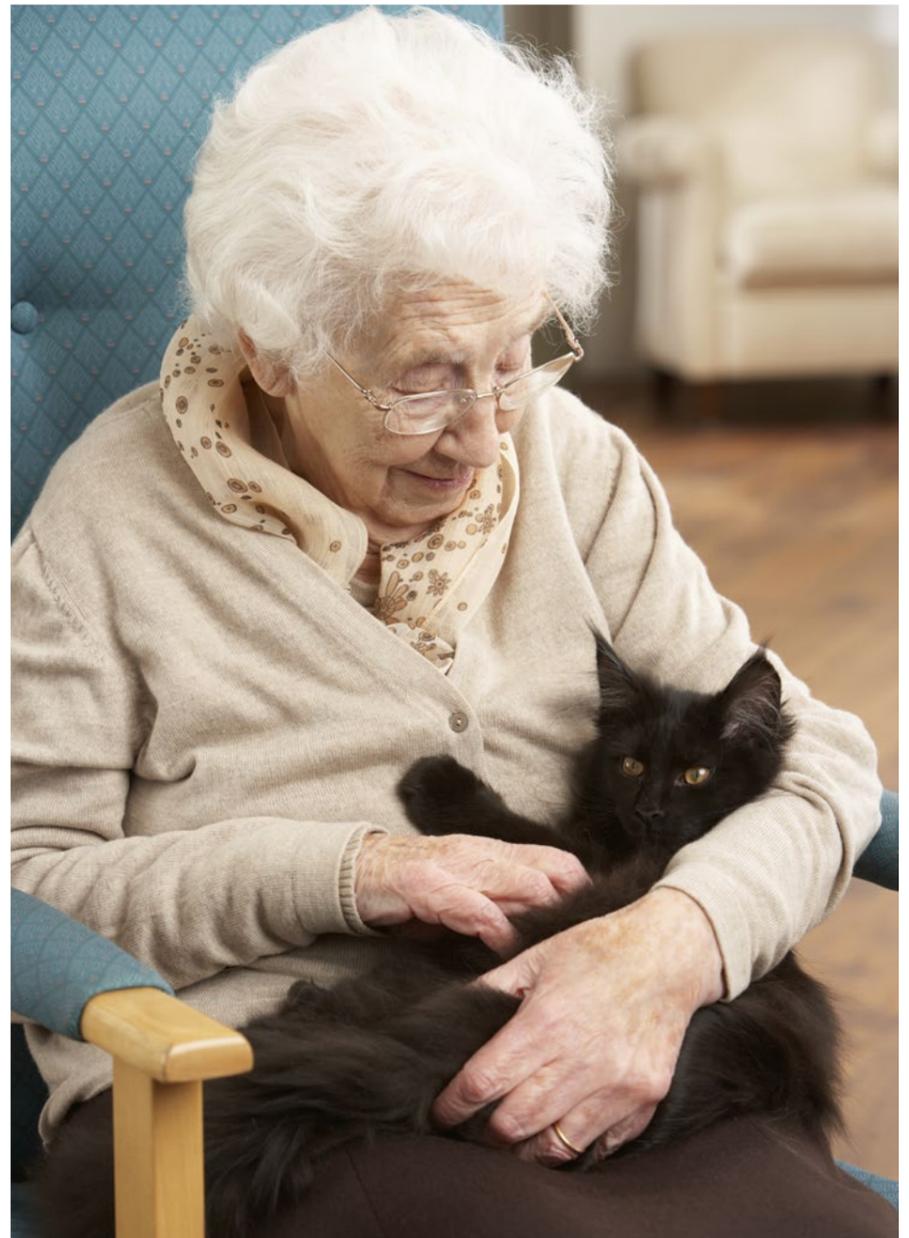
Cats and housing providers: Scottish Government recognition of the needs of people with cats or other companion animals in rented housing and care homes to allow people to keep their pets

A rising number of us do not own the homes we live in. Many of us now have landlords or managers whether in privately rented, social or care home accommodation. Yet in 2014, the number of cats handed into our Glasgow Adoption Centre because a landlord refused to accept pets increased by 30 per cent from the previous year.

More needs to be done to encourage housing providers and landlords to have pet friendly policies and pet tenancy clauses. According to one of the major online guides to care homes, nursing homes and residential homes, currently only 41 per cent of homes in Scotland say they take "pets by arrangement".¹⁹

Recommendations:

- Scottish Government to encourage more social housing associations and private landlords to allow tenants to keep companion animals
- Scottish Government to encourage and promote good practice whereby local authorities, social housing associations and private landlords have pet friendly tenancy clauses
- Scottish Government to work closely with animal welfare charities to encourage more care homes, sheltered housing and retirement complexes to allow new residents to have cats





Restrictions to control the use of air guns: enforcement and monitoring of new air gun licencing laws to prevent injury or death to cats shot by such weapons

Stricter legislation of air guns under the Air Weapons and Licencing (Scotland) Act 2015 are set to come into force in 2016. This will require all air gun owners to hold a licence and show a good reason for owning such a weapon.

On average, over four cats a week in the UK are reported as having been shot with an air gun.²⁰ Typically, pellets become lodged in the cat's body, brain, eyes, spine or vital organs, often causing fatal injuries. A cat will frequently leave the scene and, as is normal feline behaviour, may crawl away to hide or die in a secluded spot. Many air gun injuries are not immediately obvious to the cat owner and the delay in detecting air gun pellets makes it harder to establish when and where the shooting happened.

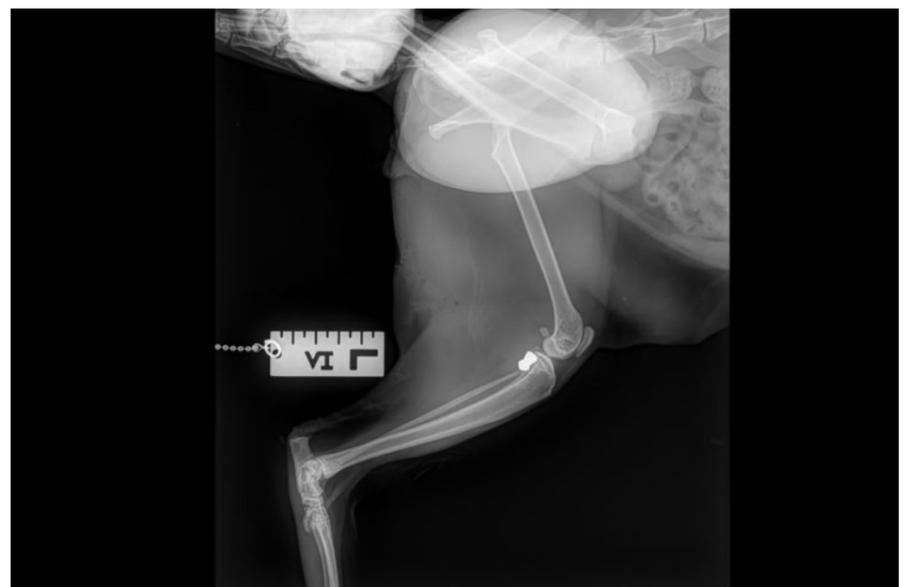
Cats Protection welcomes the new law in Scotland and will continue to log press reports of air gun attacks on cats in Scotland and would expect to see a decrease once the Act is in force. In cases where licenced air guns are still used randomly, casually or deliberately to inflict injuries on cats and other animals, thorough investigation and prosecution of the perpetrators is needed.

Recommendations:

- Scottish Government to ensure that their outcome based evaluation of the enforcement and prosecution under new air gun licensing laws (and publication of published crime statistics) includes specific assessment of the effectiveness of the new Act in reducing air gun attacks on cats

Roddy's story

Four-year-old Roddy managed to limp home to safety after being callously shot with an air gun in woodland near his home in Moodiesburn, Glasgow. His frantic owner Fabiana rushed him to the vets, where an X-ray revealed a pellet lodged deep inside his thigh. Vets said the position of the pellet made an operation to remove it too risky, so Roddy will need close monitoring in case it becomes dislodged. Fabiana, who adopted Roddy after he was abandoned as a kitten, said: "Roddy is a much-loved cat, and to think someone would take aim at him for no reason is simply horrific. It just goes to show why it's so important air guns are not in the wrong hands."





Cats and their benefit to health and wellbeing: Scottish Government recognition of the benefits cats and other companion animals bring to health and personal wellbeing

Cats can help alleviate social isolation and make particularly suitable companion animals for people with chronic health problems, limited mobility or who are housebound. Cats have also been proven to help reduce the risks of physical conditions such as cardiovascular disease.²¹

Scotland is undergoing changes in the way health and social care is delivered, following the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014. By bringing together health and social care services, greater emphasis will be focussed on the needs of individuals to promote their health and wellbeing, and in particular, to enable people to live healthier lives in their community. There are nine national health and wellbeing outcomes which apply to integrated health and social care, including ensuring services are centred on helping to maintain or improve the quality of life of service users, and helping people with long-term conditions or disabilities to live independently at home or in a homely setting.²²

Cats Protection believes it is vital that the role cats and other companion pets play in supporting individual wellbeing and an independent home life is not forgotten in the way care needs are assessed. We'd encourage imaginative initiatives such as Companion Animal Support Programmes which already happen in Australia.²³

Recommendations:

- clarification from the Scottish Government that cats and other pets can be vital to an individual's wellbeing and that health professionals and local government social services should take this into consideration when assessing a person's care needs
- formal communication by the Scottish Government with local government and health professionals to encourage consideration of the value of pets to wellbeing within care assessments
- Scottish Government monitoring to ensure that assessments and personalised care plans include consideration of any companion animals that form part of the individual's household and that benefit wellbeing

Fraser and Billy's story²⁴

Eight-year-old Fraser has autism, leaving him prone to anxiety and extreme emotional meltdowns. The world can seem a difficult place for him as he struggles to be understood and communicate his feelings. But his life was transformed after his family adopted Billy from Cats Protection's Deeside Branch. The pair formed an instant bond and Billy acts as Fraser's constant friend, support and guardian. When life becomes too difficult, Fraser can confide in Billy and mum Louise says his companionship has immeasurably improved all of their lives. She said:

"Cats are really gifted and there's something really amazing about their ability to heal."





Animal welfare education: inclusion of animal welfare in the Scottish curriculum so that all children learn about responsible pet care

Children are the pet owners of tomorrow and it's essential they leave school with an understanding of how to care for and respect animals. Developing an understanding in young people of responsible pet ownership would result in an improvement in some of the animal welfare issues which impact Scotland, including low neutering rates.

Education is central to Cats Protection's work, and this extends to all age groups, not just schoolchildren. It is clear there is a need for greater awareness of responsible cat care among the general public. At our Glasgow Adoption Centre, the number of people giving up cats for the stated reason 'Doesn't want cat anymore' more than doubled in the two year period up to the end of 2014. This indicates a worrying lack of understanding of the responsibilities involved in taking on a pet.

Cats Protection has 19 education speakers in Scotland who voluntarily give up their time to deliver talks to schools and community groups. But there is much to be done to reach more people of all ages and improve knowledge of responsible pet ownership. To help us reach marginal audiences, Cats Protection would welcome joint working with the Scottish Parliament and professional bodies to gain accreditation for our education resources.

Recommendations:

- inclusion of animal welfare in the Scottish curriculum and recognition of the preventative impact of teaching animal welfare and responsible pet ownership to schoolchildren
- Scottish Government collaboration with professional bodies to endorse voluntary sector education resources
- support by Members of the Scottish Parliament for Cats Protection's education activities locally





Banning snares: an outright ban on the use of snares on the basis they are inhumane and cruel and inflict suffering, injury or death upon animals caught in them, including cats

Cats Protection supports a ban on the use of all types of snares across Scotland on the basis their use is inherently cruel and inhumane. Snares inflict considerable suffering and injury on animals, and cats are often the victims. They are commonly used by gamekeepers and other landowners to protect game birds from predation. The “target species” are generally foxes, and to a lesser extent, rabbits.

Snares are indiscriminate – statistics gathered in 2015 showed that 71 per cent of reported cases where animals were caught in snares involved non-target species. Of these, nearly a quarter (24 per cent) were cats.²⁵ There are alternatives to snares available to land managers for both rabbit and fox control, for example, the use of various types of fencing (electric, buried and underground).

The Scottish Parliament has the power to ban snaring in Scotland but so far has failed to do so. New regulations on how snares are used were introduced in 2010 under the Snares (Scotland) Order 2010, and certain types of snare are banned. However, there is much evidence that both target and non-target species of animals are suffering agonising deaths after being caught in legal snares.²⁶

The Scottish Government is due to undertake a five-year review of the legislation on snaring created by the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011. Cats Protection would welcome such a review.

Recommendations:

- introduction in Scotland of an outright ban on the use of snares on the basis that they are inhumane and cruel and inflict suffering, injury or death on cats and other animals caught in them

Stripey's story

Four-year-old Stripey suffered appalling injuries and needed to have a leg amputated after being caught in a snare in East Ayrshire. The Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA) launched an investigation after inspecting the copper snare, which was untagged and non-locking, both of which constitute offences under the Snares (Scotland) Order 2010. An undercover SSPCA officer said, “When his owner found him, he could immediately see that Stripey was very badly injured as his leg was hanging off. The vet prepared his owners for the worst case scenario, which was that he may have to be put to sleep. This was incredibly upsetting for them as Stripey has been a much loved family pet for four years. Thankfully he survived but his leg had to be amputated.”²⁷





Labelling products toxic to cats: clear labelling of flowers, plants and household products that are toxic to cats so cat owners know which to avoid

Cats are very susceptible to poisoning and a number of household products can be fatal to them. Many consumers, who are also cat owners, aren't aware of the toxicity of products such as disinfectants and weed killers.

Labelling of toxic products has been governed by the European Classification of Labelling and Packaging regulation since 1 June 2015. This regulation is aimed at protecting people and the environment. We would like to go beyond what is legally required and ensure product labels warn consumers of a product's toxicity to animals.

A number of plants – lilies in particular – can also be fatal. Despite years of effort by Cats Protection and The Cat Group²⁸ many supermarkets still do not have accurately worded and prominent warnings on their lily bouquets. All parts of lilies, not just the pollen, are toxic to cats.

Recommendations:

- Scottish Government working with manufacturers and distributors to encourage them to voluntarily place warnings on products and plants highlighting their toxicity to animals as well as to people
- Scottish Government encouragement to manufacturers of toxic products (such as antifreeze) to develop non-toxic alternatives
- Joint working with Scottish Government to raise public awareness about the toxicity of certain household products and plants

Words of warning

Warnings should be prominently positioned on the front of bouquets containing flowers which are toxic to cats, such as lilies. In the case of lilies, the label should warn owners that all parts are dangerous, including the stem, leaves, pollen and flower and that cats can become ill after chewing them or simply by brushing past before licking their fur.





Dog attacks on cats: a review of the effectiveness of Dog Control Notices as a way of preventing dog attacks on cats

In the first six months of 2015 over four cats a month were reported in the UK press as having been the victim of a dog attack. Sadly 70 per cent of these dog attacks on cats were reported as fatal.²⁹ The vast majority of dog owners are responsible and keep their dogs under control. However, in cases where a cat or other animal is injured or killed when an owner fails to control their dog, the law needs enforcing.

Scotland has already led the way in the UK with its Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010 to tackle irresponsible dog ownership through the issuing of Dog Control Notices. These can be issued in cases where dogs are considered to be dangerously out of control on private as well as public property. However, there are ongoing concerns the Act is not being properly enforced, with authorities struggling to find resources, misinterpreting the guidelines or not enforcing it at all. Additional funding from the Scottish Government and clearer guidance on how the law should be enforced are desperately needed if it is to be a success.

Recommendations:

- a review of the effectiveness of Dog Control Notices as a way of preventing dog attacks on cats where dogs are not controlled
- Government coordination of data evidencing dog attacks on cats in Scotland and monitoring of the use by enforcers of Dog Control Notices

Belle's story

A Dundee taxi driver risked his own safety to try to prevent four dogs mauling a cat to death in Whitfield, Dundee. The unknown hero is reported to have done all he could to rescue the four-year-old female cat, called Belle. But his efforts were in vain, with Belle dying as a result of her injuries after the attack in July 2015. After seeing the dogs attack Belle, the taxi driver intervened, but the dogs turned on him and began snarling, forcing him to back off. Karen, from Fintry, said Belle belonged to a friend of hers. She added: "Sadly, despite his efforts, Belle has died. My friend is devastated by what has happened. Everyone is worried that it's only a matter of time before it is a child that is attacked by these dogs."³⁰



To find out more about the Manifesto for Cats: Scotland and our advocacy work:

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